THE PHILOSOPHY OF KARL JASPERS

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Against the backdrop of the dark world of decadence, striving forward guided by their longing for God as a light, are two contemporary German philosophers we call Heidegger and Jaspers. The influence Heidegger received from Jaspers, and that which Jaspers received from Heidegger, are both undeniable facts. In the way they both received and imparted [their insights] concerning human existence, we might well emphasize that the distinct character of both their philosophies is set against the same backdrop of the modern world.

Having come into contact with the contemplative atmosphere inspired by these two philosophers, I have come to understand painfully how deeply contemporary life has sunk into the depths of decadence, how far it is from the light, and how enclosed it is in heavy shadows. One [philosopher seeks guiding principles] from the analysis of ordinary, given life; the other, from the elucidation of earnest existence. However, aren't both simply facets of human existence? And is it our fate, the affliction (思ひ病ふもの omoiwazurau mono - lit. "thing thought-sickened by") of modern times, that we have no choice but to belong to one or the other? This seems to be the question posed to us.

Hannah Arendt-kun is a student of Heidegger, and is a woman who received her doctorate under Jaspers, having done work concerning Augustine's "Concept of Love." She is wise, lives fully in the modern age, and is one of those paradoxical people who seems the type never to forget seriousness. Translating this person's writing, I wanted to try and project the figures of Heidegger and Jaspers onto contemporary Japan. However, contemporary Japan probably does not yet need Heidegger and Jaspers. But I also feel that the time they are needed seems likely to come before long.

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"Psychology of Worldviews" (「世界親の心理學」- Sekai[kan] no Shinrigaku; Psychologie der Weltanschauung): This is Jaspers' major work, but he no longer maintains the standpoint [found] within this book. Regarding two or three points from this book, I have extracted and corrected them in my own work.

"Types of Worldviews" (「世界觀の型」- Sekaikan no Kata; Typen der Weltanschauung): Or, as mentioned next, also called "shells" (殻 - kaku). A 'type' refers to naming a specific, defined understanding of the world and life, such as a particular worldview, a certain philosophical '-ism', or a specific standpoint. The 'absolutization of a type' refers to taking one such standpoint and making it the sole, absolute one.

"Elucidation of Existenz" (「人間的存在の開明」- Ningenteki Sonzai no Kaimei; Existenzerhellung): For this term Existenz, Jaspers uses the word Dasein [in contrast]. Existenz refers to the fundamental form of the human being, which, according to Jaspers, is the essential human existence actualized in life's fateful, serious situations. In contrast, Dasein refers to everyday, ordinary life – the mundane state of getting up, working, eating, sleeping, arguing, laughing, and so on. Heidegger calls this 'Man' ('the they-self'). This distinction, in Jaspers, carries a strong religious coloring, deriving partly from Kierkegaard. This elucidation of Existenz, according to Jaspers, occurs within 'communication' (交際 - kōsai). 'Communication' means oneself and others living together, mutually revealing their respective ultimate seriousness. That is, whether it be friendship, love, or even reading what predecessors have left behind (though one-sided), it refers, in short, to the relationship between individual and ultimate existences.

Within this relationship, human existence confronts its essential, destined nature and clearly sees itself before itself. This 'elucidation of Existenz', in other words, is the act of grasping truth within 'communication'. Therefore, the 'truth' in this case differs from the ordinary kind.

"The Paradoxical Method" (「矛盾の方法」- Mujun no Hōhō; Die paradoxe Methode): The meaning of life always lies in striving to realize wholeness. However, this must first be brought into being. This becoming consists in ceaseless self-overcoming. (Humans are free in creating wholeness, yet moment by moment, they exist without wholeness.) Only through the standpoint that gazes upon this paradox, through the person living within it, is life truly revealed. This reality is what Jaspers calls Echtheit (Authenticity).

"Correctness" (「正當性」- Seitōsei; Richtigkeit): Simply put, this refers to the generally valid character possessed by things like mathematical axioms or logical laws. It is what is ordinarily translated as 'truth' (眞理性 - shinrisei). The 'truth' Jaspers speaks of is subjective and religious. This word (Richtigkeit) arose to make this distinction.

"Communicability" (「言ひ傳へることの可能性」- Iitsutaeru koto no Kanōsei; Mitteilbarkeit): The original word just means 'to convey' or 'to communicate'. It means one meaning being received as another meaning. It is one's own will being understood by another.

