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## Jaspers, Heidegger, and Arendt On Politics, Science, and Communication

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**Abstract:** Heidegger's 1950 claim to Jaspers (later repeated in his *Spiegel* interview), that his Nietzsche lectures represented a "resistance" to Nazism is premised on the understanding that he and Jaspers have of the place of science in the Western world. Thus Heidegger can emphasize Nietzsche's epistemology, parsing Nietzsche's will to power, contra Nazi readings, as the metaphysical culmination of the domination of the West by scientism and technologism. It is in this sense that Heidegger argues that German Nazism is "in essence" the same as Soviet Bolshevism and American capitalism. Jaspers himself had likewise emphasized the Will to Power by contrast with the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Heidegger differs from Jaspers (as from their mutual student Hannah Arendt) inasmuch as Jaspers preserves an enthusiasm for the possibility of scientific certainty while yet recognizing (as Heidegger does) a strong sense of the *limits* of science. None of the three can correctly be labeled anti-scientific. The essay closes by recalling Arendt's reflections on the very possibility of resistance using the example of Jaspers' own resistance to contemporary political events.

A survey of continental philosophy I wrote for translation into Chinese included an entry on Jaspers' *Existenz-Philosophie*, focusing, in part, on Jaspers' "world philosophy":

Especially toward the end of his career and in the wake of the moral devastation of the rational and cultural idea of Western civilization following the rise of Nazi Germany and World War II, Jaspers advocated a world philosophy on the basis of open communication, open-mindedness but not less the scrupulous integrity of the thinker. Interested in the dynamics of what he called *limit-situations* both because of his professional formation as a medical psychologist or psychiatrist and also because of his own personal experience of life, profoundly affected as he could not but be by his direct experience of the violence of two world wars, Jaspers interpreted such limit-encounters differently from either Husserl's conception of horizon or Heidegger's elusively nihilist

reception of the language of limit-situations, or indeed life-situations in general. Jaspers who followed a more Kantian conventionality than did Heidegger but, and as illuminated by Nietzsche's thought, conceived such limit situations in term of the individual shattering against life and so foundering. Rather than annihilating anxiety or despair in either Heidegger's or in Nietzsche's sense, Jaspers saw the chance or possibility of transcendence. Jaspers' hopeful perspective grew out of his articulation of *periechontology* (the ontology of *das Umgreifende*, the all-encompassing) but not less from his concern with origins and responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Babich, "Continental Philosophy in Britain and America," Dezhi Duan, trans., in *The Map of Contemporary British and American Philosophy and Philosophers*, eds. Kang Ouyang and Steve Fuller (Beijing: People's Press, 2005), 22-82, here p. 40.

This excerpt introduces the reading of Jaspers I undertake here, beginning from Nazism as a very specific limit situation in order to examine the question of politics, science, and communication and emphasizing Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche and his own political claims for the same.

The Chinese encyclopedia in which my survey essay appears is of the kind that has been proliferating as of late, a reference book only distinctive to the extent that it highlights the analytic-continental distinction many seem anxious to sweep under the rug, especially where there are fewer and fewer practitioners trained in classical continental philosophy and more and more analytically formed continental philosophers, i.e., those who suppose that the only thing that makes continental philosophy continental is the literal focus on the continent itself and not a matter of philosophical formation or style.<sup>2</sup> Jaspers' own thinking is more accessible to the former traditionally continental approach (indeed, it may be argued that a rigorous engagement with Jaspers' texts presupposes a continental formation) and to just this degree, taking cognizance of this traditional distinction between approaches to philosophy is no personal predilection but indispensable to a reading of Jaspers (and so too Heidegger and Nietzsche, or, indeed, though many manage to get by without such a background, particularly in the context of political philosophy: Arendt).

### Situating Limit: Heidegger's Nietzsche

Jaspers, so I shall argue here, offers a more plausible account than does Heidegger of the complications of Heidegger's involvement/non-involvement with National Socialism.<sup>3</sup> While Jaspers offers no kind of exoneration he does point to the complexity of

<sup>2</sup> See further, Babich, "On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy: Nietzsche's Lying Truth, Heidegger's Speaking Language, and Philosophy," in *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy*, ed. Carlos Prado (Amherst, NY: Prometheus/Humanity Books, 2003), 63-103.

<sup>3</sup> I draw portions for the first section of this essay upon an earlier essay forthcoming in German, Babich, "Nietzsche: Heideggers Widerstand. Nietzsche lesen als eine 'Konfrontation' mit dem Nationalsozialismus," in *Heidegger Jahrbuch 5*, ed. Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg im Breisgau: Alber Verlag, 2009).

Heidegger's thought and this is in keeping with Jaspers' philosophical style in general and with his relationship to Heidegger in particular.

In his often-cited 1966 interview with *Der Spiegel*, Heidegger claimed that his university lecture courses on Nietzsche and Hölderlin constituted nothing less romantic—or far-fetched—than what he called his "resistance" to the National Socialist movement in Germany.<sup>4</sup> Using language that was Nietzschean but no less biblical, Heidegger affirmed that "[a]nyone with ears to hear heard in these lectures a confrontation with National Socialism" (OGS 33). Later in the interview, Heidegger repeats the claim, declaring his Nietzsche lectures to have been, again, nothing less than a "confrontation with National Socialism" (OGS 35).

Some fifteen years earlier, however, in an extended letter of self-explication and strained self-defense, we find almost the same assertion, using almost the very same words for the same claim (certainly the spirit of the assertion is the same) in the letter Heidegger writes to Jaspers on April 8, 1950. Claiming that teaching Nietzsche constituted his resistance, Heidegger emphasizes the point to say, "I do not write this in order to claim that I accomplished anything although everyone who could hear clearly in the years 1935-1944 could have known that, at this university, *no one* dared to do what I did."<sup>5</sup> Heidegger continues: "I was then struck all the harder by what was undertaken against me in 1945-48 and, actually, to this hour" (HJC 189). In correspondence with Jaspers, again, Heidegger invokes his Nietzsche courses, noting that he had, at times, a Nazi spy in his lectures.

<sup>4</sup> Originally published as "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten," *Der Spiegel*, 30/23 (31 Mai 1976). In English as "Only a God Can Save Us: *Der Spiegel's* Interview with Martin Heidegger," in *Philosophy Today* 20, trans. Maria Alter and John Caputo (1976), 267-284, and a year later in the *New School Journal of the Graduate Philosophy Faculty* (1977), 5-27; and included in numerous book collections including the German Library edition *Martin Heidegger, Political and Political Writings*, ed. Manfred Strasser (New York: Continuum, 2003), 24-48 (subsequent citations [henceforth called OGS] will refer to this edition). For a useful German collection including Richard Wisser's interview with Heidegger, see *Antwort. Martin Heidegger im Gespräch*, eds. Günther Neske and Emil Kettering (Pfullingen: Neske, 1988), 81-118.

<sup>5</sup> See Walter Biemel and Hans Saner, eds, *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence 1920-1963*, trans. Gary Aylesworth (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 2003), 189 [henceforth cited as HJC].

Now there had been a break, painful to Jaspers and arguably so for Heidegger as well, though Heidegger by any standard was less of what we in New York call a *Mensch* than Jaspers, and it seems plain to me that Heidegger's greatest anxiety or concern, at all times, was for himself and this performance limited the kinds of things that caused him grief. Despite this I think it also patent that Heidegger valued his friendship with Jaspers both before and after the war and something of the complex level of communication between the two men (due, and I return to this at the conclusion, to Jaspers' particular gift for philosophical reflection and communication) can be gleaned from reading their correspondence.

Indeed, prior to the letter of April 8, 1950 and as the occasion for it, there was a separate exchange between the two men in which, read in the context of his complex philosophical friendship with Jaspers, Heidegger offers what must be counted as an apology and Jaspers, to his credit more than to Heidegger's, accepted it as such. In that letter of March 5, 1950, Heidegger relates his "shame" and impotence or sense of "powerlessness" and "failure" (HJC 185) at "having here and there, directly and indirectly, contributed" to the "viciousness" of Nazism, and of the "persecution of Jews" (HJC 187-9). Jaspers' reply of March 19, 1950: "I thank you sincerely for your frank explanation. My wife also says to send you her thanks. That you state that you felt ashamed means a lot to me. With that, you enter into the community of all of us who have lived and live in a condition for which shame is also an appropriate word. I would like to say to you, from my wife and me, that we never assumed that my wife, being Jewish, was a reason for allowing our relations to die out" (HJC 186). There is a lot said in this, and it is typical of Heidegger that he does not pick up on it. Yet the lot that is said is more than Jaspers' pointing to his own reserves or disappointment in Heidegger's regard. In fact Jaspers also hears the full sense of what Heidegger writes and repeats in a subsequent letter of March 25, 1950, a letter accompanying a gift of Jaspers' writings on *The Idea of the University, Nietzsche and Christianity, The Question of German Guilt*: "Now I think often of your word shame" (HJC 187).

Critics have complained that Heidegger's admission of shame was anything but an explicit admission of the word that Jaspers himself did not

shy away from using: namely *guilt*.<sup>6</sup> Instructively, not even Jaspers presents a perfect contrast to Heidegger and the standard for what we expect with regard to German guilt, as indeed German shame can seem almost impossibly high.<sup>7</sup> Theodore Adorno has even made the case that Heideggerian language (a claim which would include for Adorno many more thinkers than Heidegger alone) inevitably inhibited any attempt to come to terms with the horrors of National Socialism.

