



The Role of Philosophical Faith in Karl Jaspers' Existential Thought

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article	<p>This article examines the ontological foundations of Karl Jaspers' concept of philosophical faith. As a comparison with Heidegger's existential ontology reveals, Jaspers places far greater emphasis on the act of philosophizing than on philosophy itself. From one perspective, Jasper's philosophy has a moral and open character; conversely, this openness is threatened by his theory of the encompassing and his dogmatic understanding of Kant's theoretical tools. Jaspers' existential philosophy, and especially his concept of philosophical faith, can be illuminated by confronting it with the existential philosophy of his colleague, Heinrich Barth. Karl Jaspers' existential philosophy draws on the fundamental ideas of the "Marburg School," particularly the two German philosophers Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp. After World War II, when Heidegger's ontological views cast a shadow over German philosophy, Jaspers and Heinrich Barth, who adhered to Kant and opposed Heidegger's central ideas, could have had a fruitful collaboration, but this cooperation never materialized. Jaspers' existential philosophy led him towards a prophetic stance, but his concept of philosophical faith, which became widely known from his book "Atom" in 1959, continues to attract global attention. In this research, the author has employed a conceptual analysis method of the interpretive and expansive type to elucidate the concept of philosophical faith in Jaspers and has attempted to provide a better understanding of his existential philosophy.</p>
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1. Introduction

The concept of philosophical faith can only be correctly understood if philosophy itself is grasped. Jaspers' primary concern is to delineate the uniqueness and originality of philosophy, or as he puts it, to elucidate philosophy. For Jaspers, this elucidation does not occur through an external factor to philosophy; rather, philosophy elucidates itself. This self-elucidation of philosophy from within is philosophy's most important task.

The value and importance of philosophy are so great that they cannot be measured by any standard. To better understand the role of philosophy, we must compare it to organized religions and the violence that has been committed in the name of religion. Throughout history, major religions, especially Christianity, have led to a great deal of violence. Wars, torture, and discrimination committed in the name of religion are numerous. However, in the face of all this violence, philosophy has continued to exist. The fact that philosophy has survived in such circumstances is a miracle. But will this miracle continue forever?

Jaspers believed that philosophy is far more than a simple university course. He did not want to see philosophy merely as one of the university subjects, like literature or history, to be taught. In his view, philosophy is something very special and different. At that time, a philosophical movement called Neo-Kantianism was very prevalent in many German universities. This movement saw philosophy in a specific and limited way. But Jasper disagreed with this view. In 1931, with the publication of his book "The Spiritual Condition of the Age", Jaspers demonstrated that philosophy can also be influential in everyday life (Jasper, 1931). After World War II, Jaspers gained significant fame with the publication of his book "The Question of German Guilt" in 1946, in which he discussed the issue of collective guilt. During the Nazi regime, Jaspers faced severe pressure and even risked his life. He was banned from working due to his beliefs. However, Jasper did not yield, and after World War II, he became a cipher of honesty and integrity. Even when he moved to Switzerland in 1948 and took up a position at the University of Basel, many of his supporters were surprised. But Jaspers did not give up and wanted to explain philosophy to people in simple language. He used radio, books, and lectures to discuss important issues such as the future of Germany and the threat of the atomic bomb. In the 1960s, intellectuals and theorists who believed in critical theory and Marxist discourse played a significant role in shaping the discourse and debate in society. Jürgen Habermas was one of the most prominent figures in this intellectual current, and by emphasizing the importance of rational and logical dialogue, he sought to penetrate the public sphere. While Habermas emphasized the power of impartial arguments and debates, Jaspers believed that the honesty and seriousness of the individual in conveying concepts were very important. For this reason, Jaspers was known as the political conscience of Germany and had a great influence on public opinion until the 1960s. In the 1960s, this public role was taken over by representatives of the neo-Marxist "critical theory" and "discourse theory", particularly by Habermas, who continued to defend its benefits in the public sphere. While

discourse theory emphasized the power of impartial, rational, and linguistic arguments, Jaspers' communicative interventions were all based on his personal "honesty" and "seriousness". Therefore, he became the political conscience of the Federal Republic of Germany until the 1960s.

Let us return to the main question: What is philosophy? Instead of this question, Jaspers focused more on two others: firstly, "What is philosophizing?" and secondly, "How should one philosophize?" Jaspers almost sets aside the question of "what" and instead turns to the question of "how". This change of question makes a significant difference: What is Jaspers' conception of traditional authoritative philosophy? He presented his views comprehensively in a three-volume book entitled *Philosophy* (Jaspers, 1970). However, the title of this book indicates that he not only describes philosophy in the strict sense but also examines different methods of philosophizing. In fact, Jaspers seeks to analyze this specific activity, namely philosophizing. He believes that the root of this activity lies in the very nature of human existence. Jaspers argues that all individuals, regardless of their education and background, can and should realize that philosophizing is part of human existence. In his book *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, written for the general public, he explains what philosophy is and how it differs from academic philosophy courses. According to Jaspers, true philosophy is more than learning philosophical concepts in a classroom; true philosophy means a deep search and reflection on the world and humanity's place in it. He calls this kind of philosophy "world philosophy" and distinguishes it from "scholastic philosophy", which is limited to learning concepts. This distinction shows that Jaspers himself, as a philosopher, was seeking to discover truth through free and creative thought. He, who had initially studied medicine, later obtained a doctorate in philosophy and qualified to teach the subject at the University of Heidelberg. Since agreeing with Heidegger in the 1920s, he had a negative view of the prevailing academic philosophy. However, he always considered himself a responsible member of the university and valued preserving academic values in Europe.