"Jaspers and Husserl's Phenomenology" (「ヤスパースとフッセルの現象學」- Yasupāsu to Fusseru no Genshōgaku): Jaspers considers Husserl's phenomenology to be speculative metaphysics, capable at most of handling the correctness of mathematics and logic, and thus meaningless for true philosophy. This stems from his understanding of the concept of religious truth. While showing particular affinity for Heidegger's phenomenology, as Arendt-kun points out, there is a significant difference in their respective grasp of standpoints. I hope to have the opportunity to present on this later. As Jaspers often says, Heidegger's philosophy is reaching an impasse, and it will likely need to develop into a philosophy of existence (存在哲學 - sonzai tetsugaku); otherwise, it will be lost.

"Subject-Object Split" (「主観客観の分隔」- Shukan Kyakkan no Bunkaku; Subjekt-Objekt-Spaltung): Things designated as human cognition take the opposition between this subject and object as their fundamental condition. Jaspers' standpoint in handling the types of worldviews accepts this cognitive condition as it is, without analyzing it, and makes it the object of research.
"Limit Situation" (「極限情態」- Kyokugen Jōtai; Grenzsituation): I rephrase this to mean encountering the fateful, serious situations of life. These do not occur continuously. Examples include situations like death, conflict/struggle (闘争 - tōsō), chance/accident (偶然事 - gūzenji), and guilt/burden (負擔 - futan). It could be said that in these situations, humans reveal their true nature. It is when humans become most earnest and serious. The common characteristic of all these limit situations is suffering (苦惱 - kunō). And these situations most strongly and clearly reveal the contradictory nature of life. That is, they show the form of the relationship between the limited and the unlimited.

"Decision" (「決定」- Kettei; Entscheidung): This is the determination of one's standpoint – ideological, behavioral, or personal. It's not something where either option is fine, or where it doesn't matter how it goes. It refers to the free judgment that arises when one cannot maintain one's ongoing existence without deciding somehow, even though it feels impossible. It is not based on objective laws. It is an internal, conscientious decision.

"Everydayness" (「日常生活性或日常性」- Nichijō Seikatsusei aruiwa Nichijōsei; Alltäglichkeit): The state of life of the ordinary, common person in the world.

"Transcendent Death" (「超越的死」- Chōetsuteki Shi; Der transzendente Tod): One of the phenomena that brought Husserl's constitutive phenomenology to a standstill was this phenomenon of death. In conscious phenomenology, death is transcendent and lies outside description, analysis, and constitution. It was Heidegger who gave death a phenomenological-existential status. Death shows the temporality of human existence, and in the process belonging to the past, the human being relates to their own nothingness (無 - mu). Nothingness is one temporal form of the self, and by being conscious of it, the human being arrives at the self, discovers the self. That is, life takes death as its center, defining the scope of the problem and its resolution. For Jaspers, however, death is transcendent; life can be experienced up to death, but death itself cannot be experienced. That is, it exists only as a limit situation. I will leave a more rigorous consideration for a later date.

"The Moment" (「刹那」- Setsuna; Augenblick): 'Moment' refers to the time when the limit situation reveals itself. Kierkegaard says the following on the first page of his work "The Moment" (Øieblikket): "Why should I act in the moment? I want to act momentarily because if I do it now, I will regret it eternally, etc." Although he is speaking in a different sense [than Jaspers], the quality is similar.

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Psychology and worldview existed separately, and the modes of research in individual psychology and worldview studies belonged to mutually opposing or conflicting fields – this was a well-known fact for anyone familiar with the state of German scholarship in the 19th century. The mutual distance between them seemed already insurmountable.

Furthermore, as applied psychology and experimental psychology increasingly focused their work on experimental matters, the gap between the two seemed to grow ever wider.

It was our Karl Jaspers who attempted to unify and give concrete form to these two originally distant and truly opposing directions from a new, third standpoint. He is indeed in the process of accomplishing this great task. And this fact, of course, did not arise by chance. His one starting point is psychiatry, and in this domain, he possesses abundant insight regarding its methods and the purpose of its work. His other starting point is philosophical insight. That is, the insight that not only pathological types of humans, but also all ordinary types of humans in everyday life, live in a single world from which everything derives its light and harmony – a unitary world – a world which, perhaps, we cannot [fully] comprehend.

The psychological methods spanning the 19th to 20th centuries were truly narrow, content only with collecting results based on test reactions and, based on these, reducing all essential aspects of human nature to something negative. For example, [consider approaches] like those in Weber-Fechner's equations of sensation.

This negative principle, incapable of being expressed in words, which sought to ascertain the essential nature of the sick through methods of reaction gathered from originally ordinary people, was naturally unable to lay a hand on the special nature of sick people incomprehensible to us ordinary humans. In other words, applying the standard of others—that is, the standard of ordinary humans—to people in extraordinary states did not work. Conversely, it was natural to investigate whether these people in extraordinary states possess their own independent normality, that is, their own independence, or in other words, whether they possess their own world.

