

BROACHING IMMANENTALISM by Glenn C. Wood 22 June 2002, posted 25 June 2002

NOTATION UPDATE: Mr. Muller chose not to Comment directly but submitted Mr. Moore's article. The reader should read it to get a full gist of my Response. The most outstanding void in the article is the lack of reference to Karl Jaspers. Martin Heidegger, Rudolph Bultmann are pivotal postmodern points around which his dialogue revolves. Though no one equals the analytic and empathetic understanding of the psychologist-psychiatrist-psychopathologist turned philosopher, Jaspers, Edward Moore nowhere references him. At the time, winter of 2002, Mr. Moore was working on a doctorate at St. Elias Orthodox Theological Seminary. He is now Executive director of Theandros: An Online Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology and Philosophy; a current review of all articles where one might expect to find Jaspers name proved futile. One would expect to find such a reference in any article pertaining to Kierkegaard or Nietzsche. There was one article mentioning Teilhard Chardin and the evolutionary slant is as one might expect from an Anaximander or at least a neo-Anaximander tradition. The reason for this void is the weight of Jaspers views regarding Institutional revelation or the presumptuousness of vatic authority. I take his de-mything Logos as an endeavor to make room for Orthodox Church Authority at least in the Eastern form of catholicity. Here we see the need to cultivate a Greek rather than Roman ground to establish something more orthodox because more previous but more advanced than the Mosaic culture. We should keep before us too the reality of the Islamic social invasion. The force-to-force struggle for power in academia was just as real, and no side more intellectually deficient than the other. Arab scholars could be just as astute in laying the interpretive ground for their vatic theocracy, but the question of theocracy remains and Jaspers remains its most academic nemesis. The vatic threat in the New World where the separation of Church and State has been practiced shows the impact and relativity of TA 51. Coming to terms with the namable forces is not only complex it is dangerous if effective. Nicholas of Cusa...

[1] Mr. Moore is to be thanked for allowing his DE-MYTHING THE LOGOS to be posted as a comment to TA 51, and there's an apology at the conclusion of this Response, which could be read now. The KJF could result in more hard-knocks from the field, than from evaluations received by an institute of higher learning's committee of readers or that subjected to during their oral examination. Kind institutions' fellows' suggestions and recommendations might be more restrained than the good manners assured by the KJF's editor and liberated good-will

manifested by KJF contributors for there is no tax-funding or threat of loss of student tuition here (and I've searched for economic or power motivations with tolerated queries, and answers were provided though probably taxing the patience of the editor). [Notation: I'm referring to Mr. Moore's doctoral efforts and the need to demonstrate compliance within an institutional setting with vatic predispositions. It's suggested that less friendly criticism is to be expected outside the fellowship where Orthodoxy is predetermined.]

[2] I'm just going to start typing here and see if a way of handling a response takes form. Though it's the in-thing for academia to use Heidegger's works it does not impress me now anymore than did Bultmann's statement that he or theology had learned something from Heidegger -- said in his debate with Karl Jaspers in *Myth and Christianity*. If Bultmann learned nothing from the debate with Jaspers it is because he forgot the manners suggested by the often maligned scapegoat, Plato, who stated that one ought not discuss if only to win, but he also stated it's good manners to be playful. In light of the latter, studying C1 reminding me of the first experience near the epicenter of a 5.5 earth quake in California, and that recalled due to rereading Jaspers statement on p.3 of *Myth and Christianity*: That when thinkers have surmounted the resistance inherent in religion "... we do not experience the gratification produced by the discovery of a truth; rather we feel something like terror, as before a sudden void." [The demything of the biblical Jesus is like making an apology for faith in the invisible God and handing over that responsibility to Greek Orthodoxy.]

[3] Heidegger's "unique" existentialism did not move me beyond metaphysics nor did Bultmann's demythologizing of the gospel message serve as a surrogate to unavoidable Transcendence (in Jaspers sense), and perhaps due to my individual religious history his interpretation of Jesus/Christ was no positive contribution to the gospel message I was accustomed to hearing.