What Heidegger did do was to admit his shame and his regret to Jaspers and, in addition, Heidegger continually claimed to have offered a critical engagement with Nazism. I am not able to engage the complex question of the relationship between Jaspers and Heidegger in a comprehensive way, but it is relevant (and this is where the invocation of Heidegger's many letters with Jaspers over the years from 1920 to 1963 is useful in order) to raise the question of *how* even assuming that Heidegger's claim to have "resisted" National Socialism (by the expedient of teaching Hölderlin and Nietzsche),<sup>8</sup> *might* be baseless, he might have meant this claim in the first place.

Whether one concedes Heidegger's assertion as legitimate or not is irrelevant to the question: how might a reading of Nietzsche constitute a specifically political resistance? The received answer is just as well known and the same answer is given whether one supports or refuses Heidegger's claims. Using the agonistic language of confrontation

<sup>6</sup> See for a discussion highlighting Heidegger's failure to engage with the book Jaspers sent: *The Question of German Guilt* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), Antonia Grunenberg, "Arendt, Heidegger, Jaspers: Thinking Through the Breach in Tradition," *Social Research* 7/4 (2007), 1003-1028.

<sup>7</sup> Thus Mark W. Clark notes that Jaspers "like other German civil servants" took the loyalty oath and emphasized that although "Jaspers did not go to great lengths to hide his opposition to National Socialism during the twelve-year Third Reich, he also never publicly criticized the regime... With the exception of some veiled criticisms of the Nazis in his Nietzsche book of 1936, he remained silent." Clark, "A Prophet without Honour: Karl Jaspers in Germany, 1945-48," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37/2 (2002), 197-222, here, p. 200.

<sup>8</sup> This is how the question is often posed. See, for a start, James Ward, *Heidegger's Political Thinking* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995) throughout but especially pp. 207ff.

(*Auseinandersetzung*), Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche challenged (or supported) the assumptions of those attending these lectures. Trivially and inasmuch as Heidegger *qua* professor functioned as a state appointee or civil servant, what he taught, *anything* he taught (Nietzsche and Hölderlin but also Heraclitus or Parmenides), would be of political significance.<sup>9</sup>

Gary Aylesworth draws upon this civic context to explain the status and role of a German professor: "a Professor Ordinarius draws a regular salary from the Ministry of Culture with a rank equal to a Councillor of State 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Class" (*HJC* 12). Such explanatory glosses should be considered together with Pierre Bourdieu's more recent analyses of academia<sup>10</sup> and in the German context together with Fritz Ringer's study of the German professoriate<sup>11</sup> and Aylesworth offers these reflections at the start of his introduction just because, as Aylesworth takes care to emphasize, in the kinds of letters exchanged between Heidegger and Jaspers on candidates (Jewish and otherwise) both men can seem to engage in rather a lot of what in American circles would be considered *ad hominem* and today racist remarks (*HJC* 11-13, esp. 13).

Although beyond the purview of this essay, if it is true that a discussion of the relevance of issues of class between Jaspers and Heidegger is important, it is also true that such "distinctions," in Bourdieu's characterization of the social functioning of aesthetic prestige, haunt the academy and its objective ideal of merit, a conception that is inseparable from the

very ideal of "quality," of "good" and "bad" philosophy. Despite the patent obviousness of this point—it is after all the substance of the air we breathe as scholars and teachers—issues of status are often underplayed at the same time as the class markers of Bourdieu's "distinction" are often taken precisely as so many self-reinforcing "proofs" of quality (better vs. worse schools, better vs. worse university presses, etc).<sup>12</sup>

The question I seek to pose here is, to begin with, a basic question. It touches upon the very political and not less politicized distinction between theory and practice. Thus Heidegger's reference to Nietzsche appeals not only to a common interest Heidegger knows Jaspers to share with him but and very precisely to a context Heidegger could count upon given his knowledge of Jaspers' work on Nietzsche, especially where Jaspers' 1936 *Nietzsche. Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* can appear to offer a guideline for Heidegger's own reading of Nietzsche in his lecture courses.<sup>13</sup>

In what sense does or could reading Nietzsche count politically, a question relevant however one reads him—as I have just noted that Jaspers' reading of Nietzsche is patent in Heidegger's account? I take as a caution against the industry of Nietzsche biographies Heidegger's warning to his own students at the start of his first lecture course on

<sup>9</sup> Ted Kiesel has sought to emphasize this too in his own scholarly contextualizations of Heidegger's lectures.

<sup>10</sup> See Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) as well as Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Lauretta C. Clough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969). See too Paul Forman's classic paper, "Weimar Culture, Causality, and Quantum Theory, 1918-1927: Adaptation by German Physicists and Mathematicians to a Hostile Intellectual Environment," *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences* 3 (1971), 1-115. Contemporary discussions in Germany today turn upon issues of reputation and prestige in Bourdieu's analysis, correspondent to a coopted model of entrepreneurial productivity.

<sup>12</sup> But see, from a British point of view, Lisa Lucas, *The Research Game in Academic Life* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2006) and Val Burris, "The Academic Caste System: Prestige Hierarchies in PhD Exchange Networks," *American Sociological Review* 69 (April 2009), 239-264. In philosophy, the web-based ranksmanship of the Leiter "report" offers an ongoing instantiation of the relevance of this sociological commonplace in philosophy and touches on nothing less relevant to Jaspers scholarship (and so too Heidegger and Nietzsche) than the analytic-continental divide. See for a discussion Bruce Wilshire, *Fashionable Nihilism: A Critique of Analytic Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002) and the range of different contributions to *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy*, ed. C. G. Prado (Amherst: Prometheus, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Heidegger's review of Jaspers' *Psychology of World Views*, published in 1919 in the *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeige* as "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*," was crucially significant in the development of Heidegger's thought as Theodore Kiesel shows in a chapter dedicated to analyzing it in *Becoming Heidegger On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910-1927*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), pp. 110ff.

Nietzsche, "Whoever does not have the courage and perseverance of thought required to become involved in Nietzsche's own writings need not read anything about him either."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Jaspers' own introduction to Nietzsche presupposed just such a deep engagement with Nietzsche's own texts.

If this case can be made, it makes all the difference that writing to Jaspers, Heidegger was well aware that Jaspers had adumbrated a specifically political reading of Nietzsche. Thus we note that Jaspers himself offers an insightful early reading of Nietzsche's conception of "great politics,"<sup>15</sup> in a chapter that begins, moreover, with what I read as a specific appeal to Heidegger, as Jaspers writes: "Nietzsche's longing for authentic man leads him to despair of any specific form in which man is actualized" (NPA 249). Jaspers goes on to invoke Nietzsche's notion of European nihilism: "In the light of the truth as he has come to see it, everything is undergoing dissolution" (NPA 249).

Jaspers prefaces the chapter on "Great Politics" with a chapter "History and the Present Age," writing as he does in 1936 that the human being "is not static and unchanging; his existence is not simply repeated from one generation to another. He is what his history makes him" (NPA 231). This emphatically historical point about the essence of the human being: "He is what his history makes him," echoes in Heidegger's own reading of Nietzsche, especially as Jaspers also includes a methodological discussion of historical science, (NPA 236 ff.) articulated in terms of *Geschichtlichkeit* (NPA 239)<sup>16</sup> and including Nietzsche's critique of the machine in the modern age in a striking anticipation of Heidegger's later *The Question Concerning Technology*, as Jaspers quotes Nietzsche as writing "The press, the railroad, and the telegraph are premises the thousand year

conclusion of which nobody yet dared to draw" (NPA 241) and including Nietzsche's emphasis on the masses and decadence. Jaspers thus follows this reading of Nietzsche's reflections on historical decline with two sections entitled "God is Dead" and "The Origin of European Nihilism" before he turns to discuss Nietzsche's "Great Politics" in a context prefiguring Heidegger's guiding emphases, as Jaspers explicitly adverts to both Nietzsche's "metaphysics" of the will to power and his "mysticism" of eternal recurrence.

Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche inevitably shows the relevance of Jaspers' study, especially as Jaspers emphasizes (as Heidegger does) the logical and radically critical epistemological basis of Nietzsche's thinking with respect to method and to science as such.<sup>17</sup> In addition to focusing on the technological articulation of this same critique, (NPA 267 ff.) shades of Heidegger's own emphases, Jaspers also cites Nietzsche's challenging of American, English, and French politics, writing that "Only Russia and Germany really seem to concern Nietzsche from the standpoint of great politics" (NPA 265). But even here, Heidegger echoes the same emphases on offer in Jaspers' exegesis of Nietzsche's teaching of will to power.

Jaspers, it will not do to forget, wrote his monumental study of Nietzsche in a context framed by National Socialism and it was in this context that Heidegger taught Nietzsche. My concern is not to compare Jaspers' study of Nietzsche with Heidegger's lecture courses—that would be a rewarding, intrinsically relevant, but different project from the one that currently concerns us here—but only and just to shed whatever light one can shed on Heidegger's claim that to teach Nietzsche in Nazi Germany was a kind of or form of "resistance."

Resistance? This gives us an image of Heidegger, like Hölderlin's Empedocles, as a kind of latter-day, very academic and hence very fey, Che Guevara (and why not Che as a model for academic "resistance"? Sartre and de Beauvoir met the revolutionary leader (complete with a photo op).

<sup>14</sup> Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, Volume 1*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Jaspers, "Great Politics," in *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity*, p. 249-286 [henceforth cited as NPA].