To delve into the fundamental roots of philosophy, we must undertake a radical and fundamental shift. This shift involves relinquishing all our certain beliefs and knowledge, as well as everything we take for granted in our daily lives. We must even distance ourselves from reality itself and seek something beyond it. Jaspers suggests that this is akin to a mystical experience; it requires liberation from all worldly constraints (Jaspers, 1970: 33). Kierkegaard viewed this as a form of spiritual regeneration, transforming the individual into an entirely new being. Jaspers finds the original roots of true philosophy in the thought of philosophers such as Plotinus, Cusanus, and Nagarjuna. These philosophers sought knowledge beyond the limitations of reason. Like Kant and Kierkegaard, he believes that to attain deep knowledge of existence, one must proceed through philosophical doubt and personal experience. This is an active and engaging method.

To understand Jaspers' ideas more precisely, we should refer to one of his radio speeches. Although Jaspers sought knowledge beyond the material and objective world, at the heart of his philosophy lies human existence and direct experience

of being. In other words, he believed:

Philosophy, instead of merely pursuing abstract concepts beyond experience, should engage with human experience of life and the world (Ibid: 15).

Next, we aim to delve deeper into Jaspers' conception of philosophy and philosophizing, to demonstrate how he encouraged his audience to courageously engage in philosophical inquiry. He did so because he believed that philosophizing, whether consciously or unconsciously, is an inevitable part of human existence. Jaspers writes on the first page of his book, *Philosophy*:

Philosophy is the human method of understanding existence over time, and it is only in this manifestation, not in its essence, that it becomes comprehensible to us. In philosophizing, faith that is not based on revelation is expressed, inviting others on the same path. (Ibid: 1).

2. Existence and the Quest for Being

All of Jaspers' philosophy revolves around the search for the meaning and nature of existence (Ibid: 4). He believes that there's an insurmountable gap between 'real' or 'absolute' Being (Ibid: 32) and human experience of the world. However, all thoughts, conversations, dreams, and everything humans experience are somehow connected to this absolute existence. He introduces two key concepts: acceptance into being and Failure of being. According to Jaspers, humans are constantly striving to find meaning in existence and connect with it. However, this endeavor is always accompanied by failures, and humans are not fully capable of comprehending the depth and nature of existence. He believes that existence has always been and always will be, but at the same time, humans must continually strive for existential certainty. In other words, they must try to understand the nature of existence with greater assurance. According to Jaspers, the search for the meaning and nature of existence is unending. This implies that no matter how hard humans try, they cannot definitively and completely answer their existential questions. As Jaspers states, our existence itself remains incomplete as long as we have not fully comprehended existence. In other words, we are perpetually searching and discovering, never reaching a final destination. He also maintains that philosophy cannot put an end to this quest. While philosophy can help us think more deeply and ask new questions, it cannot provide definitive and final answers to all our inquiries (Ibid: 21).

This constant search for meaning and the nature of existence, which the philosopher John Patuska also highlighted, is not only a fundamental characteristic of human existence but also intrinsically illuminates and reveals this very existence. This statement implies that humans naturally seek to understand the meaning and purpose of their lives. This search is not merely an innate human need but also leads humans to better understand themselves and the world around

them. This quest transforms humans from potential beings into actual beings. In other words, through this search, humans evolve from a potential, undefined state to a more actual and defined state. Philosophy is built upon this very foundation. Philosophy strives to answer these fundamental questions through thought and analysis, helping humans to achieve a deeper understanding of their existence. Jaspers states:

To philosophize means to think seriously about existence
(Ibid: 299).

In other words, philosophy teaches us how to think more deeply about ourselves and the world around us.

While philosophizing is connected to existence and being, it is itself an ontological issue. This means that philosophy not only studies human existence and the world around it, but it also constantly seeks to answer questions about the nature of existence and being. Jaspers, like Heidegger in 'Being and Time', places a strong emphasis on the search for the meaning of existence. Both philosophers are interested in the fundamental question of what existence is and seek to find an answer. However, Jaspers and Heidegger employ different methods to arrive at this answer. Although both philosophers address the same central question, their approaches to examining this question differ. Jaspers offers various definitions of existence. Sometimes he provides very specific definitions of existence, and at other times his definitions are more general. For instance, referring to Kierkegaard, he states:

Existence is something that concerns itself and is always
seeking something beyond itself (Ibid: 13).

In another instance, Jaspers argues that we humans are, in fact, existence, and this existence of ours can be eternal or not. It depends on our own decisions. Moreover, he believes:

We humans can attain a more complete existence (Ibid: 296).

Like Jaspers, Heidegger takes an indirect approach to existence. However, unlike Jaspers, Heidegger is not interested in the 'philosophy of existence' but rather in the structures that constitute existence, what he calls 'ontology' (Heidegger, 2019: 17). For Heidegger, Dasein is a unique being. This being, in its very being, has a deep connection with existence. In other words, humans can understand existence through understanding themselves. In fact, understanding who humans are is equivalent to understanding the nature of existence (Ibid: 16). Heidegger further expands the concept of 'Being,' stating that by 'being' he means the totality of existence and everything that exists. He then introduces 'Existence' as a part of this being with which humans have a direct relationship. Heidegger poses the question of the meaning of existence as both an ontological and epistemological question. In simpler terms, he wants to understand what this 'being' is and how we can know it.

