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KARL JASPERS

(1883-1969)

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Karl Jaspers lived in an age that witnessed far-reaching political changes. He grew up in the sheltered environment of a prosperous family with a democratic, liberal and conservative bent. His objections to the authoritarian, militaristic State and a society with a caste structure, which typified the German empire, are rooted in that background.

Jaspers interpreted the outbreak of the First World War as a great fault line in the Western tradition. He believed that the Weimar Republic was threatened: politically by communism and fascism; socially by the mass consumption which was made possible by technology and machinery; and spiritually by the biased statements on man embodied in Marxism, psycho-analysis and racial theory.

His life and work were at risk during the Hitler dictatorship. He was compulsorily retired in 1937. Publication of his works was banned in 1938. The entry of the American troops into Heidelberg on 1 April 1945 saved him and his Jewish wife from deportation to a concentration camp. Hope and concern mingled in his critical appraisal of the reconstruction and political process in the new Federal Republic of Germany. When he moved to Basle in Switzerland in 1948, he found a new home in a traditional European centre of liberty.

No understanding of Jasper's philosophy is possible without recognition of the fact that his route to philosophy led through science.

After graduating as a doctor of medicine in 1908, Jaspers worked as a volunteer assistant in the Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic until 1915. In contact with his patients, in his critical reading of medical literature and in his extensive research into the complex reality of patients suffering from psychological disorders, he gradually acquired a realization which was destined to have far-reaching consequences, namely that known facts and explanatory theories do not reside on the same plane since they remain dependent on the way in which the question is posed and on assumptions and methods which give access to only one particular segment of reality.

The 'General Psychopathology', with which Jaspers graduated in psychology in 1913, points to the various routes to an understanding of certain aspects of the ultimately impenetrable reality of the mentally ill patient. The perception of individual circumstances, research into the relationships between them and understanding of the corresponding totality, are mutually conditioning and complementary factors. Explanation and understanding are essential methods that, in their manifold facets, reflect the multi-dimensionality of man. Only a multiplicity of theories can do justice to the totality of man. As concrete research and critical reflection progress, so the possibilities and limits of science become apparent; the furtherance of such knowledge was experienced by Jaspers as an ongoing and vital task to which he remained dedicated throughout his life. However, it was only at the age of 40 that he took up philosophy as his life's work and as a means of approaching those questions to which science can provide no suitable answer.

Jaspers gives a particularly impressive analysis of the relationship between science and philosophy in the third edition of 'The Idea of the University' in 1961 (see Jaspers, 1923). To bring out the essence of science, he highlights three basic principles: (a) scientific knowledge is methodical knowledge, i.e. we know by what means it was arrived at and in what sense and within

what limits it holds good; it is the exact opposite of unmethodical opinions and unquestioning belief; (b) scientific knowledge is absolutely certain, i.e. it stands the test of any reasoning; it must be distinguished from the convictions by which man may live and be prepared to risk his life; (b) scientific knowledge has general validity, i.e. it is recognized without limitation by everyone who understands it; it stands in contrast to any other form of knowledge in which man may place unlimited faith.

Jaspers goes on to investigate the limits of science by pointing out that: '*Objective* scientific knowledge is not synonymous with *existential* knowledge' (1923: 1961, p. 45). It is concerned with the particular and not with the general. 'Scientific knowledge cannot *set goals* for life' (p. 45). It proclaims no valid values. 'Science is also unable to give any answer to the question as to its *own meaning*' (p. 45). Its motives cannot be scientifically proven.

Finally, Jaspers comments on the relationship between science and philosophy which do not coincide but 'differ by nature in their origins, methods and understanding of truth' (p. 59); nevertheless they are interrelated.

Science rejects any possible confusion with philosophy but still concedes the existence of the former's 'complete freedom in its own sphere' (p. 60) and adopts a critical approach to unfounded assertions and purported proofs. 'The substantive sciences are, as it were, a concrete form of philosophy' (p. 60) if ideas help to make them transparent to 'that which is rationally unknowable' at their extreme boundaries.

Philosophy establishes a relationship with science when it recognizes the inescapable nature of the latter and binds itself to science in an infinite desire to know what really exists and is necessarily knowable. 'It perceives preservation of the scientific way of thinking as a precondition for human dignity' (p. 61).

When we consider Jaspers' philosophical work in its entirety, the phases and forms of his thinking are seen to constitute a differentiated whole, fraught with inherent tensions.

His particular philosophy acquired a sustained impetus from his experience of the fact that general psychopathology, as a science of the mentally ill, is capable only of recognizing the phenomena of reality. That idea is taken up again in his 'Psychology of Conceptions of the World' (1919) and reinforced when—in his clarification of world views, world images and mental types—the purely psychological viewpoint comes into conflict, in certain extreme situations (suffering, combat, guilt, death, chance), with the antinomic structure of a world which is not closed upon itself.

The notion that man not only exists but wishes to be himself was developed by Jaspers in 1932 in his three-volume 'Philosophy' which is structured as follows: firstly, a worldly orientation as research into objective reality; secondly, the explanation of existence as an appeal for the individual to be himself; thirdly, metaphysics in relation to the transcendental. Overriding priority is attributed by Jaspers to man as one possible form of existence which cannot be explained through concepts derived from research, but can only be elucidated through philosophical 'signs'. Only indirect attention is drawn to the selfness of man which is never in itself a subject, but tends rather to be revealed and become reality in 'communication' with others; a selfness which assumes its 'historical' shape and preserves 'freedom' through unconditional resolve, is aroused in 'extreme situations', acquires certainty in 'unconditional actions' and is fulfilled as an 'absolute consciousness'. However, existence is not in itself everything but remains related to the 'transcendental' which speaks in 'ciphers.'