<sup>16</sup> Jaspers contextualizes Nietzsche's concern for the "vital significance of historical consciousness" not only his appreciation of the relevance of his history but also inasmuch as Nietzsche "was the first to subject all historical science to critical questioning" (NPA 236).

<sup>17</sup> Jaspers' focus on Nietzsche's critical project regarding the possibility of knowledge frames his epistemological reflection that for Nietzsche "epistemology is impossible" (NPA 288). In the same critical sense, Jaspers speaks of "Nietzsche's Critique of Reason" (NPA 336).



Ernesto Che Guevara with Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre, Cuba, 1960 (Che Guevara Museum, Centro de Estudios Che Guevara in Havana, Cuba)

I made the comparison to Hölderlin's Empedocles as it is one Heidegger drew upon very explicitly. But the reference to Che should, I hope, lower the tone and advance the point of the question here as a meta-question of real or active or working resistance.

What is resistance? Does one have to get arrested, or deported, or murdered? Or, best of all, least likely of all: are the stakes for offering real resistance the stakes of somehow contributing to changing the world? And just how, if we are tempted by the latter, is the business "changing the world" to work? Such questions, at least some if not all of them are relevant as they induce us to ask, even if one means to be sympathetic to Heidegger—and most of us have no such inclinations—how such a "resistance" was expected to function?

With respect to Nazism, of course, Nietzsche is a special case, as Hölderlin (even Hölderlin) and Heraclitus and Parmenides are not, not even as taught by Heidegger. And if some of us are not inclined to think of Nietzsche as a "proto-Nazi" (as Tom Sheehan once characterized him), some of us are. Simply by teaching Nietzsche—the Nazi philosopher—Heidegger accords with Nazi policy.<sup>18</sup> If anything, Heidegger's interpretation (content and style) seems to attack Nietzsche himself rather than Nazism. Indeed, most Nietzsche scholars are

<sup>18</sup> Sheehan quotes Heidegger as saying in 1936 that the "two men who have initiated a counter-movement against nihilism—Mussolini and Hitler—have both, in their own and essentially different ways, learned something from Nietzsche. But with that, the authentic metaphysical scope of Nietzsche has not yet come into force." Sheehan, "Caveat Lector," *New York Review of Books* 27/19 (1980).

persuaded that Heidegger is hostile to Nietzsche as are, indeed, most Heidegger scholars.<sup>19</sup>

I will return to my discussion of Jaspers but it is relevant to his sense of rigor to ask, merely peripherally, what it would mean if in fact Heidegger's reading did run counter to Nazi readings? What would that mean? What would that prove? Can it be said that reading a philosopher counter the prevailing academic trend constitutes "resistance"?

The notion that reading anything or any author can effect anything is manifestly appealing to academics—thus Jaspers himself cites Marx's dictum in the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach with approval as a benchmark for what he calls philosophical actuality—which may be why we as academics are so fond of thinking about intellectual resistance, that is Heidegger's but also Jaspers' and ultimately and indeed, our own. We are sure that reading, teaching, writing, are not merely political (as there is no doubt that they are) but kinds of practical action.

Some march in the streets, some go to war, others draft legislation, or manipulate those who do, other test such drafts before the law, and so on. We academics think that to act in the academy is to act on the world stage. And Heidegger thought as an academic and, fittingly enough, Heidegger has been convicted on those same terms. To speak of Heidegger's political effect on National Socialism (whether for or against) is to attribute marvelous powers to the professor of philosophy, an attribution of influence that has been seductive (and well promulgated by those same philosophers) since Empedocles and Heraclitus and above all since Plato. Thus the American Philosophical Association continues to encourage all professors of philosophy, yes: *all of us*, to take a public stance, to use our "powers" to write as public intellectuals.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> I discuss this commonality in Babich, "Dichtung, Eros, und Denken in Nietzsche und Heidegger: Heideggers Nietzsche Interpretation und die heutige Nietzsche-Lektüre," trans. with the author Albert Denker and Holger Zaborowski, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch II* (Freiburg: Karl Alber Verlag, 2005), 239-264.

<sup>20</sup> Or at least to do public relations work for the profession (as the APA imagines this). Perhaps, given the different efficacies of such interventions, the APA intends only such as Chuck Taylor and Stanley Cavell.

Only Ronald Dworkin and Simon Critchley and, of course Cornel West (when not playing extragalactic senatorial movie roles) have managed to make the cut on the New York Times op ed page, if only in truncated, tid-bit form. For all the difference this has made. And the question, at least as I see it, has to do with making a difference.

Is what we are doing here political, meeting as we are to discuss Jaspers in a session on the manifestly political thematic of cross-cultural hermeneutics and the yet more political, if also deeply philosophical notion, of world philosophy? Does this work contra Bush, the regime—oh I forgot, Yes, we did! We've now been there, done that... or so we assume, although we as a nation remain at war, a war conducted with corporate assistance (outsourcing military and intelligence to private contractors at an astonishingly high national cost), war conducted for the sake of still other corporate interests such as energy and global markets. And we are still shooting wolves and exterminating other predators for the sake of sportsmen, drilling off-shore, etc., etc. Ah well.

Peripherally, again, it may be worth asking if there is any real or genuine or serious (I am looking for a word here to do what none of Jaspers' words managed to do) active *political* relevance to what we, you or I, say (or teach or write) about Heidegger (or Nietzsche or Jaspers for that matter)? Can we manage to have an effectively, actively *political* impact thereby, just as Nietzsche sometimes wrote, likewise echoing Marx, though scholars are slow to notice this, that he by means of his writings, intended to change the world? We ourselves, so it seems, engage in nothing more practically political in anything we do or write than did Heidegger or Nietzsche himself or even, and this is worth further reflection, Nietzsche or Machiavelli or Hölderlin or Rousseau, Plato or Aristotle, and especially, maybe most of all, Hobbes, or even, for that matter Althusser (I here exclude Marx and Engels but also Lenin and Mao as well as Carl Schmitt on the one side and Antonio Gramsci on the other). We can be politically for anyone (friends) or against anyone (enemies).<sup>21</sup>

We remember that by definition, so Schmitt reminds us but so too and in an independent voice

<sup>21</sup> Adorno emphasizes this in his *Minima Moralia*.

does Alasdair MacIntyre emphasize,<sup>22</sup> that political resistance has not only to be manifest but to succeed in some way in order to count as such. Thus speaking of the very idea (and definition) of rebellion, MacIntyre reminds us that "Rebellions are always wrong while they are unsuccessful. Successful rebellion however *is* the assumption of sovereignty and has all the justification of sovereignty behind it. It is because successful not rebellion."<sup>23</sup> Otherwise it is thuggery, or what we now call terrorism because treason has lost its ground in the new globalized world order.

The Karl Marx Jaspers cites also writes *The Communist Manifesto* with Friedrich Engels in 1848, a political piece by anyone's standards, proclaiming the tremendous fluidity of modernity as such, the same modernity Jaspers thematizes for his part in his discussions of technology and his sustained reflection on the atom bomb, a threat Jaspers also read creatively and insightfully in connection with Kant's *Perpetual Peace*.<sup>24</sup> Jaspers reads Kant's essay to extend Kant's reflections to the radically new circumstances of post-nuclear war and its still threatening (if we are now so used to this threat that we are unable to pay attention to it) prospect of "a total perdition that will be due not to nature but to his own product, the technology which he holds in his hand" (*PW* 122).

For Marx what is famously key are the dialectical possibilities attributed to the new modes of production and especially the speed of the same: "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned."<sup>25</sup> Of course, it goes without saying that the vision of *The*

<sup>22</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre makes this point with reference to Hobbes' theory of the sovereign and the limits of sovereign power (and impotence).

<sup>23</sup> MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, 1966), p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> See Jaspers, *Philosophy and the World* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1963), pp. 88-124 [henceforth cited as *PW*].

<sup>25</sup> I cite Marx here following Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), p. 60.

*Communist Manifesto* (as both Jürgen Habermas and the Canadian Jesuit philosopher, Bernard Lonergan have underscored) has yet to be realized. But Nietzsche can seem to have offered a response to this fluid desacralization, the veritable unhinging of a center where, in Marx's words again: "...man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind."<sup>26</sup>

Nietzsche and Jaspers and Heidegger were concerned with the same tendency that Marx/Engels had identified in order to perceive the conditions of life through illusion,<sup>27</sup> at best through artful illusion, at worst through the spirit-deadening illusions of religion and indeed of industrialized culture and modern techno-science.

I read the concluding chapters of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* as addressed in these same terms to Heidegger as she might have also addressed them to Jaspers.<sup>28</sup> I say *both* to Heidegger

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Habermas is talking about railroads in this modern context and Nietzsche for Habermas is only a passing reference. But those who read Habermas do not read Nietzsche and I have sought to initiate greater dialogue between readers of Habermas and readers of Nietzsche in several book collections, most recently including Babich, ed., *Nietzsche, Habermas, and Critical Theory*, (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2004). This undertaking is reprised, albeit from the perspective of political theory, and greatly expanded beyond Habermas in a recent overview collection of reprinted essays on Nietzsche and the political, Tracy B. Strong, ed., *Friedrich Nietzsche* (London: Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> On Marx and Nietzsche, see not only Michel Foucault's "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, G. L. Ormiston and A. Schrift, eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 59-68. Gillian Rose and Howard Caygill among others such as Arthur Kroker as well as (more conventionally and in the field of political theory rather than philosophy) either Nancy Love or else James Miller's "Some Implications of Nietzsche's Thought for Marxism," *Telos* 37 (1978), 22-41, and/or Anthony Giddens, "From Marx to Nietzsche: Neo-Conservatism, Foucault, and Problems in Contemporary Political Theory," *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* 1 (1982), 215-230, and for an overview of some of the difficulties that bedevil any reading between Nietzsche and Marx, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's reflections on academic-cum-cultural power-exchanges in his "Anti-Anti-Relativism," *American Anthropology* 86 (1984), 263-278.