[4] I can't resist an easy comparison and clear differentiation to be made between Heidegger and Jaspers echoing from the backfield of reality. Jaspers "and his kind" was abruptly removed from the university by the Nazi regime and with his Jewish wife went into hiding until during the allied occupation when he was reinstalled in the university. Without judging Heidegger in an ultimate sense, still, during this time he would have been the better for it if he'd sat listening to the psychopathologist Jaspers. But where was Heidegger? Preparing to move into a world free of metaphysics and creating updated immanent ideas for theology -- part of which aided Nazism?

[5] Here it seems fitting to insert a clear definition of metaphysics. Hearing no objections it's proposed we use the Oxford Companion to Philosophy: Metaphysics -- "The most abstract and in some views 'high-falutin' part of philosophy having to do with features of ultimate reality..." and the term ... originated ... as a title given to some of Aristotle's works in a catalogue by

Andronicus; " ... it meant simply the works which followed those on physics in the catalogue" and the works were untidy though pertaining to being as such with some dynamic discussion.

[6] We can discard the high-falutin part out of kindness and henceforth refer to some things in physics that range in varying intensities of untidiness. That presents a problem for discussion here, for it means metaphysics has been eliminated by definition and not by Heidegger's immanentism or Bultmann's demythologizing and there is nothing to go beyond except untidiness -- some in Aristotle and some presumed in Plato. But untidiness in Plato is less real and more transcendental and having little threat though admittedly dangerous if taken only immanently, forgetting the transcendence part.

[7] Regarding the "Death of God" theologians -- so designated to testify that they have gone beyond the untidiness of rational uncertainty -- something needs to be said about the poor man blamed who suffered severely from headaches, other diseases, heart aches -- who due to lovelessness sired only a fictitious son named Zarathustra, the illusioned mother of whom I suspect was Lou Andrea Salome--and eventually died insane.

[8] Jaspers says, and I think it's true, "Nietzsche does not say there is no God," nor does he say, "I do not believe in God," but uttered "God is dead." Nietzsche saw what we see and feel when seeing the God-is-dead theologians and if nailed to one's intense headache the sublimated infantile cry could be "God is dead" which is not much different than the crucified one saying of omnipresence "why hast thou forsaken me?" Under these conditions Jehovah the most sacred of names given in the Old Testament if not left blank in manuscripts when verbalized was -- due to respect -- intentionally mispronounced as Elohim, an appropriate sound for the talk about the ground of being while reserving silence or "Jehovah" for Being as such. Toward the end Nietzsche could and did refer to himself as the crucified one.

[9] But let me tell you what he did when confronted with Jesus. He pauses in silence so much so that Jaspers declares it "an astonishing fact." (p.142 Nietzsche, An Intro...University of Arizona, 1965). Is he silent because of the immanentism and transcendental maneuverings surrounding incarnation concepts? No, but rather while perceiving a man who was tortured to death by the most scientifically advanced apparatus of suffering ever devised, a man who could lift at least his inner eyes to a heavenly father and ask forgiveness for his torturers' ignorance.

[10] And what is all this about Plato's effect on the western churches like Rome's use of some ideas by, say, "St." Augustine? It's doubtful Plato's City policies had envisioned a divine institution born of pseudo decretals sanctifying his simply functional political ideas. "Plato became aware of the power and limits of

thinking" Jaspers says in the *Great Philosophers* (p.127), and if to become real "... each thought in its objective fixation must be transcended" (p.128), and when his Ideas developed they were not meant to be a "standard by which we distinguish correct and incorrect." (p.128) Who can deny the need for such standards (guiding principles) in today's secular community?

[11] Plato's involvement in politics required tedious practical analysis and testing in his time like it would now and comes across as an archetype ideal in terms such as "living the American dream" our in less humane ideas like not providing treatment for some diseased if it means the loss of security for the state. He developed norms that inspired political thinking and that were without doubt a partial but misunderstood influence in the medieval Catholic Church. Jaspers says of Aristotle's critique of Plato's ideas existing independently outside of things, he, Aristotle, "... utterly misses the point." Sarcasm: One can blame Plato but hardly a "Saint" like Augustine, right? If one blames an Orthodox or Catholic Saint one blames the Holy Institution. So, let's go after a philosopher having no title of divine distinction -- Plato, the first Greek theologian not confirmed, licensed, or ordained by a later institution.