A worldview in this sense is something entirely separate from a worldview in the sense of a result derived from a certain philosophy. And this new meaning is not a post-philosophical worldview but a pre-philosophical one. Here, we arrive at the problem of the "Psychology of Worldviews" (Psychologie der Weltanschauung). In this book, the philosophically relevant question can first be expressed by the following query: To what extent is it the task of philosophy to define the infinitely possible types of worldviews? (These worldviews must first be extracted from history, insofar as they are interpreted not just psychologically but philosophically.)

To this question, Jaspers would answer as follows: The original result stemming from defining a single type is, initially, of a negative character. That is, through the relativization of all types, it prevents the absolutization of any one type, adapting [this understanding] even to us ordinary humans. However, Jaspers would not be satisfied merely with presenting this negative philosophical intention. In reality, the mere enumeration of various types of worldviews, characteristic of historicism's philosophical power, holds no meaning whatsoever.

Rather, the original positive philosophical intention is to use the diversity of understandable worldviews as a foundation to acquire guideposts for what Jaspers calls the elucidation of Existenz (Existenzerhellung), that is, for self-interpretation. Philosophy is "elucidation of Existence" itself; the psychology of worldviews, in contrast, deals only with the various types of worlds and self-observation where some form of "self-elucidation" is realized. The "elucidation of Existence," which deliberately abandons any definable structure that has already manifested a form of absolutization, is the problem of philosophy in Jaspers' sense. Here, he distinguishes "human Existence" (Existenz) from both the epistemological, general 'I' and the psychological self as a complex of innate and characterological traits. Both the constitutive Ego-in-general of all conscious acts and the psychological self can be treated as objects of research under any circumstances. One because of its expressible generality, the other solely because it serves as ad-hoc psychological material. However, the possibilities of understanding these two types of human existence pass right by the originally, concretely experienceable human Existenz. These two psychological and epistemological standpoints either place the self outside the world or reduce it to something within the world. Thus, Jaspers distinguishes his own concept of the self from the concept of the self in the classical style of late 19th-century philosophy, which developed understanding the self as a contingent counterpart to the world, and similarly, from the concept of the self in naturalistic philosophy, which is content to subsume the human being, as a whole, as a lump within the physical world, into a world built upon positive science. (We will speak positively about Jaspers' concept of the world below.) In contrast to these philosophical and positivistic selves, human Existenz (a term originating with Kierkegaard) is, in essence, not something that should ever be objectively represented. Nor is it something to be theoretically constructed; rather, it is something to be experienced solely in the course of life, in utterly fateful situations. We shall speak more about these situations later.

Initially, philosophy attempted to elucidate and analyze what is experienced in the process of this life and tried to create something general. The difficult problem arising here is that one must express in words something that, due to its constitutive elements, is inherently hard to articulate. Once these matters are decided upon and enter into determined assertions as results, they are already distorted [lit. falsified]. Despite this necessary distortion, what has been experienced becomes clear to the person only through "self-elucidation." The method of this philosophy, which has no purpose other than "self-elucidation," i.e., "elucidation of Existence," can generally be called the "paradoxical method" (Die paradoxe Methode). This philosophy attempts to explain the facts at hand by means of contradictory statements, in order to avoid resting in any decisive assertion. This "paradoxical method," originating from Kierkegaard, fundamentally returns to the insight of the most ancient Plato that all truth appears only in dialogue – an insight that Hegel later made the principle of philosophy in his dialectic.

That Hegel absolutized this dialectic means he believed that, through this method, he could once again arrive at universally valid results established through synthesis, namely, eternal truths determined as the process itself.

However, the original "paradoxical method" is entirely contrary to such eternal truths. The truth understood by this method is never something arbitrarily "expressible" (aussagbar) nor arbitrarily "communicable" (mitteilbar) to others. That is, it is not mere "correctness" (Richtigkeit) like the truths of mathematics, physics, or individual sciences, as Jaspers would say.

Truth, according to Jaspers, should only be realized in the course of life. However, this is possible only insofar as this life possesses what is called existential authenticity (Die existenzielle Echtheit). But what should be noted here is that there is no standard rule for attitudes towards this possible truth and untruth of life itself, nor is there any general objective critique. Therefore, philosophy is not a science of eternal truths, nor, as Jaspers would say, is it an arsenal of valid results considered correct at best by logic, an individual science. Philosophy exists only in the process of philosophizing. It is essential to speak about any particular monadic [i.e., individual, unique] 'something,' even if that is already a distortion.

"Self-elucidation" is truly realized only in communication (Kommunikation) between oneself and others. In this communication, truth exists in the process of "being communicated" (Mitteilung).

What separates philosophy from the individual sciences is that it essentially aims at the totality of life and can always grasp the whole from individual starting points. Wherever philosophy begins, the whole is always considered and included there. Jaspers distinguishes this constant orientation towards the whole from the orientation of the new phenomenology, as named by Husserl. Regarding Heidegger's phenomenology, we will speak later; Jaspers rejects [Husserl's] phenomenology as meaningless for any true philosophy because it aims at descriptive individual accounts. Any phenomenological analysis can recognize the "correctness" (Richtigkeit) of things, but this "correctness" has no bearing on or relevance to human Existenz itself. Philosophy, therefore, according to Jaspers, is not any kind of science, and learning within philosophy is impossible in the original sense. However, one can receive stimulus for one's own philosophizing from the philosophy of existing great philosophers. This is why Jaspers occupies a middle ground between prophetic philosophy and philosophy that approaches the individual sciences in the form of logical analysis. Thus, Jaspers has eliminated the alternatives [between these two] that were thoroughly researched before him. Jaspers' standpoint is close to the prophetic philosophy like Nietzsche's in its selection of philosophical material based on "essentiality" (Wesentlichkeit), and aligns with scientific philosophy in its deliberate refusal to determine any essential value or to persuade other philosophies based on such value. The origin of this standpoint owes much to the philosophical environment Jaspers was part of.

Without Max Weber, his positivistic, resigned standpoint, as expressed in the preface to the "Psychology of Worldviews," cannot be understood. In Jaspers' memorial lecture on Max Weber, the relationship between the two can also be clearly seen. That is, the problem of the actual worldview remains solely within the facts of life, and answers to questions like 'how should one live?' should not be sought in his writings, as he himself explicitly states in that preface.

Now, let us strive to understand him mainly using his major work to date, the "Psychology of Worldviews," as a platform. Besides this book, there are his early psychiatric studies, psychological and psychopathological studies of Strindberg and Van Gogh, and later university lectures, but we will not touch upon these.

This "Psychology of Worldviews" consists of four main parts. The first part comprises general considerations, which I already tiresomely explained at the beginning of this text. The next two parts discuss Jaspers' philosophy, as indicated by their titles: "Attitudes and World-Images" (Einstellung und Weltbild).
As this correlative title suggests, Jaspers' philosophy is characterized by the determination or fixing of the "subject-object split" (Subjekt-Objekt-Spaltung), or in Jaspers' words, there is a 'split' (Spaltung) between this subject and object. This assertion has the following meaning as a methodological principle for research: namely, corresponding to every subjective attitude, there is its objective correlate, a world-image (Weltbild). This image itself is nothing more than an empty depiction when independent, but it can be correctly understood from the living power of the attitude. And the sources for studying these many attitudes are given to us as world-images within philosophy, art, poetry, religion, and myth. Furthermore, according to Jaspers, there are various forms of this subject-object split, and the unified critique regarding world-images involves determining to which fixed type of subject-object split they belong. Through this, a principle for selecting material to be adopted, beyond the methodological principle, was obtained.

For example, the world-image of the speculative thinker (思辨家 - shibenka) differs from that of the mystic (神秘家 - shinpika). That is, the speculative thinker perceives their object and the world at a viewing distance (Sichtdistanz), whereas the mystic attempts to become one with the object (called mystical union), paralyzing the split between subject and object. For this mystical standpoint, the name 'world-image' is questionable, as this standpoint originally disregards the model of the speculative standpoint.

The method of inquiry corresponding to each standpoint, not separated but according to time and circumstance, is as follows: namely, one tries to investigate not the attitude each person holds in their readily available, normal state, but rather what attitude they take when that standpoint encounters certain dangerous situations, for example, death, struggle, chance, guilt, etc.

Jaspers names these situations Limit Situations (Grenzsituationen). And why are they called limit situations? Because life must fundamentally confront these limits, and once life is within these limit situations, it confronts the limits inherent to life itself. In other words, it confronts the limits of life's immanent rationality and comprehensibility.

In these limits, life is compelled to make a rational decision regarding itself. This decision serves to determine what type of life attitude, i.e., standpoint, the person belongs to. For example, how does a person face death? How do they deal with chance occurrences? Such things indicate what type of worldview they belong to. Therefore, this starting point, as seen in the "Psychology of Worldviews," should be evaluated today, for Jaspers, only as preparation. Nowadays, Jaspers uses these limit situations as the starting point for describing the elucidation of life (Lebenserhellung). That is, limit situations like death or guilt can no longer be understood through a life understood theoretically and immanently; they have now become the skylights through which the "Transcendence" (Transzendenz) of life breaks into the "immanence" (Immanenz) of this world where we live.

Life in pure immanence, that is, life in its everydayness (Alltäglichkeit), is a secondary object for philosophy and is not recognized as the true object. This is because the immanent life in question here cannot exist without transcendent death. His transcendent element is not something constantly present in life but something that breaks into life from time to time. Therefore, the everyday continuity of life descends into commonplace existence. It is here that the "eminent moment" (Augenblick), which has acquired his special epistemological meaning, reveals itself. Saying 'epistemological' here means that the demand for universality in cognition, as required until now in the Kantian sense—that is, the demand that

it should always be realizable by anyone—is rejected as improper, and what was previously only an unsystematic, subjective role as an exception has now been validated as a methodological standpoint.
The question of how someone confronts their own limit situation translates positively into asking where that person's foothold (Halt) lies. Posing this positive question plays a crucial role in Jaspers' writings.

Jaspers distinguishes several kinds of possibilities for this "foothold." These footholds are broadly divided into "footholds within the limited" and "footholds within the infinite." For Jaspers, this "foothold within the limited" is always the absolutization of a relative point of settlement. It is no accident that he gives the name "shell" (Gehäuse) to this mistaken absolutization. It is undoubtedly a matter of considering a snail's shell as a foundation. His snail immediately withdraws into its shell when life's dangers approach. Similarly, the shells humans create grow together with the human's own life, just as the snail's shell grows with its body. And within this shell, the possibility of seeing the world without a roof, without compartments, without mistaken organization, just as it is, while being oppressed by it, is almost fundamentally lost.

As the primary type of this shell, Jaspers cites the closed systems of philosophy. The fact that Jaspers' philosophy is anti-systemic can be fully understood through this fundamentally negative evaluation term "shell." It is no wonder that Jaspers counts not only philosophical but also political, religious, and artistic forms among these "shells." This is because, for him, not only the thematic articulation of worldviews expressed in words but also each and every aspect of the entire cultural life is regarded as material for [understanding] worldviews.

What deserves special mention in Jaspers' philosophy regarding each of these standpoints is that, as shown initially in the "Psychology of Worldviews," he fundamentally and positively evaluates the "foothold within the infinite," which is realized within the eternal process.

In this standpoint, clinging to each absolutized standpoint is not the issue; rather, what matters is the conscious affirmation of the "dynamic," as supported already in Hegel's dialectic.

Describing the entirety of Jaspers' philosophy is not our purpose. However, we must be content with having been able to determine considerably the position of his philosophy among all philosophies—that is, Jaspers' philosophical position amidst philosophies of life like Simmel's and Bergson's, the abandonment of systems stemming from relativizing historicism (Nietzsche, Kierkegaard), and further, characterology, biology, and psychoanalysis. While in his typology (Typenlehre), each type is straightforwardly presented as a direct given, so to speak, in Jaspers, it is given as a possibility through personal, fateful decision. We must elaborate further on this point.

The modern philosophy closest to Jaspers' is Heidegger's. That is, Heidegger paid special attention to the life situations Jaspers named limit situations and attempted an analysis of Existenz (Existenzanalyse). However, there is, of course, a fundamental difference between them. Namely, while Heidegger starts from the everydayness (Alltäglichkeit), the normality (Normalität) of life, and tries to determine the precipice (Abgrund, abyss/cliff) of life, Jaspers insists that this domain of everydayness is originally meaningless for philosophy. For Heidegger, the assertion of everydayness simultaneously implies the immanence and this-sidedness (Diesseitigkeit) of life. Therefore, life not only does not need to be explained solely from Jaspers' limit situations but, conversely, limit situations—for example, death—are understood as the death of life from this everyday life.

That Jaspers does not share this assertion of Heidegger's is not only for systematic and philosophical reasons but also for personal ones. Namely, Jaspers has psychopathology as the starting point of his

thought. That is, the astonishment at the diversity of human life possibilities based on psychopathological experience is one of the reasons. Even now, this starting point in psychopathology remains Jaspers' philosophical validation. At any rate, it is impossible to fully determine, as of today, how important his inquiry concerning human Existenz is for philosophical anthropology. This determination will likely become clear through Jaspers' unpublished Metaphysics. In any case, positioned between the purely natural scientific anthropology of the Anglo-Saxon countries and, on the other hand, non-scientific religious anthropology, the birth of a third type that attempts anew to understand the human being beyond the Bible and craniometry should be greatly celebrated.

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