Jaspers set a new emphasis in his 1935 lectures on 'Reason and Existence' when the question of 'being' was transformed into the question of the 'all-embracing', which he describes as that which is never itself visible as a horizon but from which all new horizons tend to emerge. This 'all-embracing' is structured in the process of reflection, firstly, as 'being' itself which is everything in which and through which we have our existence and which Jaspers defines as the 'world and the transcendental' and, secondly, as the 'being' which we ourselves are and in which we experience

every particular form of existence. Jaspers represents the 'all-embracing' as 'being', pure consciousness, spirit and possible existence.

One point is of particular importance for the purpose of this study: Jaspers now establishes an inextricable link between existence and reason as the 'bond between all the manifestations of the all-embracing'. 'Reason provides the only explanation of existence; reason only acquires content through existence' (1935, p. 48).

Jaspers went on to develop this rich network of relationships in his most comprehensive work entitled 'On Truth' (1947).

A surprising new perspective of Jaspers' philosophy was opened up when the philosopher of existence and reason turned his attention to the world in his later works after 1957, at the same time as he conceived a world history of philosophy in which India, China and the Near East are investigated, alongside the West, as original routes of philosophical thinking and their significance revealed. The world as the space in which existence and reason move now acquires an inescapable importance. Democracy, peace and the just world order are the problems around which Jaspers' philosophy revolves.

To acquire a perception of the unique nature of Jaspers' philosophy, the essential link which he establishes between science, existence, reason and the world must be recognized. Any isolated consideration of one of these factors seen as an absolute in itself will inevitably fail to perceive the totality of this thinking which is oriented towards the world that it nevertheless surpasses. These very links hold the key to the fruitful nature of Jaspers' philosophy.

Jaspers on education

Jaspers made few systematic comments on education in a specifically pedagogical work. But it is surprising to note the expertise and conviction with which he explains the multi-faceted phenomenon of education when he deals incidentally and aphoristically or coherently, and on many different dimensions, with the problems and tasks, possibilities and limits of education in many of his published works.

EDUCATION AS ACTION

Jaspers discovered the special nature of education as distinct from making, shaping, tending and ruling. By the process of 'making', something usable is manufactured from a material on the basis of a rational calculation; by 'shaping', man creates a work whose form is infinite and impossible to calculate in advance. In our modern technical world, 'tending' or 'rearing' have acquired an uncanny resemblance with 'making'; nevertheless, they can only succeed by listening to the living being which remains incalculable as an organism. The process of 'ruling' means subjecting the other, be it nature or a human being, to an extraneous will and purpose.

In 1947, Jaspers drew a clear distinction between these forms of active conduct in relation to the world and education. 'At the level of inter-human relations (in particular between the older and the younger generations), education consists of everything that is imparted to young people by communicating contents, allowing them to share the substance of things and disciplining their conduct in such a way that this knowledge continues to grow within them and enables them to become free' (1947, p. 364). The process by which knowledge is imparted should lead young people 'imperceptibly to the origins, the genuine, the true foundations' (p. 364). This presupposes that young people will themselves come to terms with the surrounding reality whose many different facets they may experience through play, work and practical activities. The list of this experimental practice ranges from skills in methods of work through physical training, clear speech and disciplined discussion to the intellectual grasp of original contents in poetry, the Bible and art, and also to an understanding of history and familiarity with the basic techniques of the natural sciences.

Education is not a uniform process. It changes in the course of history and assumes different forms in different societies. Jaspers perceives three recurrent basic forms. Scholastic education of the kind that prevailed in the Middle Ages is confined to the transmission of a fixed subject matter, compressed into formulae and simply dictated with an accompanying commentary. Education by a master is a different form in which a dominant personality is honoured as an unimpeachable authority by students who are totally submitted to him. Socratic education contains the deepest meaning since it involves 'no fixed doctrine, but an infinity of questions and absolute unknowing' (1947, p. 85). The teacher and his pupil are on the same level in relation to ideas. 'Education is maieutic, i.e. it helps to bring the student's latent ideas into clear consciousness; the potential which exists within him is stimulated, but nothing is forced upon him from outside' (p. 85). Here education is understood as 'the element through which human beings come into their own through interpersonal contact by revealing the truth that is latent in them' (1957, p. 107).

Jaspers, of course, breaks out from the framework of rationalistic, excessively psychological and sociological definitions of education when he notes with deep concern that organization and its apparatus are like a net threatening to trap and control all human life. The delusion that everything is feasible is then extended to include the idea of a perfect society and the possibility of planning human beings. Jaspers therefore draws a distinction between the need for rational, particular planning and the evil which is wrought by total planning that extends to the most intimate corners of life, human existence and truth and ultimately ruins them. The fact that human freedom and responsibility lie outside the domain that lends itself to making and planning acquires heightened pedagogical significance. Jaspers comments on this in his essay 'On the Limits of Pedagogical Planning' (1952), reprinted in his 'Philosophy and the World' (1958).

Jaspers does not deny all merit in planning but criticizes a misguided spirit of planning which seeks to include things that are ungraspable. He clarifies this point by citing three examples:

- Children must acquire skills and learn knowledge' (1958, p. 30) which is made available in its pure form by the sciences. However, Jaspers enters a vigorous objection to the programme of total scientific orientation in all subjects and at all levels: 'The planning of scientific teaching cannot be decisively determined by science itself or by an understanding of the specific scientific disciplines, but is originally subordinated to an altogether different understanding, i.e. knowledge of the essence of things' (p. 31). Here, pedagogical and didactic responsibility is respected in its own right and attention focused on the young person who must, in the first instance, observe the world with his own eyes and his own categories before becoming self-sufficient enough to acquire the scientific mode of thought as an element of reason.
- Children must be educated according to their own inclinations and abilities' (p. 32). Here Jaspers objects to the idea that psychology as a science should be the 'foundation of pedagogical planning and decisions' (p. 32). However, he does concede that it has an 'ancillary role to play under the guiding hand of the educator' (p. 33).
- The essential role of the school in training children to become useful members of the community has two implications' (p. 33). Jaspers defines the first task as 'arousing the historical spirit of the community and of life through the symbols of that community' (p. 33). This may be done through consideration of the previous history of such a community and through contact between young people and their educators, although this aim cannot be a deliberate and reasoned intention. The second task, on the other hand, is to 'learn and practise everything which is necessary for work and a profession ' (p. 33). This is a matter for deliberate planning. Both tasks are indispensable. Jaspers complains that such emphasis has been placed on plannable performance that responsibility for the spirit of the whole has receded into the background. He emphasizes that 'the decisive action is taken by the individual teacher between the four walls of his classroom where he is free to assume his own responsibility. This is the venue of a real life that sometimes seems abhorrent [...] to bureaucratic planners. Here we find the sympathetic human approach combined with responsibility for intellectual content' (p. 37).

Jaspers believes that education takes place at the intersection of tension between the past, present and future and that unilateral preference must not be given to any one of these time horizons. He calls repeated attention to the fact that the substance of the present is rooted in the acquired tradition that forms part of human memory and that the path into the future runs through continuity with the past. Education must not be abandoned to tradition, to the passing moment or to some form of utopia as the only ultimate yardsticks. It is only through concentration on the present moment accepted with a spirit of responsibility that the past and future can come truly into their own.

The question as to the substance of education arises when intense activity serves merely to hide the vacuity of endless learning. Jaspers takes it for granted that all conscious education presupposes real substance. 'Without faith, there can be no education but a mere technique of teaching' (1923: 1961, p. 86). In an earlier (1946) version of this book, Jaspers recognizes that 'awe is the substance of all education. Without the pathos of an absolute, man cannot exist, else all would be meaningless' (p. 49). This absolute which creates meaning may assume a variety of forms. Jaspers quotes as examples caste, the State, religion or truth, independence, responsibility and freedom. Clearly the absolute cannot simply be proclaimed but must be the subject of testimony in practical life. It can never be decreed but must be freely accepted. Moreover, it cannot be denied that in a pluralistic society majority decisions cannot be taken on a generally valid absolute; the creation of a consensus must remain a serious objective.

Education lapses into crisis when the 'substance of the whole becomes questionable and begins to fall apart' (1931, p. 93); such was Jaspers' diagnosis in 1931. Education is failing to help children to discover an all-embracing whole. 'Experiments are made and contents, objectives, methods changed at short intervals' (p. 93). Education has become dispersed 'because of the fragmentation of traditional historical substance in those individuals who bear responsibility in their mature age' (p. 93). Jaspers enumerates facts which are of extraordinary topicality as symptoms of this uncertainty: 'The intensity of pedagogical endeavour with no unifying idea, an endless flood of new publications, the enhancement of the didactic art, the personal devotion of individual teachers on a scale which has scarcely even been experienced before' (p. 94). Substantive education runs the risk of taking second place to endless experimentation, fragmentation into a profusion of possibilities and an absurd attempt to convey the unknowable.

Jaspers frequently posed the question of the meaning and role of education. He touches on the decisive dimension of education when he defines it as 'helping the individual to come into his own in a spirit of freedom and not like a trained animal' (1966, p. 202). 'Education is accomplished when contents are freely acquired; but it fails when it is authoritarian' (p. 202). Hence it follows that 'from an early age, children must be called upon to act of their own free volition; they must learn through personal insight into the need for learning and not out of mere obedience' (p. 202). However, intellectual discipline remains indispensable. Constant practice is vital if 'the great meaning is to be made visible and brought home effectively' (p. 202).

Jaspers makes a sober attempt to define the potential and limits of education. He sees confidence in man and in the way in which he can come into his own through personal endeavour as a fundamental condition. He believes that a bold effort to educate others and oneself is justified by the fact that man is never totally conditioned by inheritance or by his environment. On the contrary, he has a vast hidden potential that can only be revealed by experimentation, hard work and firm resolve. In 1958, Jaspers expressed the view that a limit resided in the fact that 'man must not in any way calculate his dealings with others' (1958, p. 245). The unique nature of Jaspers' reflection on education becomes remarkably clear when he speaks of love as the driving force and true authority as the source of genuine education. He does not believe that these two factors are mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are inseparable. Love protects education from the will to dominate and shape pupils for finite purposes, and makes it a personal encounter instead: 'Loving communication between individuals embraces all love of things, of the world and of God. To the

extent that communication integrates these shared contents, it will unfurl effectively. Communication can only be truly effective through its material content. Objective facts only acquire significance through loving people' (1947, p. 1011).

Jaspers does not equate authority with violence and compulsion, but places it on a different level without a complete detachment from these other aspects. It is a reality, a problem and a task. It assumes different forms in the course of history with different explanations and limitations; it is in conflict with deviant forms and exists in a field of tension with freedom; it is endangered in itself and by others and undergoes constant change. Authority is an indispensable element of all life in society. 'At all times, man is only able to live under some form of authority' (1957, p. 749). However, he does have the choice as to 'which content is to become the basis of his own life' (p. 749). The following concept is all-important: 'The authority of an individual can be exercised only if personal authority allows expression to be given to the all-embracing which is also obeyed by the person who gives commands' (p. 782). Authority cannot be rationally planned, technically implemented and deliberately sought.

Particular importance attaches to emphasis on the polar tension between authority and freedom which must remain essentially related if they are not to place their own essence at risk under a despotic or arbitrary system. Jaspers recalls forgotten and repressed facts when he outlines the process by which freedom is acquired in authority:

> Believed authority is the source of a genuine education that concerns the essence of the individual. The individual human being starts his finite progression from the very beginning. As he develops, he is dependent on authority to appropriate the substantive content which is capable of being transmitted [...] The substance of authority takes on vitality to the extent that he appropriates it to himself. Freedom which was created by seizing authority can then resist authority (in its particularly rigid objective manifestations) (1957, p. 797 ff.).

Jaspers does not conceal the fact 'that authority must at some point and without specific intention take *unperceived priority*'. 'Philosophical faith which is incomprehensible to itself calls at some point for uncomprehended authority—which will not, however, become exclusive in its worldly manifestations but must be subject to deep scrutiny before consent is given to it. Authority must remain a source of trust which cannot be transgressed' (p. 866).

EDUCATION AND THE FAMILY

From personal experience and conviction, Jaspers ascribes to the family the task of laying the groundwork for all education. It is in the family that children experience, through the love of their parents and the constant concern for their welfare, that 'humanity' which helps them to master the difficulties of daily life and gives the next generation courage to pursue a responsible life in future, strengthened by all that is handed on to them. Here children experience solidarity and piety, faith and dependability in which all provide support for each other. Here the growing child receives impressions that shape his/her life, impressions of an order that is not constricting but grants freedom to everyone. Jaspers remembers his own mother and father with gratitude; they differed in their character and treatment of their children but nevertheless together created a sensation of 'safety and security' and, through their love, imparted a 'certainty in the reasons for life' (1967, p. 17) which was not even destroyed by the terrible events which took place after 1933. Education was completed by setting an unintentional example.

Jaspers' father exercised unquestioned authority. He introduced him to nature on long walks and made him familiar with the infinity of the sea, the broad marsh landscape with its 'uninterrupted horizon' (p. 16), the solitary moors and the mysterious forests. He introduced him to his immediate and wider home and to its history when he showed him monuments and buildings 'with no particular plan and simply in passing' but with an 'effective impact on his mind' (p. 41).

His father comforted him over failures at school, encouraged him to acquire knowledge as the path to truth and warned him against prejudices against other people.

Jaspers praises his mother for the confidence and love that she radiated. She created a 'sensation of security which was threatened by no mistrust or fear' (p. 75). She allowed her children to follow their own paths and strengthened Jaspers' will to live when he was faced with an illness which afflicted him in his infancy; he learned to live with this medical condition through exceptional self-discipline. He managed to do so because his parents gave him to understand that he was 'not a burden but a joy to them' (p. 47).

The substance of education was centered on the humanity experienced in everyday life. 'On occasion, brief statements were made about all that is important to man: truth, frankness, fidelity, reason and nature, diligence and performance' (p. 85 ff.). A sense of dignity and rank, moderation and form was aroused and cultivated. Absolute obedience was never demanded. The child's will was not broken, but strengthened and guided.

FORMAL AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Jaspers does not set out a programme for the design of an education system, but focuses instead on a few basic principles. He emphasizes the exceptionally important role of the primary school that lays the moral, intellectual and political foundations for the entire population. The intellectual renewal imparted by teachers is the determining factor if the population at large and those in government are to recognize the justification of the necessary financial resources. Decisive importance attaches to the educational content that must be based on the great traditions of the human mind. Jaspers advocates the need for a moral content in all teaching; reading and writing will then cease to be mere technical attainments and become instead a spiritual act—a miracle. When that spirit is alive, effort and hard work, practice and repetition, which are often experienced as a burden, will acquire new meaning and become a real pleasure. Secondary schools, in all their different forms, must also pursue the same goal.

Jaspers was in no doubt about the fact that the value of a school is directly bound up with the quality of its teachers who can only perform their task of educating young people through lifelong self-education and training. 'The only true educator is the one who is permanently engaged in a process of self-education through communication. Education can only be correct if its addressees acquire the ability to educate themselves through stringent and tenacious learning' (1958, p. 445).

Throughout his life, Jaspers remained committed to the idea that the university does not have a mere teaching function; the student must also 'learn from his professors to engage in personal research and therefore acquire a scientific mode of thought which will colour his whole existence' (1923: 1961, p. 1).

Jaspers paints a broad canvas of the tasks of the university: research; teaching and education; training; communication; the whole world of the sciences. This internal cohesion is apparent in a number of statements made by Jaspers:

1. To the extent that the university seeks truth through science, research is its fundamental task. Since that task presupposes the passing on of knowledge, research is bound up with teaching. Teaching means allowing students to take part in the research process;
2. The correct method of imparting knowledge and skills in itself contributes to the intellectual training of the whole being;
3. Performance of this task is bound up with communication between thinking beings, i.e. between researchers, between teachers and pupils, between pupils and, in some circumstances, between all of them;
4. Science is essentially a whole [...] The structure of the university must be such that all the different sciences are represented (1923: 1961, pp. 64-65).

The university can only create the preconditions and foundations required for specific vocational training if its aim is not to 'impart a self-contained body of knowledge but to train and develop scientific modes of thought' (p. 70). 'The techniques of questioning must have been practised. A thorough grounding must have been acquired in a particular discipline, but there is no need for the student to memorize all kinds of specialized facts as is demanded by foolish examinations' (70). The emphasis must rather be placed on the sense of judgement which is gained through research, proves its worth in the everyday practice of a profession, directs the gaze towards all that is knowable and opens out onto the broadest horizon.

As Jaspers emphasizes, university education is 'by nature Socratic' (p. 86) because the student's sense of responsibility and freedom come into play. 'It is only through freedom that we can acquire experience of the original desire for knowledge and hence of human independence which is the gift of God and bound up with God' (p. 86). The freedom of learning has as its counterpart the freedom of teaching.

Communication with the researcher and participation in the research process can stimulate a scientific attitude in the student himself which Jaspers characterizes as 'objectivity, a devotion to the subject, reasoned balance, investigation of contrasting possibilities, self-criticism' (p. 79). It is 'education in reason' (p. 80) which takes place without deliberate intent or planning.

EDUCATION AND TRADITION

Jaspers was convinced of the fact that man can only come into his own by appropriating the traditions which, as far as the West is concerned, assumed their classical shape in the Bible and antiquity. The roots in the tradition of any one particular people can only prove fertile if an open attitude is adopted to the other major traditions of mankind.

Jaspers believes that man places himself at risk if he confines tradition to those matters which are essential for existence or have some practical technical value, or alternatively makes a radical break with tradition so as to place all life on a totally planned new basis. In that menacing situation, the question arises as to the existence of a historical memory that outlives the polar tension between continuity and change.

Referring in 1931 to the different forms of memory, Jaspers drew a distinction between mere knowledge of the past, and understanding perception and assimilation which are essential to create 'the reality of the selfness of contemporary man, first in awe and then in an awareness of his own feelings and action leading on ultimately to participation in eternal existence' (1931, p. 106). In his preface to the periodical *Die Wandlung*, Jaspers warned in 1945: 'What and how we remember and those aspects of memory which we allow to come into play, will help to decide what becomes of us' (1965, p. 29).

For Jaspers himself the existential appropriation of tradition was given lasting encouragement through his personal encounter with Max Weber, as a result of which he came to recognize the fundamental role of the past and its consequences for education. 'Education through the study of great men has the purpose of permitting the individual's own existence to be rediscovered in them, to enable him to come to fruition through them until the human being which has become genuine and original in itself moves on to acquire objectivity and reach decisions without the detour of a hypothetical identification with the other person' (1947, p. 1006). The following maxim was often confirmed for Jaspers: 'He who sees greatness, experiences a desire to become great himself' (1957, p. 35).

Jaspers considered that the assimilation of German history was one of the most vital tasks which called above all for 'faithfulness to the facts and a judgement of the most recent past' (1966, p. 204). The most pressing command here is a rejection of the 'way of thinking which made Hitler's domination possible' (p. 205)—a command which has once again acquired extraordinary topicality against the background of the excesses of the right-wing extremists in our reunited Germany.

Looking back on his life, Jaspers described his denigration of the State without conceiving anything better to replace it as 'youthful folly.' He returned inevitably to the problem of the State when he saw the Weimar Republic threatened by the two extremes of fascism and communism.

In 1931 he approved of the State which guaranteed a particular form of general order through its power. He described two possible extreme attitudes of the State's attitude to education. 'Either it leaves education free [...] or else the State takes over education which it goes on to shape in quietude or violence to serve its own ends' (1931, p. 96 ff.).

In the first assumption, the State rules 'without continuity through its policy guided by individuals' belonging to established parties (p. 96). Diversity of the teaching syllabuses and experimentation may lead to total fragmentation. There is no continuity due to constant change. Great and true knowledge, which might have an unforgettable impact on their lives, is withheld from children. Instead, their energies are taken up by stringent criteria placed on the learning process itself, without shaping their true being. 'Pulled hither and thither, the child encounters the ruins of a tradition but no world into which he may enter with confidence' (p. 97).

In the second instance, uniform education is imposed and paralyzes intellectual freedom. 'Basic attitudes are fixed as articles of faith and drummed into the pupil with the acquisition of knowledge and skills as modes of feeling and value judgements' (p. 97). Although Bolshevism and fascism differ, they have in common the fact that they assign people to partiacular categories. Jaspers does not conceal the fact that politics involves the 'use of violence' (1958, p. 57), but stresses the essential link between politics and freedom, and states that the morally founded right only becomes reality when it is imposed by force. He calls for a new system of politics guided by morals, justice and reason which must be aroused and embodied in the individual, in whom they may be supposed to be inherent, so as to become permanently effective in the community made up of individuals. For Jaspers, the following maxim is true and might be rich in pedagogical consequences: 'Only if reason is expected, can it be encountered [...] No organization can elicit reason and a conscious awareness of reason. On the contrary, it presupposes their existence' (p. 302).

In his parents' home, Jaspers already acquired a positive attitude to democracy that brought him into conflict with the authoritarian positions adopted in schools and society in his day. It therefore comes as no surprise that, after the suffering and disaster of Hitler's dictatorship, he became a vigorous advocate of democracy because it 'is the only necessary, if infinitely difficult, path by which men can attain their potential degree of freedom and organize the world to enhance that freedom' (1965, p. 22). He does not succumb to the illusion that the different forms of democracy might themselves guarantee and bring to perfection the very idea of democracy, but he does firmly believe in the need to make constant use of the opportunities held out by democracy as the sole route to freedom.

Jaspers remains concerned at the fact that a democracy that is totally formal may itself generate total domination. He therefore constantly reminds us that confidence in the people is essential and that democracy presupposes an attitude of reason on the part of the people which it must itself take care to foster. Here Jaspers refuses to idealize, or at the other extreme defame, the people. He considers the people to be sovereign, but in need of self-education to attain that sovereignty. People become ripe for democracy by becoming politically active and by accepting responsibility for solving concrete problems.

Jaspers considers it self-evident that democracy demands the education of the entire people. 'Democracy, freedom and reason all hang by that education. Only through such education is it possible to preserve the historical content of our existence and deploy it as a generative force underpinning our life in the new world situation' (1958, p. 444). It may seem surprising when Jaspers writes: 'In the idea of democracy, politics themselves are education ' (p. 447). However,

this can only hold good for a type of politics that is guided by principles that lie above mere politics. Turning to democratic education, Jaspers develops two inter-related concepts.

The political education of young people comprises many different tasks, among which he lists the imparting of constitutional knowledge and an acceptance of authority, the generation of images and ideas, practical exercises in the solution of common problems, practice in ordered forms of debate, familiarization with thinking and the ability to see through mere slogans. This political education presupposes 'constant self-education of adult citizens in their democratic attitudes' (1965, p. 283), a process which is played out in the keen debate on topical issues. This self-education begins by 'thinning out the undergrowth of unclarity'. It always endeavours to ensure that the constitution is firmly rooted in the hearts of citizens. It is continued when, despite this basic recognition of the constitution, ways must still be found of making legal amendments to it in critical situations. It is safeguarded when the politics of ruse give way to public debate. And it is completed when, despite all the affirmation of the State, an inner distance is maintained which preserves us against total identification with a particular form of State. 'In all this, the vital need is to arouse an awareness in each individual that he bears responsibility for himself' (p. 52). This will be attained through self-education.

The idea of the 'all-embracing'

After identifying the unique nature of Jaspers' philosophy and presenting his thoughts on education in an open system, we shall now endeavour to present the central philosophical concept of the 'all-embracing' and highlight its importance for education. Scientific thinking runs up against the frontiers of knowledge which only covers objects; it must then broaden into philosophical thought which seeks certainty about being. But the totality of being remains inaccessible. Understanding, the intellect and reason will always fall short of the mark. Being is never mastered by human thought, but man is able to acquire certainty over this being through the modalities of the world around him in which it is manifested; at the same time, being escapes complete understanding.

As we have already seen, Jaspers uses an image to describe the 'all-embracing' in terms of an invisible horizon from which all new horizons emerge rather than as something that is itself directly perceptible. Jaspers draws a distinction between this 'all-embracing' phenomenon of the world and transcendental essence and specifically human phenomena which he divides into being, pure consciousness, intellect and possible existence.

Therefore, this basic philosophical operation does not enlarge our knowledge but changes its nature. The concept of the 'all-embracing' protects us from concentration on a particular type of being and leaves us open to the whole. This conceptual structure must not be confused with the categorization of forms of being; on the contrary, the characteristics of the 'all-embracing' only come into their own and retain their meaning when they are seen in their general context. Human thought, however, runs the constant risk of isolating one particular category of this 'all-embracing' and of according it formal status as an absolute. In that case, the inherent links between all its aspects are broken and the complete reality is deflected from its true purpose. Jaspers describes this error concisely in the following terms in his book entitled 'Philosophical Faith in the Face of Revelation' (1962):

> *Being* is given absolute form in pragmatism, biologism, psychologism and sociologism, the *pure consciousness* in rationalism, the *spirit* in education, the *existence* in existentialism (which becomes nihilism) the *world* in materialism, naturalism, idealism and pantheism, and the *transcendental* in acosmism (p. 141).

The notion of the 'all-embracing' proves particularly fertile when it is applied to man and an attempt is made to assess its significance for understanding and for the process of education; after all, understanding of education is necessarily bound up with an understanding of man whose full

and true humanity is to be developed, aroused, fostered and created through education. The understanding of man represents, as it were, the framework within which statements on education become possible, necessary, meaningful and clear.

The many different dimensions of man can be defined conceptually as being, pure consciousness, intellect and possible existence, without losing sight of his essential unity.

Man as a being: this is the man who is conceived and born, grows up, achieves maturity and dies as a living being, an individual. The individual is characterized personally by the specific form of his animated body which is able to function through the complex interplay of chemical and physical processes. Man is determined by his inclinations and the environment and each individual differs from all others. He shares this characteristic with animals, but this vital reality still does not define his true human nature. He is in fact something other than an animal. He differs from animals in that he combines, at one and the same time, nature and history, while inheritance and tradition play a large part in determining his characteristics. This qualitative difference between man and animals is underscored by other forms of the 'all-embracing' which characterize the living nature of man.

Man as pure consciousness: this term denotes man with the unique possibility of moving beyond his consciousness as an individual living creature and focusing that consciousness on the nature of being as such, which is made the subject of critical perception and enjoys general validity. This consciousness is the 'locus of valid thinking' (1947, p. 67) of which only man is capable. Understanding refers to objective existence and grasps this objective world through its categories. This general consciousness is necessarily specific to each particular living being in which it must exist.

Man as intellect: i.e. man with the ability to 'generate ideas' which create order among the confusing profusion of disparate knowledge that can be extended at will, which highlight the relationship between individual factors and whose aim is to establish unity among the diversity of phenomena. Intellectual understanding is more than mere logical thinking. The mind is understood as the force of understanding that seeks to perfect the totality of its interiority and to shape the world as a whole. This mind is objectively perceptible through science, poetry, art, the legal order and moral life. The mind needs the intellect that is rooted in the living being, but the intellect is not everything.

Man as existence: i.e. man in the irreplaceable historicity of his unique origin, in his unconditional resolve to become himself. Existence is the sign that being, pure consciousness and the mind cannot be understood on their own and do not have their own reason, that man is not confined to immanence but remains essentially dependent on the transcendental. However existence is impossible without being, pure consciousness and the mind. These are essential conditions if existence is to come into its own and become reality. 'It is embodied in being, made clear by the pure consciousness and its content is revealed in the mind' (1947, p. 134).

Like these three other manifestations of the 'all-embracing', existence too cannot be understood on its own but is rooted in the transcendental world. Man as a form of existence experiences his own freedom as a gift of the transcendental on which he remains dependent. This representation of man as an 'all-embracing' being is only made possible by reason which Jaspers understands as the 'bond between all the modes of the ''all-embracing''.' The purpose of reason is to bring together all these different aspects of the 'all- embracing'. It penetrates beyond each individual facet to the essential unity of this 'all-embracing'. It seeks unity in the one that is all. It reveals the relations between the modes of the 'all-embracing' as a network that Jaspers summarizes in the following words:

> Our all-embracing nature is no mere juxtaposition. We are being, pure consciousness and the mind and we are all three things which have, as it were, *coalesced*. We are existence and reason and these two categories are *related* like opposite poles. We are existence and being at one and the same time, but in such a way that existence is not immediately the same as being; it *is manifested* in being, through the separation between existence and being, and is not one with being, but becomes one by assimilating that being (1947, p. 131).

In a different formulation: 'Existing man is not merely a vital being, an abstract rational being nor yet a perfectible intellectual; he is all these things, but in all this he remains himself' (p. 648).

Education, as an aid to becoming a total human being, takes place by allowing for the existence of the whole man. But just as man by his very nature escapes any clear definition and specific moments, basic forces, abilities and dimensions of his being are isolated but still belong together in any consideration of him, so the concept of education also forms part of a wider structure. The changing ways by which man is observed each form a particular concept of education that emphasizes just one feature of the reality of education and highlights a partial circumstance. Those aspects that are isolated in reflection in reality form part of a whole. Education as a reality is always something more than we can perceive with our conceptual structures and links, more than we can empirically ascertain or determine by speculative thought. Education that is directed at the indivisible human being is conceptually articulated into different modes when it concerns man as a being, man as pure consciousness, man as intellect and man as possible existence. Particular items of knowledge must be brought together within a conceptual unity. Education has the supreme task of helping man to achieve his selfness. The other aims of education must necessarily be integrated into that task within their own limits. Setting out from this highest goal, the indispensable nature of the individual 'phases' becomes apparent in their own relative right and according to their own limited laws.

If man is understood as being, education appears to consist of concern for, and protection of, growing life which is to be developed, enhanced and brought to maturity. Education seeks to consolidate physical strength and mental health. It enhances vital energy through competition, encourages the individual to attain ever-higher levels of performance, arouses pleasure in aesthetics and secures the frame for natural enjoyment of life. It takes care of weak and endangered life, tends and cures illness. But education is not confined to the preservation, enhancement and safeguarding of vitality as such. Education is more than mere biological upbringing.

Since man as a being always lives with other beings, education involves a process of integration into the forms and structures, groups and institutions of society. Individuality is enhanced through this integration into the social structure. Education imparts familiarity with forms of social intercourse, with morals and customs, with rules and laws. It associates the ability to adapt with the courage to resist. Education seeks to safeguard the individual citizen in his profession and in politics, but it is not confined to imparting familiarity with forms of public behaviour, to the acquisition of professional expertise and to the generation of an understanding of politics. Education extends beyond integration into society.

If man is understood as pure consciousness, education means leading him on to clear perceptions, imparting usable knowledge, training in vital thinking and disciplining him to take part in an orderly dialogue with others. It puts across modes of thought which help to gain a conceptual mastery of the world in its manifold manifestations. It seeks restrained speech, clear reasoned thinking, accurate judgements and acute conclusions. Education facilitates critical thinking, using methods skillfully and reliably to guide objective action. It sharpens the ability to distinguish and creates a potential for objectivity that does not preclude personal involvement. However, education is more than the creation of an ability to behave rationally.

In appealing to man's mind, education guides him on to assimilate the products and values created, preserved and handed down by the human spirit. It imparts new life to tradition, represents contents and brings them up to date. It frees man from relegation to mere being and understanding,

which lacks a binding ethic, and enables him to take part in the all-embracing spiritual life which safeguards his existence and can be guided and understood through ideas. It fights for understanding and endeavours to reveal hidden meanings through a clear realization that the individual himself must be made aware of the reality of the spirit in order to safeguard dignity and beauty. It is confined to making the sources accessible and smoothing the path to individual apperception of original contents.

Education of this kind overcomes the constrictions of pure consciousness and leads on to a broad, open horizon. It teaches us to see the particular as part of a relative whole; it encourages us to look incessantly beyond all the component parts to find the underlying oneness. It seeks to make man at home in the cosmos of the spirit which constantly looks for new perfection in an elegant form. Education in this area means instruction in a spiritual life which appropriates tradition to create a veritable culture that observes with understanding, remains open to everything and expresses itself in its own creation and forms. But once again education is not confined to the position of man in the spiritual world, since man and the world around him do not combine to form a harmonious 'work of art'.

A comparative study of the different views of education defined so far reveals that education can, in the first instance, be interpreted in clear and compact terms, showing how it can be specifically planned and organized but how, in the last resort, it is directly confronted with an immovable boundary placed on all methodical action. Here we learn that the growing individual must enjoy freedom and that the favour of the moment is needed for the 'spark to leap across the contacts' and for education to prove successful. This discovery acquires still sharper contours if we take man seriously as a possible form of existence, since existence cannot be posited as a given circumstance or as the result of a particular form of behaviour.

If man is taken seriously as a possible existence, education is perceived as the path to an unmistakable and irreplaceable selfness which is achieved in dedication to the object, in unprejudiced dealings with other men, in a freely established bond with the transcendental. The very essence of existence prevents that existence from being embarked upon directly and turned into a purpose. Education as an aid to becoming oneself takes the form of an indispensable companion on the road; it comes into its own in indirect communication in which the partner is called upon and encouraged to take his own decisions in a spirit of freedom and responsibility. Education as a pointer to selfness is directly bound up with the educator who dares anew to become himself, to be himself and to remain himself, despite all the levelling tendencies and all the compulsions inherent in the system. The educator takes the decision to communicate by which he remains linked to the person who is being educated, even when conflicts occur between them. He arouses a sense of responsibility by assuming his own responsibility. He shows the courage to achieve and assert true freedom by boldly accepting his own freedom that does not fall prey to the temptation of arbitrary action. This reciprocity is experienced and granted in a dedication to the person who is being educated.

Evidently all forms of direct intervention and total plans have no place here. Excessive emphasis on an attempt to make the individual 'operational' runs aground on the non-availability of existence which is experienced as being in the nature of a gift. Education does not bring the individual to existence, but is only able to create and safeguard the conditions necessary for its attainment. One such condition may be the strengthening of the young person in his original desire to acquire knowledge that experiences the meaning of the failure of human cognition and becomes conscious of the need to become himself through the perception of the antinomic structure of the world and goes on to make infinite endeavours to achieve this goal.

Education to achieve existence can mean only one thing: not hiding the possibilities of becoming oneself, not missing the path towards existence, not overlooking the need to achieve man's highest goal by falling victim to cleverness and fitness. It remains impossible to predict whether and to what extent man will gain mastery of himself in his selfness. The encounter with the

transcendental and the meaningful communication with a partner cannot be brought about by force; they remain a gift. Education of this kind cannot be methodically arranged, psychologically based and secured by plans. Education that is seen as reaching its perfection in the attainment of an existence based on responsible action must be perceived in reality as a gift, as a favour despite all the earnest endeavours that may be made on its behalf.

Every different approach tends to throw light on one aspect of education and places the emphasis on one particular trend which, taken in isolation, distorts the concept of education as such. All the different approaches are intimately bound up with each other. One task involves another, and no 'phase' can represent the whole; each 'form' extends beyond itself and requires the complement of the next phases to attain its own completion. The next 'phases', in turn, remain dependent on those that have gone before and without which they could not exist. The fact that each facet of education acquires particular importance at certain stages of growth and maturity is confirmed by personal observation. It remains of the essence to make sure that individual endeavours do not miss this orientation towards existence. All attempts at an interpretation conceal dissatisfaction that demands fulfillment and attains that fulfillment by making existence possible. It is only in existence that creates oneness that education attains its highest goal.

These observations tend to point to the system of open co-ordinates within which the statements on education find their appropriate place in the overall body of Jaspers' work. Here their deepest meaning is fulfilled. Here the specific possibilities are revealed. Here the frontiers are highlighted. However, there can once again be no overall system, but only an orderly discussion of perspectives. The different aspects do not fuse together to give a total image. Each total image in turn is no more than a concept based on a particular viewpoint. This healthy insight allows us to step out boldly and tranquilly on the endless path of unconstrained questioning, thinking and action.

The concept of the 'all-embracing' is absolutely indispensable if the unlimited breadth and rich differentiation of education are to be focussed on something individual, and propagated and exercised, to use a convenient formula, as a patent solution. But only harm can be done if education seeks to be nothing other than mere survival training, a conceptual adjustment to our contemporary society, a conditioning modification of behaviour, an intellectual fitness training programme, an ideological indoctrination, an unparticipating reproduction of tradition or the staking of a religious claim in the young person. The temptation of one-sided theories can and must be resisted if the notion of the 'all-embracing' is to govern the theory and practice of education. This remains a task that can never be completed.

Note

1. *Hermann Horn (Germany).* Studied education, philosophy and theology in Wuppertal, Basel, Hamburg and Göttingen. Dr. Phil. in 1955. Founding rector of the Teacher Training University of Hagen; since 1980, full professor at Dortmund University. Specialization: Pestalozzi, Buber, Jaspers and Korczak and the relationship between pedagogics and philosophy and theology. Published works include: *Karl Jaspers: Was ist Erziehung? Ein Lesebuch; Briefwechsel Karl Jaspers—Oskar Hammelsbeck, 1919-1969*. Awarded the Janusz-Korczak Memorial Medal in 1978.

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