[12] Sarcasm: It's not Augustine that makes mistakes in his thinking; it's Plato's neo-Platonism. It's the fault of the seminal thinker Plato even though Jaspers names only two other seminal thinkers: Augustine and Kant. This classification does not seem to fit "St." Augustine. God must have predetermined Plato's influence and "St" Augustine's errors are excused because he made the best of Plato thus fulfilling the divine will in the infallible continued incarnation through an established institution.

[13] There is a certain certainty about the ground of being included in Anaximander's few lines, and that is: several words are there. What surprises me though, as it seems to Mr. Moore, is the significance given this Greek to which no Roman Church ties can be made. They seem more meaningful to some because Heidegger mentioned it in a "famous" essay, and has "taught us" how to think toward existence and all its questions, and taught us how to make bold profound acts of thought (still less ... in deed ... than the fleshed-out Word's crucifixion).

[14] There must be something immanently profound, there, in some old questioning about being as such and aspects of experience, but I don't see it as that unique. Even Jaspers in consideration of Anaximander in his *Great Philosophers* sees something first and oldest there but relative to the history of philosophy -- which is justified from the standpoint of one usual form of historical recording, i.e., the metaphysical just on the other side of the empirical-physics and this side of philosophical inspiration the reasonable side of revelation.

[15] But Anaximander is but one of many types alive during what Jaspers called the Axial period in his 1949 *The Origin and Goal of History*. A strange

simultaneous thought-quality was manifested in Persia, India, China, Israel, Rome, and ... Hellas. Jaspers suggests the cause lay in common sociological preconditions, but stops far short of miracles and says "I should like to hold the question open and leave room for possible new starting-points in the search for knowledge..." (p.18, Yale University Press 1965) I'd like to squeeze through that opening with a question: Why is the Greek now the potential source of thought essential to a so-called post-metaphysical understanding of a misunderstood or rationalized and systematized incarnation? Because he (Anaximander), intellectually introspected and saw that the mind cannot know its potential, or possible ground? Even a contemplative child can lead us into that quandary.

[16] It would be just as easy to find a similar quality of pure thought -- expressions of limits and hopeful potentials or possibilities -- in hieroglyphics, and perhaps the picture might even reveal more than the few lines attributed to Anaximander. After all a picture in relief on stone can be worth an equal number of words -- perhaps even dating earlier than the axial period (c. 600). Thanks to the myth-potential even words spoken by those without a written language can be ageless -- prehistoric remnants lingering unnoticed -- from the Navajo or Apache who shun or were denied popularizing titles of distinction -- until now in Hollywood style like with the code talkers.

[17] There's admittedly question about the dating of the story of Job. One source says 1900 to 2000. Jaspers doesn't mention a date. Another says Moses authored the book. But it's probably earlier than Anaximander. My point is the same form of thinking can be found in Job as in Anaximander but the latter is given the credit for maintaining some divinity in being; he is lionized for not being far from Heidegger's ontology. Not only that; the divinity part is limited to "prehistoric mists of Greek memory" which appears to me like so much humidity that it ... fffflows and "Saints" can swim in it -- and drown in its immanental stickiness without Anaximander as a life jacket.

[18] Job boldly, without support from Heidegger types, challenged God -- obviously a meaningful word participating in divinity -- to give him, Job, an oral examination. The first question asked was humbling: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Is that not close enough to the symbols about the nature of being? Job could not remember anything about his own origin, let alone figure out answers to questions regarding the injustices of his life, nor could he predict accurately what his future would be and why he could not die at will, nor why he maintained a faith. If there's a question the "I" has that cannot be answered regarding its self one could remain silent and leave a space like earliest Hebrew writings only later to insert a symbol. Jaspers, in *Philosophical Faith and Revelation*, refers to Job as realizing in so far as possible his Existenz -- a self suspended between itself and the transcendent not forgetting the source.