<sup>28</sup> This has yet to be fully explored and my point is not that one needs to notice how crucial Heidegger is for Arendt (this is not a point that needs noticing) but how crucial her allusions to Nietzsche are in this same very Heideggerian context.

and to Jaspers because Arendt's engagement of the question is adumbrated with reference to Nietzsche and not less to Hobbes, including the question of "sovereignty of a body of people bound and kept together not by an identical will which somehow magically inspires them all, but by an agreed purpose for which alone promises are valid and binding."<sup>29</sup>

But teaching Nietzsche, like teaching Hölderlin, is a particular and limited undertaking. Political writing is another. Thus Adorno and Horkheimer but so too, despite their differences, Arendt, and, following the war, Jaspers' own writings on tragedy and world peaces are political in ways that other kinds of academic writing and teaching are not. This is in part the reason that Arendt would never permit her interlocutors to characterize her as a philosopher: she would, she felt, be diminished by such a characterization in the public sphere within which she fully intended to be effective.

Is Nietzsche a political writer in the way that Arendt or at least for certain specialist scholars, that Jaspers was? This, on the face of it, simple question, is surprisingly difficult to resolve, especially inasmuch as dialogue and debate turn out to be hard come by. Since those who write on Arendt and Jaspers tend not to read Nietzsche (a sin that is rather more forgivable or understandable in Arendt's case),<sup>30</sup> just as those who write on Heidegger (even those who take up the theme of Heidegger and Jaspers or even Heidegger and Nietzsche) tend not to read Nietzsche,<sup>31</sup> the question is more than a little hermeneutically daunting.

<sup>29</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 245.

<sup>30</sup> The problem is more than a little tiresome. Hence Arendt scholars do offer occasional forays into the thicket or, better said, the constellation: Arendt/Nietzsche but do not imagine that Nietzsche scholarship presents the same complexities, say, as their own specialization might. So the Nietzsche one wreaks on one's undergraduates becomes the Nietzsche one flings into one's research.

<sup>31</sup> How hard is it to read Nietzsche? Heidegger, of course, raises just this question throughout his lectures and this emphasis Derrida, among others, has underscored. I address this question in the first chapter of Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), see too at greater length, Babich, "Dichtung, Eros, und Denken in Nietzsche und Heidegger" [see footnote 19] and the first chapter, "Nietzsches Stil" of Babich, *Eines Gottes Glück, voller Macht und Liebe* (Weimar: Bauhausverlag, 2009), 8-27.

But the problem hardly ends there. Even apart from the manifest difference between what readings there are, the lack of coordinated consideration of such readings probably is the most pernicious. Even less than analytic Heideggerians (so-called) and continental Heideggerians (so-called, but you know who you are, even if analytic scholars seem not to be able to see you), those who write on Nietzsche and Heidegger, quite apart from analytic continental distinctions, seem disinclined to cite one another, a literally disrespectful scholarly habit that cannot but limit scholarly progress from the outset. I have elsewhere argued that part of the reason for this tendency, at least on the part of analytic scholars, is pragmatic or opportunistic. If one doesn't advert to other scholars, one can simply and in good conscience repeat the work, ah: the right way...

### The Last of the Metaphysicians: A Step Back

Nietzsche is to be associated with metaphysics from the start of Heidegger's 1936-1937 course given in the Winter Semester at the University of Freiburg,<sup>32</sup> and I have noted that this same metaphysical focus adumbrates Jaspers account as well. Jaspers differs from Heidegger just to the extent that Jaspers, given his focus on *Existenz*, begins with the situation of the human being, an anthropological emphasis Heidegger, following Husserl, always sought to eschew, referring instead and famously to the Being question. Jaspers emphasizes that the question *What is man?* as Nietzsche poses it "does not relate to a clearly demarcated and fully determinate object, but to the encompassing that we are [*das Umgreifende das wir sind*]" (NPA 127). Jaspers again and again, and Heidegger takes this up for his own part, emphasized Nietzsche own definition of the inherent mutability of the human: "man is the animal that is still not fixated" (NPA 131).

Jaspers indeed seems to outline the metaphysical schematism at the heart of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche in the fifth chapter of his Nietzsche book where he writes "Nietzsche is one of a series of metaphysicians whose conception

of being purports to be all-inclusive and thus to comprehend the universe as a whole. His fundamental principle is the "will to power" (NPA 287). But if Jaspers explains Nietzsche's metaphysics with reference to its physical referentiality related "to this world and to no other," such a metaphysical worldview is one in which the world "exists as pure immanence" (NPA 287). It goes without saying that most conceptions of the metaphysical are other than physical or immanent. For this reason, assuming metaphysical worldview to be a view beyond the world, as it were, of the otherworldly or world as it is "in-itself," Heidegger's ascription of an engagement with metaphysics as the substance of Nietzsche's philosophy runs counter to most, if not all, of Nietzsche's interpreters who read Nietzsche on just the same terms as radically *anti-metaphysical*. Of course, and as Eugen Fink was also careful to emphasize in his own reading of Nietzsche, metaphysics as such was a concern for Nietzsche as it was for Schopenhauer and for Kant.<sup>33</sup> For Jaspers, "the fundamental principles of his metaphysics were fashioned from a transformation of Kant's critical philosophy" (NPA 287). Nietzsche's metaphysics is expressed in terms of his engagement with religion<sup>34</sup> as well as with both philosophy and science, a double engagement that brought Nietzsche to frame what he called the perspective lens of life. As Heidegger writes in the epigraph he sets to the first double volume of his Nietzsche courses, "For Nietzsche himself, identifies the experience that determines his thinking. 'Life ... more mysterious since the day the great liberator came over me—the thought that life should be an experiment of knowers' (GS §324)."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Eugen Fink, *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, trans. Goetz Richter (Aldershot: Avebury, 2003). See in particular, Fink's Chapter 5: "Nietzsche's Relationship to Metaphysics as Imprisonment and Liberation."

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger takes as motto to his lecture course Nietzsche's marvelous provocation to monotheism *an sich*: "Well nigh two thousand years and not a single new god!" (*The Antichrist* 1888).

<sup>35</sup> In the 1991 English language translation to Heidegger's lecture courses, this appears as "The Author's Foreword to all Volumes," *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*, David Farrell Krell, trans. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), p. ixl [henceforth cited as N1 or N2].

<sup>32</sup> Thus the first chapter of Heidegger's *Nietzsche 1: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell, (New York: Harper, 1979) is entitled "Nietzsche as Metaphysical Thinker." We will also note that 1936 also marks the start of Heidegger's engagement with *Ereignis*, that is, his *Beiträge zur Philosophie*.

An element of what a generous reading could call resistance—and certainly Heidegger's reading of Heidegger, as we may regard his self-interpretation of his lecture courses, should be assumed to be generous<sup>36</sup>—is already to be found when Heidegger suggests that "Nietzsche's thinking proceeds within the vast orbit of the ancient guiding question of philosophy 'What is Being'" (N1 4). We recognize this claim and its reference to Nietzsche already from *The Introduction to Metaphysics*. But is this not what we expect from Heidegger? The key to "real" philosophy is thinking Being and to the extent that Nietzsche does it, he can be counted as a philosopher, not of a specifically Nazi kind but within the philosophical tradition as a whole.

By saying this Heidegger inverts the then- and still-standard readings of Nietzsche as philosophical *outsider* both concords with and subverts Jaspers' conclusion that "to philosophize with Nietzsche means to be constantly taking issue with him" (NPA 458). From the start, Heidegger contends that "Nietzsche is not at all so modern as the hubbub that has surrounded him makes it seem" and "not nearly so subversive" (N1 4). For Heidegger, rather than diminishing Nietzsche by setting him internal to Western philosophy, to say that "Nietzsche knew what philosophy is" is to discover his outstanding place in this tradition: "Only great thinkers have this" (N1 4).

If, however, one is looking for a *Reichsphilosoph*, what is needed is a revolutionary thinker: a new thinking for a new Reich. We are still looking for the same "new" Nietzsche. Thus today's commentators have pointed to a peculiar anxiety on Heidegger's part vis-à-vis Nietzsche, following or in the wake of Derrida, such that it would inspire him to locate the anti-traditionalist, indeed anti-traditional, anti-metaphysical thinker interior to (rather than apart from) the metaphysical tradition. Contra typical denigrations—not at all remarkably still current today—of Nietzsche as "irrational" or "non-rigorous" or as a "poet philosopher" but also contra those who name Nietzsche a "philosopher of life," Heidegger engages Nietzsche as a *thinker* of the will

to power by engaging Nietzsche's thinking about thinking (knowledge, logic, science). Here Heidegger parts company with Jaspers whose systematic reading of Nietzsche takes him another direction. What is plain is that Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche's Will to Power (as knowledge) challenges the standard Nazi reading of Nietzsche as a philosopher of "the will" or of "life" and it remains opposed to contemporary readings of Nietzsche.

Heidegger undertakes this challenge to the Nazi ideal of Nietzsche as a philosopher of the "Will" in the direct context of a consideration of the work known as the *Will to Power*, a masterwork never brought to "fruition," as he reminds his students from the start but remaining as a collection of "preliminary drafts and fragmentary elaborations for that work" (N1 7). Heidegger here issues his most provocative claim against Nietzsche scholarship: "What Nietzsche himself published during his creative life was always foreground" (N1 9). This foreground would include *The Birth of Tragedy* as it would also include *The Gay Science*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, and so on. For Heidegger, Nietzsche's "philosophy proper was left behind as posthumous, unpublished work." Even *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* would remain as "vestibule" (N1 4), and it is essential to underscore here that Heidegger does not invent this description as a term of denigration, but quotes, verbatim, Nietzsche's own characterization of his own masterwork.

For Heidegger, if not indeed for Jaspers who takes a consistently systematic exception to Nietzsche as aphorist, the question turns upon the challenge of reading an author who writes, as Nietzsche writes, in aphorisms. The problem is that of the aphoristic form per se, for "not every brief notation is automatically an aphorism, that is, an expression or saying which absolutely closes its borders to everything inessential and admits only what is essential. Nietzsche observes somewhere that it is his ambition to say in a brief aphorism what others in an entire book...do *not* say" (N1 10). This "somewhere" of Heidegger's elliptical reference is to the conclusion of Nietzsche's preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals* and Nietzsche's own remonstrance against those of his readers who have had trouble understanding his *aphoristic writing* diagnosing such as those readers as those who have,

<sup>36</sup> Manifestly enough, not all self-reflective readings are. Nietzsche's self-reflective readings seem to be a counter-example and it would take us too far afield to show that not unlike Heidegger, like most scholars, Nietzsche is kinder to himself than is usually assumed.

as the great majority of modern readers have, "unlearned the art of reading"<sup>37</sup> aphorisms.<sup>38</sup>

How indeed are we to read Nietzsche's aphorisms? And what will this mean for our reading of Nietzsche? This question is important if we turn as Heidegger does and only selective few of Nietzsche's current readers do, to Nietzsche's seemingly opposed teachings of the will to power and the eternal return of the same. Thus Heidegger proclaims "Whoever neglects to think the thought of the eternal recurrence together with will to power, as what is to be thought genuinely and philosophically cannot grasp the metaphysical content of the doctrine of will to power in its full scope" (N1 21). Here Heidegger mentions two authors who have two different but exactly traditional interpretations: Alfred Baeumler and Karl Jaspers,<sup>39</sup> both of whom, and for different reasons, exclude the teaching of the eternal return from the teaching of the will to power.

At the start of the 1938 lecture course, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, we find not only a signal confrontation with Baeumler's teaching contra the eternal recurrence but a trailing hermeneutic echo of Heidegger's own language in the epigraph set to his *Beiträge*: "If our knowledge were limited to what Nietzsche himself published, we could never learn what he carefully prepared and continually thought through, yet withheld" (N2

15).<sup>40</sup> The published aphorisms are to be read, this is Heidegger's exoteric/esoteric distinction, against or in contrast with the unpublished texts qua *unpublished*. In this esoteric or "withheld" domain of Nietzsche's thought, the unpublished texts are, as Kierkegaard said of Socrates—and as Nehamas has also emphasized this uncanny or strange irony—"silent."<sup>41</sup> For Heidegger, this silence is a telling or revealing silence: not a silence that betrays itself or gives itself away but an authentic or genuine silence.

It is exactly significant at this juncture that Heidegger goes on to condemn academic scholarly productivity and indeed the future of scholarship in general as following the muster of the natural sciences. Even the natural sciences have their political side as well as their ideological fashions, an emphasis made contra the nationalist trend of Nazi or "German" science, "it has now come to light that the Russians are today conducting costly experiments in the field of physiology that were brought to successful completion fifteen years ago in America and Germany, experiments of which the Russians are totally unaware because of their boycott against foreign science" (N2 16). We have noted that the 1936 Jaspers had already drawn upon Nietzsche's own contrasts as he made them with reference to America, England, France, and to Russia, all in distinction to Germany (NPA 264-267).

Heidegger's specific reading here repays our attention. Against the Nazi ideology of folk, specifically *German* science, Heidegger challenges the *same* German tendency, in his words, to exclude the foreign.<sup>42</sup> This is not the whole of Heidegger's point as he emphasizes the growing dominance of "industrial and technological organization" (*ibid.*),

<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, §viii, *Kritische Studienausgabe* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), Vol. 5.

<sup>38</sup> It is an irony but also a sign of the importance of reflecting on this notion that the most sustained commentary so far on this Nietzschean discussion of aphorism has been all about identifying (and misidentifying) the aphorism to which he referred. See for a discussion and further references to the terms of the dispute, Babich, "The Genealogy of Morals and Right Reading," especially pp. 182-185.

<sup>39</sup> Part of Heidegger's reasons for refusing Baeumler's refusal of the teaching of eternal recurrence in spite of his sympathy for Baeumler's refusal of Ludwig Klages' "psychological-biologistic interpretation of Nietzsche" (N1 23), has to do with Baeumler's privileging of the will to power, which Baeumler, Heidegger argues, "interprets politically" (N1 22). Where Heidegger's position on Baeumler is complex his refusal of Jaspers is both facile and inexact.

<sup>40</sup> See Babich, "Heidegger's Will to Power," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 38, Number One (2007), 37-60. I offer an explication in these terms of Heidegger's epigraph to the *Beiträge* on p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> See for a lovely reading of this "silence," Alexander Nehamas' account of Platonic irony (tacking between Mann's Castorp and Plato's Euthyphro in the first chapter of his *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 19ff.

<sup>42</sup> Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's letter to Böhlendorff can be read in this way as well. See Babich, "Between Hölderlin and Heidegger: Nietzsche's Transfiguration of Philosophy," *Nietzsche-Studien* 29 (2000), 267-301.

an emphasis that recalls Jünger's own emphases but can also be heard in Schmitt in his analysis of the changing nature of sovereignty in the modern political world.<sup>43</sup> Presaging his later articulation of his argument concerning technology and the scientific worldview, Heidegger writes that without "the technology of the huge laboratories, without the technology of a perfected machinery for publication [and we may interrupt here to wonder what else the internet would be if not such a machine for seemingly perpetual, because (seemingly) perpetually renewed publication—BB], fruitful scientific work and the impact such work must have are inconceivable today" (N2 17). Nor does Heidegger absolve the social sciences much less the humanistic disciplines, caught as they are (and as we today still seem to be caught) in a "rush to 'get it out' and the anxiety about 'being too late'" (N2 17).

Heidegger goes on to identify one of his key strategies for reading Nietzsche (a strategy that repays our attention): "we will first bring before us those communications ventured by Nietzsche himself... After that we shall survey the materials that Nietzsche withheld" (N2 18). In this way and contrary to well-promulgated claims, beginning with those of Bernd Magnus, Heidegger *does not* pick and choose between Nietzsche's texts but examines first the exoteric (or published) texts before contextualizing these same published texts in terms of Nietzsche's unpublished writings. Accordingly, when Heidegger undertakes to read Nietzsche as thinking the thought of eternal return, he first engages Nietzsche's representation of the eternal return as a thought experiment (with demons, moonlight, spiders, and an hourglass) in *The Gay Science* and in this context raises the crucial question of the meaning of science as such and for Nietzsche. This reference to science can be understood as referring to a key distinction between

the published (exoteric) and unpublished (esoteric) articulations of the teaching of the eternal return.

Heidegger emphasizes his confrontation with Nazi readings of Nietzsche still more explicitly in 1939: "Nietzsche's philosophy impels us toward the necessity of confrontation in and for which Western metaphysics, as the totality of a history that has been accomplished, is consigned to *what has been*, that is to say, is consigned to an *ultimate futurity*" (N2 162, emphasis added). Anyone with "ears to hear" would have heard this as a straightforward challenge to Nazi interpretations of Nietzsche.

In Heidegger's context, what is to be done is to steer clear of the all-too-common tendency to "grasp Nietzsche's philosophy superficially and to pigeonhole it with the help of the usual historiographical labels as 'Heraclitean,' as a 'metaphysics of the will,' or as a 'philosophy of life'" (N2 162). The terms Heidegger mentions here, "metaphysics of the will," "philosophy of life," the parallel coordinate of a totalized history: "what has been" and "an ultimate futurity," are not only the same terms still invoked in order to lay claim to the same irrationalism that firmly locates Nietzsche as a precursor to fascism but these are also the popular terms on which Nietzsche had been read and was read at the time as a potential philosopher of Nazi thought.

If Heidegger did nothing other than to fit Nietzsche within the tradition of philosophy, he opposed the tendency to find a Nietzsche eccentric to philosophy and its tradition. A confrontation with Nazism is thus and already at work in the very idea of Nietzsche *as a thinker* and that is also to say as a thinker within, rather than apart from the tradition of Western metaphysics and philosophical thought. It goes without saying that this level of resistance falls short of active heroism but it does not follow that it is no kind of resistance.

### Science and Totality

Nietzsche challenges the positivistic thinkers of his day who claimed that "philosophy itself is critique and critical science—and nothing besides!"<sup>44</sup> Instead Nietzsche argues that the philosopher of science

<sup>43</sup> Michael Zimmerman, among others, has explored this emphasis. See for a discussion of Jünger on technology, *Titan Technik. Ernst und Friedrich Georg Jünger über das technische Zeitalter*, ed. Friedrich Strack (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2000) and see for Schmitt's complex reference, Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago). See too Arendt on the issue of science and technology and the concomitant de-positioning of philosophy in *The Human Condition*, §§ 38-42.

<sup>44</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §210.

will need to be critical of the claims of critical thinking—critics, even critical scientists, are themselves no more than the "tools" of the philosophers, and are hence "far from being philosophers themselves."<sup>45</sup> For Nietzsche, what is at issue, as Jaspers likewise emphasizes, is not a celebration of critical thinking *per se*, as if this were the heart of science, but the spirit of *philosophical* critique (and here Jaspers does not differ from Heidegger) and therefore of the genuinely philosophical critique of science which puts science itself in question.<sup>46</sup>

Jaspers thus speaks of what Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* regards as the critical "problem" (or question) of science, in terms of scientific methodology as genuine scientificity (*NPA* 172 ff.). It is significant that Jaspers traces this scientific focus to the open and rigorously research orientation of Nietzsche's teacher Friedrich Ritschl, inasmuch as Jaspers reminds us that Ritschl's seminar included a range of "non-philologists, including even numerous medical men, [who] participated in it with a view to learning 'method' ... the art of distinguishing the real from the unreal, the factual from the fictitious, demonstrable knowledge from mere opinions, and objective certainty from subjective preference" (*NPA* 30). As Jaspers emphasizes, this same rigorous emphasis on the common method unifying the sciences led for Nietzsche, as for Heinrich Rickert and Heidegger, to an insight into the formal limits of science as such.<sup>47</sup>

One of the things that can be lost in reading Jaspers today, in addition to the relevance of an entire array of nineteenth century themes and insights as these inevitably inform his thinking and his conceptualization of his thought, is his approach to the logic of totalitarian thought. Hannah Arendt expresses this for her own part, following Jaspers' (but no less Nietzsche's) arguments against the

particularly repressive force of the principle of non-contradiction. Very much as Jaspers also carefully distinguishes the role of logic and scientific reason in a broader sphere, Arendt argues that "within the totalitarian ideologies of Western science 'the purely negative coercion of logic, the prohibition of contradictions' became 'productive' so that a whole line of thought could be initiated, and forced upon the mind, by drawing conclusions in the manner of mere argumentation."<sup>48</sup> Such "forced" conclusions can never be said to be "wrong" because the ideology of causal thinking always assumes "that one idea is sufficient to explain everything in the development from the premise and that no experience can teach anything because everything is comprehended in this consistent process of logical deduction" (*OT* 470). Rather than a monolithic relationality, Arendt emphasizes a plurality of conditions and events, told and retold, woven into the very "texture of reality."<sup>49</sup> Like Heidegger, Arendt opposes thought to logic both because thinking is dialogical and because it is far more than that and, in yet another Nietzschean parallel, echoing Simone Weil at the same time, Arendt argues that thinking, like the truth of poetry, "points to an infinite plurality which is the law of the earth" (*LM1* 187).

Arendt thus argues, as Heidegger had argued at its inception and as Adorno, as we have already noted, would differently rail against the totalitarian presuppositions of analytic philosophy. Arendt, for her own part, does not hesitate to identify these same presuppositions as animated by ideology, and she reminds us of the uncritical conceptual illusion that "what appear to be errors in logic to minds disencumbered of questions that have been uncritically dismissed as 'meaningless' are usually caused by semblances" (*LM1* 45). Saying this Arendt hardly means to offer a concession to the challenge that such problems, *qua* semblances are in fact illusory. Rather, for Arendt, as for Kant, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and Jaspers, every kind of semblance must and can only be "unavoidable for

<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §210.

<sup>46</sup> *NPA*, Chapter Two: "Truth," pp. 171ff. esp "The Methodical Attitude," pp. 173ff., and "The Limits of Science," pp. 176ff.

<sup>47</sup> See, again, *NPA* 176ff. For a discussion of Rickert, Jaspers, and Heidegger including further references in connection with science, see Babich, "Early Continental Philosophy of Science: 1890-1930," in *The New Century Volume Three: History of Continental Philosophy*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Chesham, UK: Acumen Press, 2010), in press.

<sup>48</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966), p. 470 [henceforth cited as *OT*].

<sup>49</sup> Arendt, *The Life of the Mind Vol. 1, Thinking* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978), p. 137 [henceforth cited as *LM1*].

beings whose existence is determined by appearance" (LM1 45). Speaking in the parlance of professionally marginalized philosophy (the analytic continental divide was as active at the time as it still is today), that is: speaking as a continental philosopher, we live for Arendt *in* the world, as finite, limited organic beings. And if such "semblances" or perceptual, perspectival phenomena cannot be analyzed, they can be reflected upon, thought about, and through such thinking, some kind of account can be attempted.

But, just as Plato said at the beginning of philosophy, no story can be told if no one listens. And listening, like thinking, like reading, must be learned. The obstacles to listening are the obstacles to the entirety of the life of the mind as well as the free expression of humanity beyond the limits of material and ideological oppression (social class, sex, race, etc.) Hence the ongoing story of continental philosophy as an appeal to thought remains an unfinished, still unframed invitation.

The approach to philosophic knowledge is distinct from the totalitarian conviction of either the relativist or the dogmatist. Thus Jaspers writes: "The way of reason demands that we reach out for all possible knowledge. Concepts, whether prevalent or only possible must be known and tested without submitting to any of them."<sup>50</sup> That Jaspers means this openness is patent and he reads not only Kierkegaard but also Nietzsche and elects Max Weber as the exemplar of this same rigorously rational openness,<sup>51</sup> an openness Jaspers, like Nietzsche before him, referred to in perfectly routine German conventionality as "science." It was not that Jaspers shared Weber's reservations with regard to philosophy—in his 1955 Epilogue, published as the introduction to his three volume *Philosophy*, Jaspers, after drawing a parallel to his own youthful and thus and then "unquestioning"

search for "cogent insights valid for everyone, (P1 12) reflects that Weber effectively discards philosophy, retaining only an esteem for philosophical logic "in which sense he held its philosophic character to be self-evident."<sup>52</sup> For his own part, what Jaspers took from Weber was a sense of the meaning of science, that is: of the vocation of science that comprehended both sciences' power and its limits. This Jaspers expressed at numerous locations in his writing and also used it to illuminate, and this is the height of systematic or methodical rigor, the limitations of even Weber's intellectual project. By contrasting untrue and true or authentic foundering, itself a reflection on the meaning of shipwreck in Weber, now known to many people from a passing acquaintance with Hans Blumenberg and for others by way of Isaiah Berlin but also and emblematically present to both Jaspers and Weber as Nietzsche unforgettably articulated this idea of the shipwreck of rationality in his first book on tragedy: "science spurned by its powerful illusions speeds ... concealed in the essence of logic, suffers *shipwreck*."<sup>53</sup> Jaspers emphasizes that "Max Weber's foundering consists in grasping positively—in limitless, definite, empirical knowledge that is close to the object and material—genuine ignorance and opening up for himself the possibility of a being as authentic being rather than as known Being" (BPW 488). For Jaspers this means that one was enjoined to respect the difference between philosophy and science as well as the relation between the two and hence the value of both.

Yet Jaspers then as now would suffer for pointing out this distinction. If he was criticized for this it was nonetheless essential to his thinking. And like Husserl and like Heidegger, but also we should not fail to note, like Heisenberg, and like Gödel and even Einstein, Jaspers too, as we have already

<sup>50</sup> Jaspers, *Philosophy*, Vol. 1, p. 12 [henceforth cited as P1].

<sup>51</sup> Jaspers, "The Scientist, the Man," in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, pp. 480ff. [henceforth cited as BPW]. See however for a direct comparison of Weber with Nietzsche, p. 493: "the race of men born into the world of Homer and the Jewish prophets was not lost in Nietzsche. Its last great figure, for the time being, was Max Weber; he was a figure of our world which changes at such a mad pace that particular contents of Weber's world have already passed away in spite of the brevity of the time that has gone by."

<sup>52</sup> P1 12, Weber himself, Jaspers would summarize was a "philosopher," but if philosophers are always "new and original" in each era, "all philosophers have one thing in common: they are what they know. Every philosopher is the lucidity of an unconditional being." Jaspers, *Leonardo, Descartes, Max Weber*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 195.

<sup>53</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, §15. (*Die Geburt der Tragödie in Kritische Studienausgabe*, Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), Vol. 1.

suggested, would warn of the "crisis" of science in general but especially the natural sciences. As Jaspers put it in terms of the historical constellation of science qua revolutionary, "Once upon a time, science disrupted authority, tradition, and revelation. It enabled the human being to take his stand upon himself" (BPW 249). With this reference to the idea of revolutionary science, Jaspers intends to refer to Luther's theology as much as Newton's physics and Liebig's chemistry. "Later," Jaspers continues, "rendered absolute in positivism and idealism, science entered a crisis. It did not deliver what it had seemed to promise: a worldview, a set of values, a knowledge of the goal. Claiming more than it could claim, science betrayed itself; and as erudition, it became detached from being" (BPW 249). For Jaspers there are two solutions to the resultant crisis. One solution is a return to revelation and authority, although for Jaspers the dangers of this are artificiality and soullessness, hence such a return can never be blind as it would inevitably have to "differ from what it was before being put in question" (BPW 249). What Jaspers means by his other alternative, here articulated as the prospect of "philosophizing" has then to do with really living, attuned, i.e., "in existence to awaken possible Existenz. We can go forward to freedom, related to transcendence and without knowing whither" (BPW 249). It is important to note that a genuine science is essential to such a possible Existenz, as it includes what Jaspers names the "manifest mystery" (BPW 161). For Jaspers, "The manifest mystery is an essential trait of scientific world-orientation; this is why it may be either empty and indifferent, as a mere unexistential consciousness, or it may prepare us for the leap to possible Existenz. This is also why," and Jaspers is careful to emphasize this point, "a strong and conscious *Existenz will be most insistent upon pure, cogent science*" (BPW 161).

There are popular visions of science that Jaspers refuses again and again as insufficiently scientific, Heidegger's word for this insufficiency would have been a lack of rigor or reflection. Hence Heidegger notes of the dogmatism of popular empiricism that it is not "free sight but a hardening of positive science to an uncomprehended and depressive authority. This superstitious belief in factuality will not let us see the full reality in facts. It is a vacuous manner of assertive speaking, not a bringing to mind of factuality, it covers up the field of vision

and it not open to things" (BPW 166). Similarly, Jaspers argues "An empty faith in technological omnipotence makes us tie ourselves to technological ends" (BPW 166).

Knowing what science can do for Jaspers also entails knowing what it cannot do. The distinction echoes the early Nietzsche's attention to the "limits of science," as we above noted that Nietzsche speaks of these limits in his invocation of the "shipwreck" of reason with reference to both Kant and Schopenhauer in *The Birth of Tragedy*, a consciousness of the limits of science given for both Jaspers and for Nietzsche only with "methodical consciousness" (BPW 13). Method is key to science for Jaspers (BPW 355), but and again what is at issue is the compound of "methodical consciousness" or *mindful* science. Thus Jaspers can reflect that "once knowledge loses its methodical sense—which lies solely in the notion of research—the purity of the results of knowledge will be lost as well" (P1 140). What Jaspers means by this is not limited to the hermeneutic sciences *per se*, the human or social sciences, such as history and political thought hence Jaspers' example is nothing other than mathematics. Recalling both Heidegger's and Husserl's reflections on science, Jaspers remarks upon the sheer and marvelous efficacy of mathematics using the example of the mathematics of particle physics:

The unvisual clarity of the formula shines into total darkness. It seems like magic when the results of measurements taken in our world confirm the reality of the conceptions of this curious mathematics. Yet it is distinguished from magic by its complete rationality, by a critical self-examination that keeps improving the results, by the relativity of all current achievements, and by its transparency for the intellect at large, stripped of all subjectiveness. Nothing in it is arbitrary. No authority prevails. Everything is subject to correction until assured for the present, and to reexamination in the continuity of general cognition. (P1 139)

The distinction Jaspers makes here echoes Heidegger as Jaspers emphasizes his own path to philosophy, precisely in the allure of the way of science as a philosophical insight, a specific *thaumazein*: "that scientific cognition cannot guide us, that it cannot even find grounds for its own existence, that in the perspective of philosophy it is diffuse" (P1 13).

In his own reflections on his philosophizing, Jaspers parts company with Heidegger emphasizing what is perhaps the heart of his *Existenzphilosophie*, as he goes on to clarify this point: "Thus my philosophizing originated in the conjunction of enthusiasm for scientific certainty with the experience of the limits of science and a yearning for the philosophy that will sustain us in life" (P1 13). Jaspers, writing almost as Nietzsche writes in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, invokes a direct connection between one's studies and the thoughts that move one, i.e., "the thought figures spring from personal life and address themselves to the individual" (P1 13). Yet, and just as Heidegger too shied away from popularizing characterizations of his thought as a kind of ecstatic existentialism, Jaspers also claims that he is not describing the "contemplation of soul-stirring figures" but speaks instead, likewise as Heidegger does, of what he calls "thinking." For Jaspers, it is thinking that "sets it apart from the tendencies of emotional self-satisfaction, from thoughtless romanticism, and from the self-destruction of reason in so-called irrationalism. The joy of a thinking life, whether in sorrow or in rapturous love, is that philosophical thinking will not only make each experience, each action, each choice more clearly conscious but more deeply based and more intense" (P1 13).

Jaspers had his reasons for emphasizing his affinity with and interest in the sciences, not only because of his background in biology and medicine (and the current author shares the first part of that intellectual trajectory from the life-sciences to philosophy), but also because he found himself, as Heidegger who also had a plain interest in the sciences from the start, accused of being an opponent of the sciences. Thus Jaspers writes, very disarmingly, "It is odd how often I have been called anti-scientific, or indeed contemptuous of science" (P1 13, 15). A philosophy that put science in question was for Jaspers not opposed to but inherently, intrinsically rigorous: a philosophy on the path of a science as Kant had put it. By contrast with a philosophy conceived as a science would be the today far more common kind of philosophy enamored with science, i.e., philosophers as science fans. Like Jaspers, Adorno and Arendt also warn of the dangers of philosophers caught in the grip of

what Rorty named "physics-envy."<sup>54</sup> It is regrettable but not perhaps politically surprising that the intellectual situation of attack and indignation Jaspers describes has hardly altered in more than fifty years. The problem is not a matter of being for or against science, per se: the problem is the anxious reaction of such science-enthusiasts when faced with philosophical reflection or critique:

These exponents of an academic discipline called "scientific philosophy" consider *science* attacked if one questions the scientific character of *their* thinking. They remind me of the theologians who teach the absoluteness of Christianity; the only difference is that the theologians cite divine revelation while those thinkers cite themselves, albeit in the form of generally valid scientific truth (which in this field is imaginary). They see contempt for science precisely where true science – as distinct from pseudo-science and scientific superstition – has become an element of life, precisely where the scientific approach is called for and evoked by philosophical thinking.<sup>55</sup>

Like Nietzsche and like Heidegger, Jaspers argues that there is a difference between science and philosophy and he argues that the "scientific philosophers," those indeed who today constitute the philosophical "mainstream" of analytic philosophy, are precisely those who fail to make this distinction. That Jaspers has to make this argument, although this same first volume includes an extended discussion of science, articulated on the model of scientific research in general and philosophy of science and mathematics (but also history), is telling but not surprising to anyone who works, as I happen to work, on Nietzsche or indeed

<sup>54</sup> Rorty, "Tales of Two Disciplines," *Callaloo*, 17/2 (Spring 1994), 575-585, p. 576. Dominique Janicaud spoke in a related vein of "epistemological correctness." I owe Janicaud's phrase to a postcard reply to my article on the Sokal hoax. See Babich, "The Hermeneutics of a Hoax: On the Mismatch of Physics and Cultural Criticism," *Common Knowledge* 6/2 (September 1997), 23-33, as well as "From Fleck's *Denkstil* to Kuhn's Paradigm: Conceptual Schemes and Incommensurability," *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 7 1/1 (2003), 75-92.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. See also Jaspers' chapter in this first volume, "Conclusive World-Orientedness, Positivism and Idealism," pp. 226 ff.

Heidegger and science, or indeed the very idea of continental philosophy of science as such.<sup>56</sup>

### End-Worlds: The World in World Philosophy

If I were writing another essay on another day, I would have preferred to read Jaspers' conception of world together with Heidegger's world, especially in the context of art. But in the current context, and with reference to science, we may note that Jaspers writes of the specific reciprocity of world and "worlding," if one may be permitted to use such quasi-Heideggerian terms. For Jaspers, "An objective world is *never solely given*. As I find it I have to gain access to it by my activity. No experience can be made without some course of conduct ....The objective world is *never solely made either*" (P1 113). Jaspers goes on to explain, invoking the example of the lived life of the laboratory, as Norwood Russell Hanson but also as Gaston Bachelard and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and indeed Heidegger might equally have spoken of it, albeit each in different ways, to remind the reader that "In scientific world orientation we see empirical reality in both the given world and the one that remains to be made. But there is no cut-off point. What has been made will henceforth be given and what is given has the unpredictable modifiability of new productive material" (P1 113).

The world, the "entire world" for Jaspers, "is a *boundary concept*" (P1 171). But saying that did not mean that he was speaking with only an existential notion of world. For Jaspers, always Kantian, the world is a question, especially when one poses the question of the beginning of the world. Writing well after Kant, Jaspers poses the question in an exactly cross-cultural context, invoking the answer as given in the Rig Veda, in China, and in pointing to an array of traditions. And he includes the dominant

scientific world-view of the big bang—"when we hear this," he writes "we stand in amazement before a now largely known cosmos, thinking perhaps that at last we know whence it came. Where measurements and mathematics reign, modern man is inclined to submit" (PW 129).

But the problem is what science leaves out, in order, indeed to be science. The first is ineliminable, following no one but Kant (and Nietzsche after him, as we seem to need Jaspers to remind us that and "Still, Nietzsche *came after* Kant," NPA 287, emphasis added). Thus Nietzsche argues that the world is interpretation according to a human schema that we cannot throw off. The ineliminability of this constitution is twofold. To begin with, "the world in its entirety cannot become an object. We are in the world and can never face it as a whole" (PW 129). But beyond this, it is also the case that we think, that we are human, that we are conscious—and here Jaspers might have gone beyond Kant to Fichte and Hegel but he adds his own gloss by speaking almost as Schelling might have done, of "our awareness of our freedom," arguing that thereby "we transcend the incomplete world we can know" (PW 130).

The word freedom however is also perfectly Kantian, as Jaspers' powerful and insightful reading of Kant's "Perpetual Peace" shows.<sup>57</sup> In this move, with this insight, the world hangs, as Jaspers writes, in "suspension," that is in a kind of balance or to use Hölderlin's language, a cradle.<sup>58</sup> I cannot here take this further but Jaspers' appeal for many readers lies in his attention to this attunement: "The idea of God's creation of the world will be a symbol then not a matter of knowledge. It is the abyss revealed by the idea of Creation that we, along with all our mundane knowledge and activities are engulfed and sheltered at the same time" (PW 130).

<sup>56</sup> See for example, the author's several essays on this, such as Babich, "Early Continental Philosophy of Science: 1890-1930," in *The New Century Volume Three: History of Continental Philosophy*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Chesham, UK: Acumen Press, 2010) and Babich, "Continental Philosophy of Science," in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Twentieth Century Philosophies*, ed. Constantine Boundas (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2007), 545-558; in addition to Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).

<sup>57</sup> In my view, unmatched to this day not only for hermeneutic care and historical precision or exigence but also for Jaspers' attention to Kant's own situation and hence to his style. See Jaspers, "Kant's 'Perpetual Peace'" in PW 88-124. Jaspers takes up the notion of Kant's irony, see pp. 97ff and pp. 120ff and with reference to Nietzsche, pp. 257ff. On Kant's style, see Willi Goetschel, *Constituting Critique: Kant's Writing as Critical Praxis*, trans. Eric Schwab (Durham: Duke UP, 1994).

<sup>58</sup> I discuss this suspension or balance with reference to time in "The Ethos of Nature and Art: Hölderlin's Ecological Politics" in Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, pp. 185ff.

Jaspers was "drawn"<sup>59</sup> (he uses this language himself) to Heidegger but at the same time this appeal was a patently conflicted one. Jaspers' interest here corresponded indeed to a genuine friendship but a friendship tried in the impossible way that a changing world and the fortunes of one's intellectual life can rout any friendship. That the friendship survived had everything to do with Jaspers' extraordinary intellectual openness which in Jaspers' case is also another word for scientific, that is philosophical probity. Hence there is a difference between the length of Jaspers' relationship of an enduring but ultimately fractured friendship—for friendships can and do survive in the face of betrayal and what would be more for Jaspers as he reflected in time, also disappointment—with Heidegger that was also a philosophical correspondence in its most rigorous sense and the perdurance of Arendt's friendship with Heidegger. I would argue too that Arendt's loyalty also included Jaspers. For it was Arendt's gift for friendship that allowed her friendships to last, it was her loyalty, as a person, to the person of the friend that would make all the difference and mean that she, probably better than most took the meaning of Nietzsche's reflection on the friend as a certain reticence.

Jaspers' expression of philosophical affinity with Heidegger was adumbrated in Nietzschean terms and Jaspers paints a picture of Nietzschean heights to do so, writing of Heidegger in a note from 1964 (BPW 511):

High in the mountains on a vast rocky table-land the philosophers of each generation have been meeting since time immemorial. From there one can gaze down onto the snow capped mountains and, still deeper, into the valleys inhabited by man, and into all directions under the heavenly canopy toward the far horizon. Sun and stars are brighter there than elsewhere. The air is so pure that it consumes all gloominess, so cool that it keeps the smoke from rising, so bright that it causes thought to soar into unfathomable spaces.

It is not hard, as Jaspers observes to gain access to this plain, and there are many paths, only one must be determined to leave one's familiar surroundings, where one is at home "in order to

learn on these heights what authentically is" (BPW 511). Jaspers means however despite his emphasis on the openness of such access to highlight the exigence and the rarity of thought:

It seems that no one can be encountered there today. But it seemed to me as if I, seeking in vain among the eternal speculations for men who find them important, as if I had encountered one man, no one else. (BPW 512)

Everything turns upon the space between this sentence and the next, the space that also changes the tone from the elegiac to the pain of the tragic, which here is still, as Jaspers argued, simply not enough:<sup>60</sup>

This one however was my polite enemy. For the forces we served were irreconcilable. Soon it seemed that we could not speak to each other at all. Joy turned into pain, a strangely inconsolable pain, as if we were missing an opportunity that was palpably close. (BPW 512)

When Jaspers goes on to add as he does that "This was the way it was with Heidegger" (BPW 512), the point is made against the criticisms usually posed against him which for Jaspers are "intolerable throughout since they do not inhabit that high plateau" (BPW 512). Jaspers did not stoop to the common and if he reflected that perhaps the kind of criticism and the kind of struggle he sought might not be possible, he did, very much for his own part, and indeed we might well hope for a share in this, "try to catch at least their adumbrations" (BPW 512).

If my own teacher Gadamer is right in this—and I believe he was—cross-cultural hermeneutics works as friendship works, namely on the basis of conversation. Yet and to that hermeneutic reflection on language one must add that one still and truly

<sup>60</sup> Jaspers writes of the "limits" of tragic knowledge, and this shows his political or active orientation, "it achieves no comprehensive interpretation of the world. It fails to master universal suffering; it fails to grasp the whole terror and insolubility in human existence. This is clearly shown by the fact that although everyday realities—such as sickness, death, chance, misery, and malice—may well become the media through which tragedy makes its appearance, they are not so considered from the outset because they are not in themselves tragic." Jaspers, *Tragedy is Not Enough*, trans. Herald Reiche, Harry Moore and Karl Deutsch (Beacon: Boston, 1952), p. 99. Tragic philosophy Jaspers observes, "lives in an aura of grandeur" and inasmuch as it lifts us above reality "this philosophy narrows our awareness" (p. 100).

<sup>59</sup> Jaspers, "Martin Heidegger," Note 239 (1961/1964) in BPW 510.

needs the friend but and in addition to that, one also requires a friend of a certain quality, a friend like Jaspers (or like Arendt). True conversation is only of the kind that admits more than one approach, more than one voice,<sup>61</sup> as Gadamer observed that great minds like Heidegger's could not but exclude.<sup>62</sup> This does not mean that Heidegger could not be a friend but much rather that he was not, and this is to say the very least, a quality friend. Some friends give more to a relationship than others and it matters that others give less.

Jaspers himself reflected that the then current environment could be said to extinguish "all self-being" – and he meant a Germany still divided into two, hence he referred here to Eastern Europe but also the United States to the extent that it too could be called, and we have since learned to our pain how easily it might also be called: totalitarian, but

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<sup>61</sup> It was with reference to his own understanding of sense language as conversation that Gadamer could reflect in an interview that "It was very difficult to speak with Heidegger because he wanted to understand step by step.... he continually saw intermediate steps [*Zwischenstufen*]. I mean, I always learned an incredible amount when I listened to him – but it was not a conversation." Gadamer, "Heidegger as Rhetor: Hans-Georg Gadamer interviewed by Ansgar Kemman," in *Heidegger and Rhetoric*, eds Daniel Gross and Ansgar Kemman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 47-64, here p. 50. See for a contrasting discussion of medical dialogue, Jaspers' reflection on the world-circumstance, as it were of patient and physician in his discussion of what he calls "the existential communication in which the doctor shares [or does not share – my addition] the burden of the patient's fate" (P1 154). For Jaspers, everything turns on the gravitas of the situation, hence the doctor is as as Jaspers says "Existenz for Existenz" (P1 155). And Jaspers' own background is decisive here, beyond success and failure, Jaspers speaks of an ethos of utter respect and even love to emphasize the therapeutic breadth of communication which is for Jaspers to be understood as philosophy itself is ultimately to be understood as *action*. "The historic process of two communicating selves, the doctor and the patient does not involve silence and talk alone; every demand or challenge, every question or goal will be part of it" (P1 154).

<sup>62</sup> Gadamer explained this point with reference to his own experience with inviting Heidegger to speak with his students and their "disappointment" in him which Gadamer understood in terms of Heidegger's inability to converse. For Gadamer, "Heidegger never got beyond that stage, but it is also difficult when one has such a superior intellect. He could easily situate the other within his thinking. For people like us, it is easier to notice that the other could also be correct." Gadamer, "Heidegger as Rhetor," p. 51.

he went on to argue that "resistance will still be offered by any felicitous meeting of individuals who band together in fact without oath or pathos. 'Truth begins with two,' said Nietzsche" (P1 36).

It is this quote from Nietzsche that Jaspers resumes when he writes in *The Future of Mankind* of the enduring and still possibility of human community "in reason, love, and truth... Nietzsche's word 'Truth begins when there are two,' is born out by every community of individuals ..."<sup>63</sup>

I would like to end with a parallel recollecting my initial question regarding the possibility of resistance. Arendt concludes her introduction to Jaspers, *The Future of Germany* by reflecting on the problem of political accuracy – many of Jaspers' warnings and predictions have since been vindicated, as Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, also warned of what became Germany's darkest years. For Arendt, the question is not the philosophical question of truth in the end but the different question of political impotence.

"Jaspers' forebodings of an imminent catastrophe in both cases," Arendt argues, "were denounced by all respectable critics."<sup>64</sup> Arendt draws our attention to the absolutely public character of Jaspers' intellectual contribution, asking us to reflect upon the ultimate, as it turned out in both cases, irrelevance of this same broad public support in the face of academic critique. For in both cases, Arendt observes, Jaspers "was read by a minority that, though perhaps strong enough numerically to make itself heard, was in fact impotent – able and willing to face the all-too-obvious realities but powerless to change them."<sup>65</sup> The current situation may not be otherwise and it is worth noting that Arendt's observation challenges the very notion of the political influence of the public intellectual on the very philosophic level of reflection and political action.

The project of speaking truth to power has neither efficiency nor the prospect of sure success to recommend it. But it is one of the oldest expressions of rectitude or human justice.

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<sup>63</sup> Jaspers, *The Future of Mankind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 223.

<sup>64</sup> Arendt, "Foreword" to Jaspers, *The Future of Germany*, E. B. Ashton, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*