Interestingly, Heidegger establishes a deep connection between this grand philosophical question and everyday human concerns. He argues that when we worry about our future or fear death, we are actually addressing this same question about the meaning of 'being.' In other words, our anxieties about life and death are, in essence, a search to understand the nature of existence. To put it simply, Heidegger merges two great philosophical ideas to answer more fundamental questions about life and the world. He combines the philosophy of life, which deals with personal experiences and the meaning of life, with ontology, which studies the nature of reality. By doing so, he creates a new philosophical method called 'fundamental ontology.' In this method, Heidegger focuses not on objects and things but on human experience of the world and the meaning that humans give to existence. Heidegger's primary goal is to understand the meaning of 'being.' He wants to know why we exist and what the world around us is like. For this reason, he chooses human existence as the starting point for his inquiry. He believes that by examining human experience of the world, we can gain a deeper understanding of the nature of reality. So, in summary, Heidegger aims to answer questions such as 'Who are we?', 'Why do we exist?', and 'What is the world?' by combining the philosophy of life and ontology.

While Heidegger delved deep into the human experience of existence in his 'Being and Time,' Jaspers took a different approach to understanding the origin and roots of human existence. Instead of relying on logical analysis, he used intuition and direct understanding to illuminate this subject. For this reason, some argue that instead of 'hermeneutics of origin,' the term 'elucidation of origin' is more suitable to describe Jaspers' method. In simpler terms, Heidegger sought to understand the nature of existence from a philosophical perspective, while Jaspers was more interested in understanding the personal experience and meaning that humans give to existence. This difference can be described using the terms 'ontology' and 'ethics.' Ontology studies the nature of being, while ethics studies human values and duties. Jaspers believed that by understanding the origin of human existence, we can gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us, and this understanding helps us make better ethical decisions. This fundamental difference shapes the entire philosophy of both thinkers. Despite their apparent similarities, Heidegger and Jaspers pursue different goals. Heidegger seeks to transcend the limitations of metaphysical thinking, while Jaspers attempts to integrate metaphysics into the flow of human life and experience. According to Jaspers, practical reason (as Kant defined it) plays a significant role in this process. In one of his major works, Jaspers states that 'existential philosophy is rooted in and dependent on metaphysics.' He also says, 'Philosophy is origin,' or more precisely, 'Philosophy is the awareness of being that originates from another source.' In other words, Jaspers believes that philosophy not only examines the world and existence but also originates from a deeper, more mysterious source. This source transcends our everyday experience and refers to a kind of awareness of a fundamental being.

This transcendent source is often referred to as the 'transcendent.' However, when we speak of a 'source,' questions arise about whether it is irreducible or self-

revealing. Jaspers' philosophy seeks to draw from both this transcendent source and the concrete conditions of everyday life in order to achieve an unambiguous expression, becoming a part of life itself. This view of philosophy, rooted in life, was beyond the prevailing academic philosophy of the time. Initially, Jaspers was unaware that his philosophy differed fundamentally from that of Heidegger. Later, in his writings, he explained the fundamental difference between the two philosophies. In essence, Jaspers sought a philosophy that addressed both the spiritual and transcendent dimensions of human existence and the concrete conditions of human life.

Philosophy manifests itself in real life, in the judgments and decisions we make, and in all our interactions with others, penetrating to the depths of our being. In other words, philosophy is not only found in books and classrooms, but it is present in all aspects of our lives. In this regard, I completely disagree with Heidegger. According to Heidegger, philosophy should be in books and writings or in the mind of a philosopher. He sometimes separates philosophy from everyday life and views it as something separate and independent. Heidegger sees the world of philosophy as a calm and quiet place where the philosopher is distant from the problems and concerns of everyday life. But in my view, these two worlds cannot be separated. Everything a philosopher arrives at in this calm and quiet space should have an impact on our lives and the world around us. (Jaspers, 1978: 246)

3. The Elucidation of Existence and the Step toward the Encompassing

In 1935, Jaspers delivered a series of lectures on 'Reason and Existenz' (Jaspers, 1960a). In these lectures, he expanded his philosophical theory, which he had presented in 1931, with a new concept called the 'Encompassing' (Jaspers, 1947: 158). The question now arises as to whether this new concept has made Jaspers' theory more complete or whether it has limited or even changed its nature. Some argue that this new concept has moved Jaspers' philosophy towards a more traditional type of philosophy that focuses more on the existence of objects and general concepts than on the personal experience of the human being. If we look at Jaspers' earlier writings, this criticism is somewhat thought-provoking. The second volume of Jaspers' *Philosophy*, which examines human existence, is the most important part of this three-volume book. In this volume, Jaspers speaks extensively and deeply about how human existence is formed and its nature. Concepts such as relationships with others, the passage of time, freedom, the boundary situations of life, and important decisions are all part of this examination and have contributed to the fame of Jaspers' philosophical method. Instead of using terms like 'existentials' or 'structures' that are common in other philosophies, Jaspers employs the term 'aspects'. He contends that these aspects are not merely parts of human existence but represent moments when a human being attains a profound understanding of themselves. Jaspers' comprehensive philosophy places a particular emphasis on the

individual and their personal experiences, an approach rooted in the philosophies of Descartes and Kant. Although many critics argue that Jaspers' philosophy lacks a systematic structure, his method of clarification renders this criticism baseless. Jaspers believes that understanding the nature of human existence does not require complex and theoretical arguments, just as Kant did not rely on abstract arguments to prove his ethical theory. For Jaspers, existence is sufficient in itself and proves itself through real, lived experience.

Jaspers repeatedly emphasized that both human existence and those entities beyond the material world (what he terms 'modes of being of the encompassing') have their own unique logic that is inaccessible to ordinary methods of understanding. This logic can only be grasped through the method of existential clarification. He argues that to comprehend the world fully, one must adopt a far broader horizon encompassing everything. This horizon, like an invisible boundary, surrounds all. Yet, it is neither visible nor tangible; it can only be apprehended through specific experiences that transcend the ordinary. These experiences enable us to access that which lies beyond the material, measurable world. Everything beyond the material, observable world—such as spiritual concepts, the existence of God, or ethical values—can be viewed as parts of a larger whole. All our experiences, even the most expansive and profound, are limited. To consider them as the totality of truth leads to a dead end. These experiences can be categorized into two types: those that define us as living, conscious beings, such as existence, consciousness, and spirit; and those that transcend us, like the world and what we call the 'transcendent'. Between these two lies 'reason', acting as a bridge connecting these experiences. This reason is not a fixed and definite cognitive tool, but rather a flexible and evolving one. Jaspers terms this overall understanding of the structure of human experience 'basic knowledge.' He asserts that comprehending this knowledge is essential for a profound understanding of human existence.

However, this fundamental knowledge renders the concept of 'existence,' which is of paramount importance to Jaspers, somewhat obscure. When we say that existence is a particular state of the encompassing, it seems as if we are limiting existence. Whereas, existence should be something that encompasses all limitations. Additionally, Jaspers seeks to preserve philosophy as an independent activity. That is, philosophy should not aim to directly discover reality but rather should help us understand ourselves better. Thus, according to Jaspers, we do not need anything other than ourselves to understand existence and philosophy. By reflecting on ourselves and our experiences, we can attain a deeper understanding of existence and philosophy. When everything we thought revealed reality to us (like science and everyday experiences) was called into question, we needed to find a new way of understanding the world. Jaspers argues that in such circumstances, something called 'philosophical faith' becomes significant. This faith is not blind faith but rather a faith that arises from deep philosophical reflection. This faith helps us better understand our own existence and move toward growth and development. However, this faith is like a delicate plant. It

must be nurtured and cared for. If we do not pay attention to it, it may wither away. It's like a spring that dries up if it does not receive water.

Jaspers argues that to comprehend complex, transcendental concepts like 'revelation', we must employ a specific foundational knowledge. He likens this foundational knowledge to armor that protects us from the complex and incomprehensible ideas that emanate from the transcendent realm. By employing what he terms 'transcendence', he can decode religious insights and access realities that we cannot directly perceive, realities that seem to message us from another world. While Jaspers holds a non-objective understanding of existence, his relationship with this dimension is dual: on the one hand, he strives to simply set aside all beliefs and dogmas and seek pure truth. On the other hand, he recognizes that it is precisely the ambiguity and complexity of religion and religious beliefs that drive him towards philosophy and the search for the meaning of life. In other words, Jaspers believes that the darkness and obscurity of religion help him attain a deeper understanding of existence.

4. Critique of post-Kantian Philosophies: Fichte, Schelling, Hegel

Jaspers recognizes that darkness and ambiguity exist not only in religions and religious beliefs but also throughout the history of German thought post-Kant. By examining the works of Schelling, he demonstrates how German philosophers have strayed from the original path of Kantian thought. At that time, the greatness and destiny of Germany were intertwined.

The great truth in German Idealism resided in understanding the need to complement, appropriate, and continue Kantian philosophy against Kantian orthodoxy. But it was a particular German fate to approach this task by forsaking the Kantian way of thinking ... Sorcery took the place of high philosophy, and, since it also contained a truth, had even greater seductive power. (Jaspers, 1955: 313)

Schelling says:

One has always sensed how profound the break between the Idealists and Kant was, but perhaps not made it perfectly clear until now... (Ibid).

And finally:

The break in the mode of thought took effect in one particular area of German education in the 1790s ... Prior to this break, the spirit of Lessing, Goethe, Kant, and Humboldt abided ... With the break something quite different arose, the spirit of sorcery, subsequently known as Romanticism; in philosophy this spirit reached its utmost expression in Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel (Ibid: 314).

These changes provoked intense reactions, particularly among materialists and positivists who claimed to hold a scientific viewpoint. Following these events, philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Marx launched critiques of this intellectual trend. Even neo-Kantian philosophies, which sought to return to Kant's philosophy, were unable to bridge this divide. Jaspers viewed this rejection of Kant's philosophy and disregard for its values as a profound and enduring catastrophe. Jaspers not only criticized Schelling but also leveled severe criticisms against Heidegger. In one of his notes about Heidegger, he wrote...

He lacks a consciousness of truth in favour of self-exorcizing sorcery, which leaves behind a void ... He adheres to Schelling, Eckhart, and gnosis lacking an awareness of origin and suffering an impoverishment of former sense; verbatim borrowing in decisive places. (Jaspers, 1978: 102)

Jaspers believed that both Schelling and Heidegger were influenced by a kind of magical and **mystical** thinking. He thought that this thinking led Heidegger to make serious political mistakes. However, it seems that Jaspers was not alone in these criticisms, as another philosopher, Heinrich Barth, shared his views and also criticized Heidegger.

5. Jaspers and Heinrich Barth

The most significant part of Jaspers' book on revelation is an essay he wrote to celebrate the 70th birthday of his friend and colleague, Heinrich Barth (1890-1965). In this essay, titled "Philosophical Faith and Christian Revelation", Jaspers explores the relationship between philosophical faith and Christian revelation. (Jaspers, 1960a: 12) This essay is shorter and more focused than his more comprehensive book on the subject. In addition to Jaspers, other philosophers such as Karl Barth, Hermann Diem, Emil Brunner, Fernand Brunner, Alfred de Quervain, and Gerhard Huber also contributed to the Festschrift honoring Heinrich Barth. This list of contributors highlights Barth's significance at the time, even though he has not received the recognition he deserves today. (Jaspers, 1962: 498) Barth's name appears multiple times in Jaspers' writings, even in his correspondence with Hannah Arendt. (Arendt et al, 1985: 129) On the other hand, Heinrich Barth explicitly disagreed with Jaspers' views on faith and history in one of his writings (Barth, 1950: 434), although their overall perspectives were quite similar. From the outset, the personal relationship between Jaspers and Barth was marked by tension. Barth had long hoped to secure the philosophy chair at the University of Basel, but the position was ultimately offered to Jaspers. Later, when Barth was up for full professorship, Jaspers opposed his appointment. Heinrich Barth was a follower of the Marburg School of philosophy. He attended the lectures of great philosophers such as Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, and Ernst Cassirer, and in the 1920s he became involved in the "critical idealism" movement. Barth sought to develop his own philosophy of existence based on Kant's ideas about practical reason and the teachings of the Marburg School (Cohen, 1931: 454).

However, Karl Jaspers had a completely different approach. He wanted to revolutionize philosophy and religion, transforming traditional viewpoints. Barth says of this: 'When I was studying philosophy at the University of Basel in 1949, Karl Jaspers was a very famous and popular professor. His lectures were so captivating and engaging that the university halls were always full of students. He spoke with great confidence about various philosophies, even those beyond European philosophy. He was tall and dignified, with a very distinguished and conscious demeanor. In other words, he was a very influential and inspiring figure.' Unlike Jaspers, Heinrich Barth had a difficult time. He was severely disabled and taught at very inconvenient hours, such as 7 AM in the summer. He always had his head buried in his books and spoke in a soft voice. He was not at all interested in small talk or self-promotion. For this reason, the number of students who attended his classes was very small. His classes were held in a small, dark room. In his classes, students had to take careful notes and read and interpret philosophical texts in the original language themselves. Many students didn't even know that Jaspers had another colleague named Heinrich Barth. This is not so surprising, as Barth's writings were very hard to find and few people read them. Following the severing of ties between Switzerland and Germany in 1933, Barth's significant work, 'Philosophy of Practical Reason' (published in 1927), was nearly forgotten. (Barth, 1927: 434). Even his substantial two-volume 'Philosophy of Appearance' was mistakenly believed by many to be a much smaller book (Barth, 1947: 434). Nevertheless, both volumes demonstrate that all our knowledge of the world begins with the appearance of phenomena. This appearance, or phenomenon, in philosophical terms, even if not the ultimate starting point, serves as the foundation for all our cognition. This focus on appearance is what fundamentally distinguishes Heinrich Barth's philosophical perspective from that of Jaspers, as well as from the theology of his brother, Karl Barth. Barth's important work, 'Outlines of a Philosophical System', published in the year of his death, 1965, delves into this very topic. However, it was quickly relegated to the status of an outdated work associated with existentialism, and received little attention.

Both Jaspers and Barth were profoundly influenced by Plato, Augustine, and Kant. In fact, Jaspers **considered** these three to be the principal founders of philosophy (Jaspers, 1959: 319). Barth emerged from the Marburg School of philosophy, while Jaspers strongly opposed the Southwest German Neo-Kantianism, particularly the views of Heinrich Rickert. Both philosophers had a deep interest in the Bible and its teachings, which significantly influenced their thought. However, the primary difference between these two philosophers lies in their respective perspectives on Christianity. Jaspers argued for a return to the original and fundamental roots of Christianity, namely the teachings of the Bible. Yet, he believed that over time, churches and religious institutions had deviated from these roots and distorted the essential teachings of Christianity. Barth, too, accorded significance to the Bible, but his views regarding churches and religious institutions differed, setting him apart from Jaspers.

Both Jaspers and Barth adopted and expanded upon the idea of a philosophy of

existence, first introduced by Schelling and later by Kierkegaard, to develop a thought about human existence. Jaspers speaks of the concept of 'possible existence', meaning that humans can attain various forms of existence. On the other hand, Barth is interested in how human existence becomes manifest and connects with reality. He believes that our knowledge of the world and ourselves is an existential event, and it is within this event that our existence takes shape.

The existential philosophies of both philosophers are grounded in duty and responsibility. They both argue that for humans to live a meaningful life, they must feel that they have **duties** to fulfill. This duty helps humans to understand the deeper reality of their existence. They believe that this existential reality, which transcends the material and observable world, cannot be explained through simple logic and reasoning. To comprehend this reality, one must employ specific and unique methods that allow us to indirectly approach this reality.

Both philosophers believed that philosophy should be independent of religion and grounded in reason and experience. They argued that philosophical knowledge should not be **influenced** by religious beliefs. Given that these two philosophers were contemporaries and colleagues with many shared views, the question arises as to why a more significant and collaborative relationship did not develop between them. One possible reason for this is the existence of minor disagreements between them. In his later years, Jaspers became increasingly rigid and inflexible in his philosophical views. He was deeply committed to his own philosophical system and subjected any other philosophy to careful and meticulous criticism. If we want to express the fundamental difference between the philosophies of Jaspers and Barth in simple terms, we can say that Jaspers had a broad and universal view of philosophy. He sought to examine all the world's philosophies within a unified framework and to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the history and philosophy of humankind. In other words, Jaspers was searching for a universal philosophy. Barth, however, had a deeper and more precise approach. He was more interested in the roots and foundations of philosophy and sought to understand how each philosophy had developed and on what basis it was grounded. Instead of seeking a universal philosophy, Barth aimed to analyze different philosophies individually and in detail. While Jaspers believed that European philosophy was nearing its end, Barth, by examining concepts such as emergence, the act of emergence, and the transcendental basis of understanding, was able to discover new and unknown dimensions of philosophy. Through this, he expanded the boundaries of philosophy and introduced novel perspectives in this field.

6. Philosophical Faith and Reading Cipher-Script

Barth held a complex and somewhat contradictory view of the work of his compatriot, Jaspers. On the one hand, he had great respect for Jaspers' significant achievements and **shared** some fundamental beliefs with him. On the other hand, he doubted whether Jaspers' philosophy could provide answers to all philosophical questions, particularly those related to religion. One of the most significant differences between the two philosophers was their respective views on religion. Jaspers believed

that religious faiths based on revelation (such as the Abrahamic religions) had value, but Barth disagreed. Barth thought that Jaspers did not give enough importance to the religious beliefs of ordinary people and viewed them with a degree of condescension. This disagreement reveals an internal tension within Barth himself. He wanted both to respect philosophy and to value the religious beliefs of people. In other words, he sought to give value to both reason and faith.

While Jaspers acknowledged the uniqueness of each individual and experience throughout history, he also believed that all humans possess the potential to reach the highest level of existence, even if the path to this goal varies across cultures. In his writings, he references ancient ideas such as Neoplatonism and Sufism, which seek a form of self-improvement and salvation. Regardless of whether Jaspers' ideas are justifiable, a crucial aspect of his philosophy is the assertion that humans are not merely part of the world. In other words, humans cannot be fully explained by the laws and concepts of the material world. Humans possess a spiritual dimension that transcends matter. This idea that humans originate from a unique and distinct source suggests that humans are more than just material beings. Jaspers uses the term "enclosure" to describe something that is both a profound and fundamental truth. This truth pertains to the nature of human existence and suggests that human existence is distinct from all other things. Jaspers elucidates this distinction through the concept of "freedom". He posits that human freedom is not something that can be deduced from other things but is rather a self-evident fact. Just as we do not need to prove our own existence, our freedom requires no proof. This idea of freedom helps us transcend the limitations of the material and predetermined world. In other words, we humans are beyond natural and social laws and are capable of making choices and decisions. Additionally, Jaspers argues that despite this freedom, each human is a unique and distinct individual. Human freedom does not imply that all humans are the same but rather signifies each individual's ability to choose their own life path. This characteristic of individual uniqueness is crucial for understanding the nature of human existence. To preserve this uniqueness, humans must avoid anything that seeks to mold them into a specific and limited form. Paradoxically, it is these very things that limit humans, such as rigid and closed religious beliefs, irrational beliefs, and superstitions, that can actually help us discover our true selves. When confronted with these things, we are forced to struggle against them and overcome them. This struggle leads us to understand ourselves and the true nature of our existence. In other words, it is these challenges and problems that help us know ourselves better and discover our authentic selves.

Jaspers argues that when we move beyond accepting ready-made beliefs and start questioning and thinking for ourselves, we are essentially developing a form of "philosophical faith". This philosophical faith drives us to seek deeper meanings beyond the surface appearance of things. To reach this deeper meaning, we must distance ourselves from what Jaspers calls the "arbitrary suspension of phenomena". This means we should not allow events and things to passively influence us without our conscious consideration. Instead of letting life's circumstances dictate and limit

us, we can view them as "enigmas" and seek their hidden meanings. This process helps us transcend the limitations of the material world and attain a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. However, the lofty goal of penetrating the depths of existence and all dimensions of reality transforms those who pursue it into ciphers of a higher reality. This implies that the power of transformation lies entirely within the individual, and any suggestion of self-aggrandizement should be seen as a form of awareness and a shift in perspective. However, a crucial point Jaspers makes is that he does not advocate for the destruction of religious knowledge or ciphers. His primary concern is that these ciphers themselves may be misinterpreted or given undue importance. Instead of seeking to simplify or fully comprehend these concepts, Jaspers aims to find a new way of looking at them. He is searching for a novel mode of thought, one capable of accommodating complex and ambiguous ideas. In simpler terms, rather than attempting to reduce these concepts to something we already understand, he wishes to accept and understand them as they are. Of course, this does not imply that the fundamental nature of these concepts changes.

From an ontological perspective, ciphers both exist and do not exist. They are like something that sometimes points beyond themselves and sometimes becomes the material thing. In either case, they eventually disappear. Therefore, there must be something that **preserves** this peculiar state of ciphers so that they can reveal existence to us. When someone seeks to find their identity and emerge from a state of anonymity, these two states converge, causing human existence to turn both inward toward itself and outward toward something greater and beyond. It is universally acknowledged that within every human being, there exist dark and ambiguous elements, which may even be negative. Humans continually strive to integrate this dark aspect with the rest of their existence. The question then arises: why do we need these ciphers? Kant, in his "Critique of Judgment", uses these ciphers as a means of understanding the beauty of nature. He suggests that nature communicates with us through these ciphers. However, Jaspers argues that these ciphers are not solely for understanding nature. Rather, everything in the world can be a cipher in some way. To fully grasp this concept, we must approach it from a personal and existential perspective. This may remind us of the once-popular notion of an "Individual mythology". However, over time, these ciphers evolve into significant cultural icons that influence our daily lives. The question arises: can these ciphers alter our lives and impact us? Are they merely reflections of our inner experiences, or can they lead to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world? In his later philosophy, Schelling sought to uncover hidden and profound truths that resembled the mysterious knowledge of esoteric traditions. He believed that understanding these truths required paying attention to specific ciphers. Kierkegaard did something similar, albeit in a different way. In his pseudonymous writings, he expressed his philosophical ideas in an enigmatic manner to provoke deeper thought in the reader. Jaspers, in his book on the atomic bomb, employs the concept of eternity as a cipher (Jaspers, 1960b: 493). Through this, he aims to delve into the profound meaning of existence and life. This cipher alludes to the possibility of

humanity's complete self-destruction and the terrifying threat of nuclear weapons. This threat has shaken the foundations of the material world and overshadowed its brilliance.

7. The Politics of Philosophical Faith

Jaspers argues that the world has reached a point where human reality and world reality have become intertwined. He sees this significant shift as a reason for a fundamental change in our way of thinking. In other words, we must radically question and transform our entire approach to thought. This radical shift in thinking (Ibid: 298) is rooted in freedom and can help us overcome the great challenges facing humanity. Jaspers calls this transformation a revolution in thought (Ibid: 321) and believes it is essential for human survival and progress. He also emphasizes the importance of global communication for solving global problems and argues that we must move beyond rigid and limiting religious beliefs to achieve a shared understanding of the world.

The nuclear threat has transformed the abstract concept of the "entire world" into a tangible, global reality that affects all humanity. Understanding and awareness of the entire world now means understanding and being aware of planet Earth and all its beings, and this understanding must be achieved through thought, social institutions, and global cooperation (Ibid: 301). In this critical situation, even the concept of "philosophical faith", which seems to be the weakest element of power, must compete with religious powers that promote violence and dominate politics. Unlike Heidegger, who believed that human destiny is unchangeable, Jaspers asserts that we can **change** our future. He disagrees with Heidegger's view that humans are helpless in the face of powerful forces and believes that his own writings are part of this great change. He is aware of the idealism of this endeavor but despite the low probability of success, he does not consider it entirely hopeless. As a last resort, he suggests following in Schelling's footsteps and founding a philosophical religion. Furthermore, Jaspers does not believe in a single, universal religion or wisdom, even though logic, which is the source of all beings, might suggest such a possibility. Ultimately, what remains is the continuous and universal movement of reason, which is constantly recreating itself. Reason should not be used as a tool or expected to serve us. Reason is like an open book or a shared treasure among us all, not yet recognized as an absolute principle. As Hegel states in "Phenomenology of Spirit", or as Jesus Christ said:

The kingdom of God is within you. (Hegel, 1948: 64)

Philosophical faith refers to faith in oneself and one's roots. This faith, through self-knowledge, also leads to faith in philosophy as the sole pure and fundamental truth of the existence of reason. For this reason, Jaspers emphasizes the awareness of "presence," an awareness that can only be understood when we recognize its eternal aspect in this **very** moment and place. With this thought, Jaspers transforms the idea of eternity into a clear and guiding cipher.

The existence of technologies capable of ending human life has given new

dimensions to philosophical faith. The individual's understanding of life is now juxtaposed with humanity's struggle to maintain the conditions necessary for its survival. Individual death and the annihilation of all humanity have become closer, particularly in the minds of the sick and power-hungry like Hitler. It is said that Adolf Hitler remarked, "We may perish, but we will take the world with us". The individual lifespan and the lifespan of the world are intertwined in the obsessions of individual power, converging at an absolute point. Philosophical faith opposes this absolutist viewpoint that the world can be completely controlled. If we face the possibility of the complete annihilation of the world, then the material nature of the world becomes of paramount importance to us. In these circumstances, our existence as beings living in the world becomes objectively and tangibly apparent. Philosophical concepts such as "being-in-the-world" in Heidegger's philosophy and "incarnation" in Barth's theology become more significant in such situations, showing us that our existence is directly linked to the existence of the world.

Jaspers argues that when confronted with significant and defining events, such as revelations, dark and absolute aspects of violent politics become apparent. These aspects are so deep and complex that they cannot be easily understood. However, even mistaken or **misunderstood** events cause individuals to introspect and question their own existence. Moreover, the threat of human annihilation drives us towards concrete and practical actions. Today, public discourse in the media is influenced by these two aspects: the dark and complex dimensions of violence and the need for practical action to prevent annihilation. Fears of violence stemming from religious fundamentalism, as well as the proliferation of nuclear weapons, both in the hands of governments and terrorist groups, have significantly increased. These threats have intensified considerably since the publication of Jaspers' book on the atomic bomb and the future of humanity in 1960 and the end of the Cold War in 1989. However, we can no longer simply attribute these threats to the competition between two superpowers. New asymmetric wars and covert intelligence agency wars against global crime have completely transformed the shape of global politics.

Today, philosophical faith, rooted in the history of religion and culture, faces a serious challenge: **the** growing political role of religion and culture in the contemporary world. While globalization of markets and technology is expanding, religion and culture, as a reaction, have turned into islands for preserving identity and specific perspectives. This reaction has created significant differences between civilizations and even within each civilization. In these circumstances, dialogue between different religions and cultures has become more of a dream, while violence and conflict between different ethnic groups have become a bitter reality. Can philosophical faith do anything in the current situation? When conflict erupts, philosophical faith seems to have no power. However, there are shining examples like Gandhi who show that this is not the case. Of course, Jaspers says that Gandhi was in a unique situation and cannot always be considered a model. But even if **philosophical** faith exists only in the hearts of individuals, it can still be a great hope. Precisely because religion and culture have become factors of

turmoil, a kind of thinking that both encompasses and questions them offers an opportunity to find ways to peace. This opportunity exists because philosophical faith does not rely on any fixed and unchanging principles and can, using logical thinking, find solutions to problems even in very difficult circumstances.

What we have discussed may seem self-evident, but it is nonetheless an important necessity. To accept this simple necessity, we must change our perspective and fundamentally transform our way of thinking. We must acknowledge that this necessity is so crucial that nothing else can replace it. Religion and culture are based on fixed and unchanging beliefs, but philosophical faith has only one constant belief: the belief in **rationality**.

While philosophical faith may make one feel isolated and alone, it also opens a window to connection with others. In his book, *Philosophy*, Jaspers placed communication at the center of existential enlightenment. He envisioned a day when all beings could unite in a philosophical community. Jaspers expanded on this idea and spoke of a universal philosophy. He believed that philosophy should also address human history and provide a deeper understanding of human existence throughout history. He believed that this philosophical quest would never end. But this infinity indicates that philosophical faith will continue to thrive and has a bright future ahead.

Conclusion

Karl Jaspers' concept of philosophical faith is central to his existential philosophy. Jaspers believed that philosophy, through the act of philosophizing and the search for existence, can lead to a deeper understanding of reality. For Jaspers, philosophical faith signifies a profound and unwavering belief in a reality that transcends sensory and rational experience. This faith is grounded neither in revelation nor in traditional religious beliefs, nor solely in rational arguments. Instead, it is rooted in individual existential experience, allowing humans to explore the hidden dimensions of their existence and the world. Jaspers argued that deep within human existence lies a search for a meaning beyond everyday life. This quest enables individuals to discover and believe in the truth of their own existence. Rather than relying on pre-determined answers, philosophical faith empowers individuals to address fundamental questions about being, meaning, and purpose in life. Jaspers contended that philosophical faith points to aspects of reality that extend beyond the grasp of pure reason. This does not negate reason but rather complements it with other dimensions of human experience. He also believed that philosophical faith helps individuals establish deeper connections with others and fosters a better understanding of themselves and the world around them. Karl Jaspers' existential philosophy, and particularly his concept of philosophical faith, can be illuminated by a comparison with the existential philosophy of his contemporary, Heinrich Barth. Both philosophers contributed to the development of existentialism by emphasizing individual experience and the significance of human existence. However, their approaches to this philosophy differed. Both philosophers stressed the importance of the independence of

philosophical inquiry from revelation and were critical of mystical approaches in philosophy. Jaspers engaged more broadly with the history of philosophy and religions, while Barth was more interested in analyzing fundamental philosophical concepts. In essence, Jaspers viewed religion as a personal experience and a source for understanding human existence. He believed that religion could help individuals answer life's fundamental questions. Heinrich Barth, on the other hand, was more interested in the philosophical analysis of religious concepts and paid less attention to personal religious experience. Jaspers leaned towards biblical religion, while Barth was more inclined towards critical philosophy and Marburg idealism. Jaspers sought to develop a universal philosophy, whereas Barth focused on analyzing the foundations of philosophy from Plato to the present. In conclusion, by examining the ideas of these two philosophers, we can find new answers to fundamental questions about life, existence, and being.

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نقش ایمان فلسفی در اندیشه وجودی کارل یاسپرس

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این مقاله به بررسی مبانی هستی‌شناختی مفهوم ایمان فلسفی کارل یاسپرس می‌پردازد. چنانکه مقایسه با هستی‌شناسی وجودی هایدگر روشن می‌کند، یاسپرس بسیار بیشتر بر عمل فلسفه‌ورزی تأکید می‌کند تا خود فلسفه. از یک منظر، فلسفه یاسپرس جنبه‌ای اخلاقی و گشوده دارد؛ از سوی دیگر، این گشودگی به واسطه نظریه او درباره فراگیر و درک جزمی او از ابزارهای نظری کانت تهدید می‌شود. فلسفه وجودی یاسپرس و به‌ویژه مفهوم ایمان فلسفی او را می‌توان با رویارویی با فلسفه وجودی همکارش، هاینریش بارث، روشن کرد. فلسفه وجودی کارل یاسپرس از ایده‌های اساسی «مکتب ماربورگ»، به‌ویژه دو فیلسوف آلمانی به‌نام‌های هرمان کوهن و پل ناتورپ سرچشمه می‌گیرد. بعد از جنگ جهانی دوم، وقتی هایدگر با دیدگاه‌های هستی‌شناسانه‌اش بر فلسفه آلمان سایه انداخته بود، یاسپرس و هاینریش بارث که هر دو به کانت اعتقاد داشتند و مخالف ایده‌های اصلی هایدگر بودند، می‌توانستند همکاری مثمر ثمری داشته باشند، اما این همکاری هرگز محقق نشد. فلسفه وجودی یاسپرس او را به‌سمت یک حالت نبوی سوق داد، اما مفهوم او از ایمان فلسفی که از کتاب *تم* او در سال ۱۹۵۹ به‌طور عمومی شناخته شده است، همچنان توجه جهانی را به خود جلب می‌کند. نویسنده در این پژوهش با استفاده از روش تحلیل مفهومی از نوع تفسیر و بسط مفهوم، به روشن‌سازی مفهوم ایمان فلسفی یاسپرس پرداخته و سعی کرده است درک بهتری از فلسفه وجودی وی ارائه دهد.

کلمات کلیدی: ایمان فلسفی، کارل یاسپرس، هایدگر، هاینریش بارث، فلسفه وجودی.

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