[19] As far as man being made in the image of God one need only be reminded

that God is primarily invisible but then so is humankind -- whether with reference to what concepts can capture through limited perceptions to what is knowable about subatomic physics and uncertainties in body and consciousness. Man is more myth than content, but enough connected sensitive tissue to communicate pain and enough myth to interpret objectively the cries of others, myth enough to allow the leap from self to identifying with others in the community, or enough immanently confined myth for mass extermination.

[20] The meaning of the incarnation is seen in the final un-anesthetized fully conscious scream: "ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABA SABACHTHANI?" (My God...why hast thou forsaken me). Insensitivity through frequent enlargement in collective consciousness, an attitude of acceptance toward multiple crucifixions, had to be in time restructured with a renewal of disgust toward those crosses of indescribable pain. God, the word, was a spirit more than carnal, and if Jesus was God what part could his suffering play in outlawing institutional crucifixions?

[21] Jesus had to be wholly the son of man; the son of God idea emptied from the mind of humankind, emptied of this idea that the son of God, equal to God, could not suffer. The potentiality of myth would inevitably return after the shock treatment, as would transcendence to be represented after the dawning of night's suffering and death; after the suffering of a mother's son is over and lying at rest temporarily in the bosom of being. Though existence, experience, is more alive than ever at the dawning of a new day quiet now from screams, now there remains the unshakable feeling without the words "better he than me." Words like that not now spoken for there remains no more sacrifices but a fearful looking forward to judgment, a personal responsibility for our own errors, and if we err now and must insist on another human sacrifice we would be crucifying afresh the son of man and even willing to crucify the son of God so long as an other must pay for indiscretions.

[22] The immanentism of the incarnation is no longer available. The host is not more immanent than transcendental, and sense the tomb is empty we have now only symbols. Anaximander is not needed to embellish the crucifixion or to sensitize suffering, now to be misused to establish an immanent presence for institutionalized rituals. Remembering without Anaximander is essential lest we forget the pain of the broken and bleeding crucified one.

[23] So how do we explain this felt need for Anaximander, Heidegger, and Bultmann etc. as necessary personages in a demythologizing process distracting from crucifixion? Rome has its incarnations ranging from the first Roman Empire's Emperor's lineage or descending from the divine - a bad immanent content given to unavoidable myth spaces -- to give distinctiveness to a ruler's power. Greek Orthodoxy too must have its comparable attachment to divinity even if it means throwing out mythological propriety and settling for the misuse of a reverend-immanentism. Religion competes too often through the use of

conjured miracles. The magic of institutional immanentism is more dangerous than the mysterious affects of individualistic transcendental philosophical logic.

[24] We can guess that's why Mr. Moore was wisely - with different style than here -- reminded that if the whole is forced into the parts it's going to bulge out again and maybe not in support of religious Greek and/or Roman Church, nor High Church of England, but in the multitude of small sects inspired by the standards of a book of restraint and possibility.

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Mr. Moore is to be thanked again for laying a matter worthy of discussion before the KJF. I'll end with a quote from Karl Jaspers, the psychiatrist, philosopher, and understood-theologian who comprehends the therapeutic value of words: "...[I]n my opinion the language of myth is an indispensable cipher of supernatural reality, and to do away with it would be disastrous." (p. 72 *Myth and Christ ...* Noonday Press fourth printing 1964). To do away with potential myth forces regarding Jesus is disastrous to authentic selfhood and protestant small group development, though it might be essential to establish and limit myth to the control of an assumed Greek or Roman Orthodoxy.

[26] I'd like to apologize to Mr. Moore for some unfairness in this dialectical broaching. When I was in college working at General Electric Plant in Edmore Michigan, I operated an apparatus called a "broach." It was about 15 feet high and cutting teeth would come down and shave off metal giving shape to cutting tools. The very large Jesus has been used in my broaching-response to your graciously allowed posting, and in a way I sacrificed some of your forms of thinking to make a point, and perhaps to invoke response. But most of all I feel some guilt for having used Jesus' suffering experience in this dialogue, but for that there's comfort in his understanding, and in his words that the sin against the son-of-man is not the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit.