



## Karl Jaspers as a Critic of Psychoanalysis A Short Sketch of a Long Story

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**Abstract:** The well-known psychiatrist and philosopher, Karl Jaspers, critiqued psychoanalysis already in the first edition of his *General Psychopathology* in 1913. His criticism increased in the fourth edition of 1946 where Jaspers added philosophical reasons to his previous epistemological objections. In those postwar years, Jaspers also wrote polemic essays on the theory and practice of Sigmund Freud's school which had regained intellectual and institutional acceptance, especially at his university at Heidelberg, represented by Viktor von Weizsäcker and Alexander Mitscherlich. This controversy can be analysed by taking into account Max Weber's theory of modernity as well as his postulate of leading value judgments in sciences. For Jaspers, psychoanalysis increasingly endangered his idea of an existence-philosophical life conduct.

**Keywords:** Jaspers, Karl; Freud, Sigmund; Weber, Max; psychoanalysis, critique of; life conduct; existence; brain-myth; psycho-myth.

Karl Jaspers is well-known as a philosopher.<sup>1</sup> His book *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*,<sup>2</sup> published in 1919, is seen as the beginning of German Existenzphilosophie. Less widely known is the fact that Jaspers started out in Heidelberg as a psychiatrist where he wrote in 1913 an epoch-making methodological work, his *General Psychopathology*,<sup>3</sup> which since then had established

him as an authority in the field of psychiatry. His international fame as a medical author began with the first publication of the English translation in 1963 and never declined since.

In the various editions of the *General Psychopathology*, Jaspers treats Sigmund Freud and his psychoanalysis in an increasingly critical vein. His 1931 cultural-philosophical essay *Man in the Modern Age* condemns Freud's psychoanalysis as a questionable ideology,<sup>4</sup> and after 1945 he attacks its basic tenets once again in polemical articles. In 1954, Jaspers tells the readers in the new foreword of his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* that even as a young psychiatrist he had put up "inner resistance" to Freud and that this had been for reasons which transcend purely scientific matters. What Freud had attempted to

<sup>1</sup> The text is a slightly revised version of passages which introduce and resume the core thesis of my book, *Life Conduct in Modern Times: Karl Jaspers and Psychoanalysis*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, Berlin: Springer 1919, 5th ed. 1960. [Henceforth cited as *PW*, all translations by the author].

<sup>3</sup> Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, transl. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, transl. Eden and Cedar Paul, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1957.

establish in the "medium of science" was perceived by Jaspers as "reprehensible" philosophy which he aimed to challenge with "thoughts from completely different origins" (*PW* ixf). In an earlier letter to the philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker who had defended psychoanalysis, Jaspers polemicizes as follows, "The devil is at the root of this. For this reason there can only be complete rejection."<sup>5</sup>

Without a doubt, Jaspers' increasingly critical view on psychoanalysis can be related to the emergence of his philosophy. This is the core thesis of my book which made me want to trace back his critique of psychoanalysis as it presented itself in various journalistic writings, thereby elucidating the arguments, motives, and contexts that shaped his critique from the time of its first psychiatric formulation up to the final critical thoughts of Jaspers as political philosopher. The study can be understood as a historical reconstruction of conditions which induced Jaspers ultimately to take such a polemical view on psychoanalysis. Its methodological framework is the sociological theory of Max Weber, one of the greatest intellectual figures of the twentieth century, whom Jaspers held in highest regard.

In fact he was the first to view Weber immediately after his premature death in 1920 not only as a sociologist rooted in deep knowledges on national economy, law, history, and politics but also deeply inclined to philosophical perspectives which lead a hidden life in his works. Therefore Jaspers wrote with a strong sense of conviction after his death: "It is not appropriate for this great man to be committed to a single profession or science. If he was a philosopher, perhaps he was the only philosopher of our times and was a philosopher in a sense in which no one else could be termed as such today."<sup>6</sup> Thus it hardly comes as a surprise that in 1949, when Jaspers is at the zenith of public recognition as a philosopher and psychiatrist, he should look back to and acknowledge the decisive role of Max Weber throughout his own lifetime as a scientist and philosopher:

I am indebted to Max Weber not only for my *Psychopathology* of young years, but also for providing me with the means to formulate my philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

The investigation of Max Weber's writings revealed to me surprisingly that Jaspers' interpretations of the hero of his works did not show. Instead, one can recognize certain crucial differences, for example, Weber's sociology involves concepts and evaluations that are not to be found in Jaspers' thinking. Even so, some of them provided the framework for a discerning and profound examination of his critique of psychoanalysis. In particular, three aspects of Weber's sociology promote an understanding of Jaspers. First of all, it is his theory of modernity which can serve as a point of reference for examining the existential philosophy of Jaspers. Second, Weber's postulate of value-freedom offers us a metascientific perspective which allows to reconstruct and to criticize Jaspers' arguments against psychoanalysis. Third, in the course of such a reconstruction, great significance is attached to Weber's concept of ambitious intellectual life conduct, for it couples ideas and social action in such a way as to help us grasp a main aspect of Jaspers' existence philosophy, namely its implicit ethics and motivational dynamics. In this light, one core thesis of my book is that his reservations against Freud's psychology is rooted in his own interest to provide a philosophical concept of life conduct for modern man as an alternative to the increasing seduction to lead one's life by means of psychoanalytic orientation. The late Jaspers who is confronted with the rise of psychoanalysis after 1945—in Germany as well as in the US—writes polemically:

Wanting to entrust a physician with the prescriptions of one's life conduct is an escape from seriousness to convenience on the part of some modern human beings.<sup>8</sup>

This judgment enforced the criticism on psychoanalysis and was encouraged by information on the rise of Freud's theory Jaspers had been given by Hannah Arendt in the intellectual climate in the United

<sup>5</sup> This letter, dated August 8, 1953, will be published in the forthcoming Karl Jaspers, *Korrespondenzen: Psychiatrie, Medizin und Naturwissenschaften*, eds. Matthias Bormuth and Dietrich von Engelhardt, Göttingen, Niedersachs: Wallstein, 2016. [Translation by the author.]

<sup>6</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Max Weber: Gesammelte Schriften*, München: Piper 1988, p. 94. [Translation by the author.]

<sup>7</sup> This letter, dated April 22, 1949, will be published in the forthcoming Karl Jaspers, *Korrespondenzen: Psychiatrie, Medizin und Naturwissenschaften*, eds. Matthias Bormuth and Dietrich von Engelhardt, Göttingen, Niedersachs: Wallstein, 2016. [Translation by the author.]

<sup>8</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Der Arzt im technischen Zeitalter*, München: Piper 1986, p. 38.

States after World War II when the influence of European immigrants with psychoanalytic background began to increase not only in the psychiatric establishment but also as public intellectuals.

Looking at the beginnings of this criticism as written down in the first edition of the *General Psychopathology* one can assume that Jaspers seems to be relatively well-disposed toward Freud and his school. He appreciates psychoanalysis as an innovative element of descriptive psychiatry, not far from his phenomenological approach which had been mostly influenced by the understanding psychology of Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel, and Max Weber as the importance of Edmund Husserl's ideas had decreased already at that time. Therefore, Jaspers welcomed certain attempts to understand aetiologies in the sense practiced by Swiss members of the psychoanalytic movement, lead by Eugen Bleuler and his assistant Carl Gustav Jung.

In 1920 when Jaspers delivered a revised version of the *General Psychopathology*, he relativizes his openness for Freud's school, introducing existence-philosophically accentuated arguments developed during his first years as a teacher of psychology at the department of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. Now the founder of psychoanalysis no longer lives up to the great thinkers Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche who had invented a systematic way of psychological understanding at the middle and end of the nineteenth century. Freud's theory is confined to the limits drawn by the early *Studies on Hysteria*, while all of his insights found and written after 1895 Jaspers rejects as dogmatic beliefs without any scientific or psychological value.

After initially showing interest in the psychoanalytic technique of working with the concepts of resistance and transference, Jaspers eventually dissociates himself from it, calling for a symmetrical relationship of communication instead without the physician being invested with authority to offer interpretations concerning issues of the patient's inner self-understanding. Jaspers deems suggestive-manipulative psychotherapy to be purposeful in less differentiated forms of communication alone. From a theoretical perspective, Jaspers rejects Freud's accentuation of sexuality as the aetiological backbone of his theory of neurosis as introduced around 1900 and comes to associate psychoanalysis pejoratively with *fin-de-siècle* culture. The third edition of the masterpiece, already necessary in 1923, does not change this new polemical position at all.

In the fourth and last edition of the book which was written in times of inner emigration during World War II, Jaspers took the chance to introduce his existence-philosophical conviction more clearly into his psychopathological thinking. Now psychological understanding is purely descriptive, a reference point for symptomatology. Free self-determination is introduced as an independent aspect alongside of what were viewed as for the most part unknown causal determinants of psychic disease. Existential self-reflection now constitutes a central component of the psychopathological conception. This new focus also manifested itself in Jaspers' idea of school-independent psychology as a discipline which actually only envisioned unspecific treatment methods, tolerating "depth-psychological" methods for pragmatic reasons alone and looking upon existential communication as a rare possibility for true understanding. Because psychoanalysis claimed to be able to gain rational access to unconscious components of the personality, it was affected most acutely by Jaspers' apodictic exclusion of the medical potential for understanding. At this time the former psychiatrist still holds the biographically oriented psychosomatics developed by Viktor von Weizsäcker, a former colleague at Heidelberg University, who founded a philosophically based concept of biographical medicine. This demands of the physician to engage with the patient by providing subjective interpretations without making any claims to scientific validity. In part, this approach evidenced an affinity to the individualistic tendency of existential communication, the core idea of Jaspers' own philosophy.

After the war, Viktor von Weizsäcker returned to Heidelberg and started to establish a psycho-somatic approach which clearly propagated an ascription of psychic causes to somatic symptoms. Furthermore, he integrated psychoanalytic thoughts into his concept of which Jaspers had judged in the last edition of his *General Psychopathology* only as historically illuminating ideotype for dogmatic, sectarian forms of psychotherapy. Nonetheless, Jaspers was opened to support Weizsäcker's plan to institutionalize psychoanalytic psychosomatics at Heidelberg University, albeit with certain limits. In 1949 Alexander Mitscherlich, the former assistant of Weizsäcker and the new director of the institute, demanded obligatory training analysis, and at the same time, von Weizsäcker began to champion an anti-traditional form of psychotherapy which undoubtedly provoked Jaspers.

Beginning in 1950, Jaspers brought forth various polemically articulated arguments against psychoanalysis in a number of articles. More rigid than before, he negated the pathogenetic competence of all psychological hermeneutic approaches, in particular psychoanalytic psychosomatics. He criticized their aim to ascribe psychologically meaning to the expanded life context of the patient in the course of interpreting the patient's disorders. Jaspers based his criticism on a polarizing interpretation of Max Weber's postulate of value-freedom as it had been formulated for the first time in his 1931 *Man in the Modern Age*. According to this work, medicine constitutes a scientific, fact-based discipline which, as value-neutral science should lay no claim to hermeneutic authority as it concerns what were imputed to be biographically determined factors of disease. Jaspers spoke out vigorously against the planned obligatory training analysis. He was of the opinion that scientific psychotherapeutic training should not aim to effect the kind of socialization which psychoanalysis attempted to achieve following the model of schools of philosophy in antiquity. In concrete terms, Jaspers feared that through its academic institutionalization, psychoanalysis would assert itself as a generator of socio-psychological patterns of meaning in society and influence the intellectual elite in West Germany as it had influenced the intellectual elite in the United States.

Jaspers' seismographic sensitivity with regards to efforts made by psychoanalysis to structure self-reflection and consequently impose a socio-psychological impact on the life conduct of the intellectual elite is no doubt to be attributed to his own interest in providing this target group with existence-philosophical orientation. This implication of Jaspers' thought for modern society manifests itself in *Man in the Modern Age* for the first time. Existence-philosophical life orientation proves to be modern insofar as Jaspers conceives of secularization—not unlike Max Weber—sociologically as a withdrawal of ultimate cultural patterns and norms from the public sphere to the realm of private life conduct. Decisions on values and life conduct which are meaningful for the individual become all the more compelling, the more aporetic and meaningless instrumental societal connections appear to be.

But unlike Weber, Jaspers adheres to the pre-modern postulate of transcendence, which he sees as indispensable for the orientation of personal life conduct. Thus the "truthfulness of conscious life

conduct" is conceivable without the metaphysical premise. In terms of motivation philosophy, Jaspers evidences a great affinity to Calvinist notions of standing the test as described by Weber's sociological study on the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,<sup>9</sup> notions which resulted, as Weber argues, from the belief in a concealed but existent transcendence. In subscribing to the postulate of the ciphers of transcendence, Jaspers succeeds in tapping into traditional metaphysical systems without recognizing their norms in a purely conservative sense as being invested with primarily supra-individual, binding authority. For their personal appropriation alone decides their validity. This philosophy must be designed as paraconservative insofar as the pre-modern distinction of transcendence and immanence is implicitly postulated as a collectively valid premise. Jaspers' sobering encounter with Weber's pluralistic thought, whose "Intermediate Reflection" allows purely immanent spheres of meaning to collide with transcendently oriented ones without privileging the one over the other, underscores these connections.

Existence-philosophically founded truthfulness calls for truthfulness in terms of personal life conduct, but not in a moralistic sense. As a cipher, inner-worldly action was to indirectly prove the reality of the conception of transcendence, thus also attesting to the metaphysical motivation of truthful action. That such probity could even help to create more trustworthy and more human conditions in the private realm as well as the public one is emphasized by Jaspers after 1945 in his political philosophy more clearly. Paying tribute to the transcendent in one's life conduct remains the central, meta-political motive for political action, however. In terms of the existence-philosophical approach, life conduct as it is shaped in the private sphere has primacy over that of the public realm. Dolf Sternberger, the political philosopher who was close to Jaspers after 1945 in Heidelberg, speaks of an "ethics of intimacy" which he saw as issuing from existence-philosophical communication and personal attestments to truthfulness. In *Man in the Modern Age*, Jaspers depicts the realms of private life conduct—marriage, family and friendship—as islands of possible trust. He also viewed the university as a possible realm of communication probity insofar as it remained untouched by manipulative patronization. Existential self-reflection as it is sketched out in the *General Psychopathology of*

<sup>9</sup> Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, transl. Talcott Parsons, New York: Scribner, 1958.

1941/42 can be described as a charismatic socialization process in which the life conduct to which a person commits himself individually is seen as bearing witness to existence-philosophical belief. It is from this self-understanding that Jaspers' profound reservations against psychoanalysis as a modern form of life conduct in theory and practice derives and is articulated.

The institutional affinities of existence-philosophical life conduct in particular were impacted by the ideas of von Weizsäcker and Mitscherlich which Jaspers had to face after 1945 in Heidelberg. For one, Jaspers had to view Mitscherlich's plan to establish training analysis as an obligatory method of socialization at the university as a direct challenge to the existence-philosophical assertion of self-reflection and its eminent importance. Secondly, von Weizsäcker's provocative statement concerning his intension to illuminate the most personal realms of life (such as marriage) psychoanalytically struck the institutional nerve of Jaspers' existence-philosophical concept. Therefore he formulated a wholesale rejection of the claims to private life conduct staked out by psychoanalysis.

In other words, Jaspers was bent on preventing public institutions from launching a scientifically legitimized invasion into the realm of personality, its formation, and the individual form of life conduct which derived from it. He wanted the private sphere of life to remain intact. And he wanted to challenge each individual to search for meaning in a philosophical way not influenced by scientific conjectures what could be the truth of our inner, hidden life, and dynamics.

Encountering von Weizsäcker and his assistant with their programmatic positions after 1945 in Heidelberg Jaspers gained more and more a clear idea of the attempt of psychoanalysis to provide Western intellectuals with rising authority of psychoanalysis as a theoretical and practical means for finding a deeper meaning in their lives. On the occasion of the founding of the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt in 1960, Mitscherlich formulates quite clearly the goal of psychoanalytically oriented life conduct for modern society:

However one assesses what is inevitably a time-bound theoretical justification of insights which are not bound to time, there can be no doubt about one fact, namely that the genius of Sigmund Freud revealed a new dimension of self-recognition and established a method of critical inquiry into human behavior and desire. What is important today is to continue scientific research and expand the theoretical foundation of his

insights, aiming primarily to act on them in our life conduct.<sup>10</sup>

Both the psychoanalytic and the existence-philosophical concepts of life conduct demand self-reflection on the part of the modern individual with an aim toward leading society out of the modern-day crisis of orientation. Jaspers propagates his idea of a philosophical life conduct in all of his writings and approaches the public proclaiming the challenge of a philosophical reflection of one's inner possibilities.

But the existence-philosophical socialization process as proposed by Jaspers for the academic elite led only a shadowy existence in the next decades and was usually suspected of aiming to support conservative, restorative forces. In contrast, Mitscherlich not only succeeded in joining forces with other university policy-makers to establish psychoanalytic psychosomatics in 1970, a year after Jaspers had died, as a part of the medical training. Furthermore, his large studies *Society without the Father* and *The Inability to Mourn* became an inextricable part of the collective memory of the Federal Republic.<sup>11</sup> The publisher Siegfried Unseld, whose "Suhrkamp culture" shaped the intellectual change of climate in the 1960s to a significant degree, referred to Mitscherlich after his death in 1982 as having been the "mind doctor of our Republic".

Jürgen Habermas deepened the idea of a psychoanalytic way of self-reflection with philosophical means in that time. In his book *Knowledge and Human Interests* the world-famous philosopher proclaimed 1968 a "scientific self-enlightenment" in the name of psychoanalysis and therefore replaced the existential way of self-reflection introduced by Jaspers two decades before.<sup>12</sup> The heyday of his philosophy had passed. Over the next two decades questions of personal life conduct in Germany and the broader Western world were shaped to no small degree by the socio-psychological

<sup>10</sup> Herbert Bareuther, *Forschen und Heilen: Auf dem Weg zu einer psychoanalytischen Hochschule*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1989, p. 295. [Translation by the author.]

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Mitscherlich, *Society Without the Father: A Contribution to Social Psychology*, New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1969. Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior*, New York: Grove Press, 1975.

<sup>12</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

implications of psychoanalysis. Jaspers had lost the struggle which had started in the years after World War II in Heidelberg where the first steps were taken to establish psychoanalysis in the academic world in Germany.

Looking back on both approaches to the human need for meaning in modern times by taking the sociological perspective of Max Weber one can resume the following: Mitscherlich had only intended to use psychoanalysis therapeutically, and not as a worldview, this intention was coupled with an empirical understanding of science which differed completely from that of Jaspers despite a high degree of congruence in terms of the concepts they employed. Mitscherlich violated Weber's normative premises in an empirico-objective fashion. On the other hand, Jaspers' value-neutral interpretation of empirical science did not do justice to Weber and medical reality either. The discrepant interpretations of science and value-freedom are attributable in their intention to answer questions of life conduct for modern individuals in purely psychoanalytic or existence-philosophical terms respectively. Jaspers propagated a kind of science which restricted itself to objective facts in the realm of psychotherapy as well; he wanted biographical aspects of life to be treated in the purely subjective sphere of existential communication between the patient and the physician. With his socio-psychological concept of psychoanalysis, Mitscherlich persistently and self-confidently over-stepped the natural-scientific boundaries of medicine in the direction of individual and collective questions of life conduct.

Beyond the concrete findings at hand, the study of Jaspers' critique of psychoanalysis offers room for inquiry in various directions. In medico-ethical terms, issues are raised which connect with more recent discussions on instrumental and ultimate goals of psychotherapy. And difficult processes which involve weighing the principles of patient autonomy and the responsibility of the physician, in particular in the area of psychiatry and psychotherapy, can be illuminated by the insights on the historical discussion between Jaspers and his opponents. In psychiatric terms, the discussion as to which position should be adopted between the poles of strictly biological and psychodynamic approach to disease is not yet conclusive. In any case, many arguments are prefigured by the historical arguments. An investigation into Jaspers' critique of psychoanalysis invites the reader to follow Max Weber in preserving an awareness of the normativity of every

scientific procedure and clarifying the specific premises which guide the inquiry in question. It would also be desirable if this study should keep alive the Weberian interest in a liberal notion of life conduct for which we are individually answerable and which goes beyond the limits set by Karl Jaspers in his admirable idea of an existence-philosophical way of life conduct.

### **Letter to my Critics – Psychotherapy as Cultural Science**

It already has been an outstanding experience to discuss my book *Life Conduct in Modern Times: Karl Jaspers and Psychoanalysis* with my critics in Vancouver. I am deeply grateful that Helmut Wautischer organized this little symposium in the name of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America in April of 2015 in the context of the 89th Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division.

I

In this letter I will take the chance to resonate with some words to the published papers of some of my critics. Each of the three commentators develops different aspects which deserve more treatment than I have given them in my study. Reading John McCole, Roger Frie, and Ed Mendelowitz brings to my mind that any writer – even in the field of science and philosophy – is only able to enlighten some aspects of a complex topic which needs to be studied and written about in a variety of ways. Roger Frie metaphorically points out the epistemological truth when he asserts that "understanding always occurs through the lens of our own experience." I only can confirm that our intellectual life is strongly influenced by biographical circumstances and cultural traditions we encountered during our formative years. And I am more than happy that my critics added so much to my limited knowledge and intellectual shortcomings from their different angles: They really enlarged and deepened my point of view in many ways.

In his comment, Ed Mendelowitz finds wonderful words by quoting William Arrowsmith on the merits of good criticism, "how at its ultimate limits it may even make the work better by completing it in the act of comprehension." These words express perfectly my reason for being greatly thankful to my critics. I myself often remember the short words written by the German scholar, Max Kommerell, one of the greatest interpreters

of literature in the twentieth century, who observes with great and true modesty, *wir sind auf Ergänzung angewiesen* (we depend on complementing each other).

This letter cannot exercise the ambition to answer all the questions my critics raised in their comments. But they surely will inspire critically my future work on Jaspers as a major figure of German intellectual life in the previous century.

## II

Having this project in mind it is no surprise, therefore, that I begin my letter with an attempt to respond to what John McCole, as an intellectual historian, asks about my study on Jaspers' critique of psychoanalysis, "whether there is narrative emplotment, a storyline" in it. McCole provides sound arguments to read my study as a "tale of missed opportunities" by stressing out the sociological perspective of Max Weber. If Jaspers really would have shared the insights of his teacher, the result would have been a deeper way of judging Freud and his school. But only in the last years of his life Jaspers was forced to open up his eyes for the radical pluralism of Weber. And even then Jaspers did not change his own position that claimed the possibility of a higher standpoint that would enable deep thinking people – in his opinion – to transcend the perspective of modern relativity.

In other words, beyond Weber's sociological diagnosis of his time, Jaspers assumes passionately that there is still a metaphysical horizon opened for every modern man legitimized by Kant's critical idealism. Later, Jaspers strengthened this philosophical perspective by shaping his affinity with Kant's philosophy of freedom and toward the postulate of antinomy of freedom. It will be part of the intellectual biography of Jaspers to describe in detail the decisive role that Kant assumed more and more in his later years. The philosopher wanted to open up this small path of an existentially enlightened life conduct at the university for every learned man and woman. And given the information Jaspers received from Hannah Arendt about the major role psychoanalysis began to play in the intellectual life of America after 1945, he tried to block this development by highlighting what he perceived as the great dangers in the theory and praxis of psychoanalytics.

Roger Frie is more than legitimized to argue against this form of criticism from his actual perspective of psychoanalysis that had seen many changes over the

last decades. And he is absolutely right in saying that many arguments of Jaspers from his early and later years were also raised from within the profession, often with more intellectual sophistication.

Furthermore, I only can agree with Frie's critical comment on Jaspers' tendency to compare psychoanalysis in Europe before 1933 with the political ideology of National Socialism and its political ambition. Jaspers' private return to this argument after 1945 is a shocking fact, showing how deeply he disliked and rejected psychoanalysis in the sense of scientific means for personal life conduct.

But focusing on the question of the scientific value of psychoanalysis and the unbalanced argumentation of Jaspers against it, Frie neglects the core interest of my study. It is my goal to compare Freud and Jaspers as intellectuals whose works provide different theories of life conduct by taking the sociological perspective provided by Max Weber. Reading the controversy through the lenses of Weber one can understand the polemical exaggerations of Jaspers as bound to his deep fear and hostility toward psychoanalysis as different and alternative means of self-reflection. And I neither want nor can answer the question whether one should prefer to take Freud's psychoanalysis or decide for Jaspers' existence-philosophy or a mixture of both or other scientific and philosophical concepts. But according to Weber's idea that science could never be exercised without a personal horizon of values next to philosophical concepts all psychotherapeutic methods have to be seen as scientific avenues of value judgments when they touch or follow final questions related to life conduct.

So the historical controversy can serve itself to illustrate by story and argument the significance of values in our scientific and moral thinking which are always driven by hidden resentments and affinities as Nietzsche pointed out in his *Genealogy of Morals*. And insofar it makes perfect sense that the inquiry in the history of ideas can demonstrate that Nietzsche's book has been most influential for all three thinkers. Freud was one of his earliest readers during his years as a student in Vienna. And Max Weber read Nietzsche before he developed his epistemological standpoint quoting the *Genealogy* already in 1904. Jaspers followed him already in the first edition of the *General Psychopathology* recurring to Nietzsche's *topos* of resentment in some aspects concerning his explanations of psychology of understanding. All three were inspired by Nietzsche's analysis of the unconscious impact our likes and dislikes

do have on our scientific and philosophical viewpoints.

My study tries to keep on this track by analyzing the deeper personal and philosophical drives which turn Jaspers' criticism of psychoanalysis into a polemical one. And in my book one can find between the lines and explicitly as well that my personal value judgments show a great affinity toward Weber's idea of pluralism. I also do think that there is no possibility for us as human beings to associate ourselves to any absolute position in a definite way. And I am convinced that what we have to encounter is a radical pluralism which is situated right in the center of each person at least as a possibility for the conflicts between struggling positions taking place right in our hearts. And the question whether we can solve them or not will remain open and by no means we can expect to find a general agreement about such questions that can claim to be of final character.

Nonetheless, I do share with Jaspers the anthropological tendency that Kant called the "metaphysical need." Even Max Weber has to be understood as a thinker who was bound to a certain limit by this question, as it was raised systematically around 1800 in impressive monuments of thought by the German idealistic movement. His definition of a modern intellectual as a man with the "inner need to experience the cosmos as meaningful whole" is indebted to this tradition. And his apology of modern pluralism gains dramatic tension that is already palpable in the works of Nietzsche, whose sharp criticism of the Platonic and Jewish-Christian tradition simply emphasises how deeply he is still rooted exactly in such metaphysical needs.

In this situation of total disenchantment of meaningful worldviews there are two main ways the modern individual can try to avoid this very reality. On the one side we can build up general monuments of a new culture of meaning, some "objective" world of science, as Weber has often pointed out. On the other side we can try to encounter the great loss of meaning in the crisis of modernity by withdrawing from public life and remain in a private realm to develop purely subjective cultures of meaningful life. Psychoanalysis and its hermeneutical attempts to provide a way for gaining personal meaning has to be seen in this context. For Jaspers it became increasingly competitive with the existence-philosophical approach. It is precisely this narrative that was a great help for me in reconstructing and understanding the polemical discussions Jaspers led after 1945 with Viktor von Weizsäcker and Alexander

Mitscherlich, as the first postwar representatives of psychoanalysis at German universities.

It occurs to me that it is not by chance when Ed Mendelowitz focusses in his review of my book on the existential core of Jaspers' criticism, since he studied with Rollo May and laid therefore an existential ground to his idea of psychotherapy. By introducing Bob Dylan and Franz Kafka as secularized Jewish-Christian thinkers into his considerations, Mendelowitz reaches out astonishingly far beyond more general humanistic approaches quoting provoking statements of these crucial intellectuals of the last century. Dylan's self-ironical interview in which he talks about building up a party which is limited to the person of its founder succinctly demonstrates American transformation from its European heritage of metaphysical thinking. William James could not have spoken more clearly about his conviction of a "personal religion" which does not depend on any dogmatic or institutional circumstances. Following this tradition of radical individualism all final questions of life cannot be answered by any psychotherapeutic master or school. The person has to make up his or her mind at last, all by oneself. All a physician could do is trying to help in a Socratic way by engaging in what Jaspers called "existential communication" when questions of value and meaning touch psychological life. Mendelowitz points to the center of Jaspers' concern who wanted a "self-reflection free of compulsion." In fact this condition is a philosophical one and can only convince those who have a strong feeling for personal freedom and for the impossibility of a common solution in the field of ultimate meaning. Whenever people converse with each other at such horizon, when the common need for a meaningful life is experienced, there begins what Jaspers called existential communication and what might connect individuals to a "hidden church" of those who feel connected in this open way of raising ultimate questions, not knowing the answer but sharing the deep questions. Mendelowitz hints at this fact at the end of the interview with Bob Dylan when the musician answers the question whether he would be able to recognize those who are also members of that party without knowing it: "You can recognize them when you see them."

There are no dogmatic or rational or institutional criteria which could help to foster such insight. Here, Mendelowitz points at Jaspers' postulate of "ciphers of transcendence" and a conversation of Franz Kafka to illustrate the challenge of such a deeper truth of



life which cannot be shared directly. The secular Jew who was one of the greatest writers of the last century was very well acquainted with the labyrinths of our institutional and bureaucratic systems in our societies like the state, the university and the churches which pretend to be an authority which has vanished already as a matter of fact. And Kafka was in search of a higher meaning that could help answering the question whether a deeper truth will always be closed to us: "The fact, to which we give different names, and which we try to apprehend by various processes of thought, pervades our veins, our nerves, our senses. It is within us. For that reason perhaps it's invisible. What we can really grasp is the mystery, the darkness."

I am sure that Jaspers would have agreed with this sentence. He felt very deeply connected to the Jewish religious tradition his wife Gertrud had been raised in. And due to his teacher Max Weber, he was one of the philosophers who knew quite early in the last century that there is no need to cut off our religious questions after having recognized that all forms of institutionally organized beliefs had lost their convincing power at least for the intellectuals in the disenchanting world. Nowadays the topos of secularization is well accepted again and leading intellectuals analyze and search for modern ways of expressing our metaphysical needs. Ed Mendelowitz takes Jaspers seriously and offers us with Dylan and Kafka two wonderful members of that hidden party or church.

It is my strong conviction that we all who have been well-educated and well-trained in the world of rational sciences will only be able to cultivate our deeper questions in a language which is nurtured by arts and letters. And all three critics illustrate by their affinities to thinkers like Georg Simmel, Sigmund Freud, Ludwig Binswanger, Franz Kafka, or Bob Dylan how greatly and deeply they are at home in the world of Western culture.

Besides all struggles the party of those who do believe that there is more than the world of pure facts should come together and should try to talk to those who seem to have forgotten what can be known of mankind besides the empirical facts. Each human depends on nature and culture. And by all means, there is certainly an impact from influences humans go through in formative years. Even a discussion on Karl Jaspers can help to discern the impact on our intellectual development throughout the years at different universities under the supervision of different teachers.

Reflecting upon such worlds in a historical study

of letters, articles, and books a person left behind, in my opinion, is a good preparation for human tolerance. By doing so, the researcher and later the reader of a narrative can understand why and how other men and women give valuable significance to their lives. Comparative studies of people who took intellectually different ways under similar circumstances are even more enlightening for recognizing the however limited meaning of objective influences and subjective judgments within one's personal development. Jaspers and Freud wanted to postulate a certain psychological and philosophical way of living for coping with the limits of life with such eagerness that did not allow recognizing and respecting the attempt of the other. Freud did not take more than a short notice of Jaspers while the philosopher of existence fought more and more against the world of psychoanalysis as a theory of life conduct. In our cultural historical approaches, to them we have the chance to gain a certain overview and to encounter the challenge of understanding. At last we will have to face an open horizon of questions on different intellectual levels.

We might come back to the insight that Max Weber and William James already had: Every single one of us needs a form of personal religion which goes beyond the limits of science. Ed Mendelowitz has stressed out this truth in an essayistic way that combines arguments with art. John McCole followed them strongly in the works of Georg Simmel. And Roger Frie did so by bringing the works of Ludwig Binswanger to our attention. I am happy that my attempt of demonstrating the role Jaspers has played in introducing philosophical and cultural aspects to the world of psychiatry has found such resonance. All three approaches demonstrate in different ways how we all join one party of psychiatry and psychotherapy as cultural science.

### III

The cultivation of the subjective aspects of psychopathology does not mean that one has to leave the grounds of possible objectivity. It simply reveals a certain sensibility and awareness that is required to understand a variety of interpretations even when it is claimed that there is nothing more than biological evidence to life. We have good reasons to react polemically toward such a poor position which Jaspers already encountered a hundred years ago calling it a "brain-myth." At the same time, he was also very clear that on the other side there is a seductive danger of

speculative subjectivity. And therefore he spoke of the "psycho-myth" as a parallel challenge for all serious cultural sciences.

Nowadays we have to take care of a new humanistic approach in psychotherapy which goes beyond evidence-based limits by using clear thoughts and terms and by connecting our thinking to the great tradition of Western knowledge provided by the arts and letters. Creating a culture of enlightened criticism can certainly benefit from a profound German example, the clear prose of Immanuel Kant. He knew that our scientific knowledge of man is limited and that metaphysical needs create in each of us certain value judgments. This anthropological fact has to be respected by scientists. And whenever they approach a human being in the social and psychiatric sciences this cannot be done in quantitative ways alone. Humans are in need of interpretation since for the most part, we will not agree with one another. Jaspers and Freud

are good examples for such challenge. We will not go wrong as long as we do keep the questions open and do not postulate final solutions may it be in the name of empirical or speculative approaches to man. Recurring to the great American tradition of William James and his psychology of religious experiences which was illuminating for Weber and Jaspers, I would like to close my letter with this claim: The world of cultural sciences to which psychiatry and psychotherapy belong has to be grounded in a well-minded skepticism that is open to encounter a variety of concepts inclusive of all forms of individual beliefs and worldviews. How else could we reach the evolutionary level of personal morality men have envisioned by struggling with each other since Adam and Eve left paradise? As Kant claimed, man is culturally free even when he is bound to natural causes. We do live in the horizon of this "antinomy of freedom."