

THE "KARL JASPERS FORUM" UPDATE 12 (2-27-2006)
EXISTENZ AND INCOMING ENCOMPASSINGS--PERIECHONTOLOGICAL
ONTOLOGISTIC CYPHERS

Comment: Periechontology involves the conceptual use of the Greek *peri*, which has an incoming-encompassing connotation, and *periech* denotes perpetual timeliness of sacred but interpretive writings and the relativity and importance of the same. It is used by Jaspers to encompass and prevent ontology (a major premise) from encompassing individual and humankind's thinking and thereby disregarding the substance of history. Homer in part used the symbols and the concepts are biblical--to say the least.

Notation: Contributor's to Mr. Muller's Website's posting dated 2-25-2006 include Rodrigo Barros Gewehr, and Fred Abraham. Herbert also Comments on Ramona Fotiade's report on Derrida used as a Target Article. None refer to Karl Jaspers. Comments below will be confined to these three with greater emphasis on Mr. Muller's apparent efforts to make the biblical Abraham into a radical constructivist.

FOR QUICK REFERENCE:

- 1. Rodrigo Barros Gewehr**
- 2. Fred Abraham**
- 3. Herbert Muller and the Biblical Abraham**
- 4. The Historical Traditional Context of Abraham**
- 5. Choosing Dance Partners—All except Jaspers, Kierkegaard disinterested**
- 6. Heidegger is jilted by Gadamer, Derrida, and Ortega**
- 7. Jaspers Refuses to Dance With Gadamer**

1. Rodrigo Barros Gewehr Comments on Ramona Fotiade's Derrida piece. Rodrigo apologizes for an English ability. There's no need for the apology, for his conceptualizations are clearly manifested for those not restrained by linguistic nit picking.

1.1. It's easy to resonate with Rodrigo's expressions about the limits of reason, and the consequences of the necessary use of reason. His view that rational understanding leads to silence reminds one of Jaspers' expressions that normal in-depth communication can and must exhaust in silence. The silent-area one reaches alone or with another is that area where the illumination of Existenz can hear or read the ciphers of Transcendence. Such silent listening and revelation can actually take place on the other side of a penetrated narcissism. In this sense we are not victims of personal egotistical constructs, and we don't penetrate our constructs, self-images, as a license for plagiarizing predecessors' works. I mean having reached beyond self-images is no ground for not recognizing those contributors already there. I don't see such a penetration into silence as a belatedly realized disappointment in the way that Rodrigo seems to, for it is not part of my personal occidental heritage to treat as something novel or original the transformation of self. A successful transformation-continuum though is another question.

1.2. He expresses the view that poetry is “far beyond science and philosophy”. I would agree with Kierkegaard and Jaspers’ assessment, that it’s more “far out” than beyond. Rodrigo does not make reference to Jaspers but neither does he express anything that could be misconstrued as an intended reflection upon Jaspers’ views. The concept of absolute mortality in some sublimated sense is not beyond but within the limits of science and philosophy, in as much as the infinity of the finite now associated with quantum physics is no more irrational than when the biblical Paul talked about resurrected bodies.

1.3. References to “laic dogmatism” as a form of contemporary enlightened consolation makes me wonder where that could lead in a dialogue where exhausted-silence is replaced and held captive to a vow of silence equal to the speechlessness of fixated sacred images. This reference to sacred images could point toward iconology and a corresponding ontology. For Jaspers, ciphers of Transcendence are more than the epiphenomena side of percepts/concepts as in mental images universalized, though the ground of transcending is made possible by Transcendence as such, but without universal vatic-like applicability and enforcement.

2. Fred Abraham begins with what could be an effort to show some justification for the inclusion of a Target Article that avoids an application of Karl Jaspers' views. Fred prefaces his remarks stating that he perhaps by lineage is able to understand Derrida but also admits to not being an expert on Derrida. Fred explains the “nativity” comment after (in <8>) we are reminded of the importance of biographical data in understanding a complex Derrida. As an Algerian Jew, Derrida was caught in an uncomfortable situation to say the least, caught up within the quests for power, cultural, economic, political, religious, which Fred referred to as “beliefs and ideologies”. Reminders of this sort of biographical circumstance help foster a clearer understanding as to why an author would not admit dependence on Jaspers and Gertrude, but chose initially rather Heidegger and Husserl forces. These forces continue currently but under new personages struggling for position.

2.1. Beyond the reasonable social and cultural factors making life difficult and requiring an unusual way of handling experience, Fred appears to be offering excuses for not giving to predecessors including contemporaries credit where due. Here we see Derrida portrayed as a natural development in an “evolving” sort of mutation, a leap due to punctuations of personal existence. But great ideas have a traditional necessary-part and therefore we are unjustified in laying claims to too much originality. There is probably no way of avoiding some plagiarism regardless of how complex or poetic one might try to hide it. But the more efforts are made to hide feelings of inferiority, the more a feeling of superiority manifests itself as some special metaphysical election in a predetermining developing. One can interpret Fred’s Comment as an effort to confirm the right to violate a “lest we forget” maxim, to reinforce Herbert’s Radical Constructivism and zero derivation formula, i.e., the propounding of unreality as a fundamental basis for being unmindful toward forbearers. That traditional ideas can be relevant to current situations does not require putting on a veneer of being radically original. I don’t know if Derrida is blameworthy of such claims to originality, but one could suspect as much based on Fred’s defense of Derrida’s originality. A conjured foundation for originality is probably

something to be on the look out for in the frenzy to produce something original in academia.

2.2. In Update 10 it was pointed out how many of Jaspers' French translations were available to Derrida (see **Heidegger Incommensurate with Jaspers**). So one would be wise not to leave the impression that what form ideas took was not just the untraceable something in the wind of the twenties. As substantiation of originality, Fred refers to a friend's work written in 1998 stating that the author was "not even then aware of the post-structuralists" but the book was "postmodern in its nature..." Fred does not mention here that "post-structuralism" is a French variant of extant ideas and its French-peculiar form had been around since around since 1970. My point here is that in a Karl Jaspers context, from one emphatic side of "post- structuralism" one would hope for a fair treatment of direct lineage to Jaspers and not avoid it with obvious blinders and by comments about degrees of inadequacies between current enculturalizations defended by "our language has a word for it and yours doesn't". That might be justifiable thinking to protect great ideas and great thinkers from the profanity of modern secularizations processes, such as protecting Jaspers biblical theistic consciousness-conscience from pornographic economics that is rapidly becoming a gross national product of the so-called developed civilizations. What makes Jaspers influential is the quality and quantity of his clinical work, and his moral stature presents a threat to those capitalizing on immorality.

2.3. Fred then reminds us that we can leapfrog over Jaspers (for this is essential the issue here) and return to where all this "evolution" of ideas began, i.e., to the Greeks. If it can be shown that the "evolution" began with the likes of an Anaximander, on to the processes of Heraclites' flux and on to the alleged ontic permanence of Parmenides, then we are excused for avoiding all who were actually before and after...until the French "post structuralism's" school.

2.4. Fred began his Comment expressing some reluctance to participate. His credentials (See his Website) are such that he is qualified for having gut feelings, i.e., enlightened reason. I take the gut feeling in part to be agreeing to participate and provide support for the use of a title of distinction while avoiding the distinctive Karl Jaspers' works. This is not the character of Karl Jaspers. If one reviews his works beginning with his General Psychopathology, the endless listing of precursors and critical comparisons is imposing and intellectually above reproach--and Jaspers' originality is discernible but largely due to the absence of any personal aggrandizement intent.

3. Herbert Muller and Biblical Abraham—Herbert, in this week's TA85 C3, <6> and <7>, refers to the "theistic" as an ontological tool mindfully constructed but then the symbol god is capitalized without acknowledging the, or any, Transcendent source. Notable personages are used in the process—including the biblical account of Abraham. None of these are given incoming-encompassing credit, but are mentioned merely to support a private interpretation. The private interpretation, which is not given any IMHO (i.e., in my humbler opinion) status, no flux, no flexibility, is then made public. It's propagated from a University's podium. A structured god becomes a "G god", and then

elevated into...the...formula, i.e., “God”. The formula becomes the sign for God-is-nothing-more-than-conjured-and-objectified. That is called epiphenomological vitalism within the science of psychology. One’s phenomenal idea is self-induced with breath and the idea becomes a living thing.

3.1. One ingenious byproduct of this theological rationalization is that if I perceive the complex and am descriptive enough, I not only get credit for being a critic but also stand in danger of receiving an award for it from those not inclined to properly distribute credit. I’m placed in the position of having to utter a disclaimer or take repose in anonymity. Fortunately, there are biblical precedents that make that sacrifice unnecessary—if not subjected to private and fixated interpretations. One such precedent involves Abraham. I mean the biblical account of the faith involved in the Abraham situation is revealing enough to allay any concerns about getting an award for being critically original.

3.2. Herbert attempts to provide a sidewinder biblical basis for a subjective literal interpretation of Abraham’s situation. Herbert does not study the biblical account with any degree of hermeneutic acumen except to mention the need for “historical context” and then he gains meaning from association with some hermeneutic experts such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Husserl, Heidegger, and, I guess, Derrida. Kierkegaard and Derrida (in that order) have reflected on...faith...relative to the biblical Abraham. Kierkegaard shows that Abraham is not the father of...the...faith. Neither was the Danish State Church or Catholicism. Kierkegaard uses the phrase “subjectivity” in a context showing that faith is given from beyond subjectivity. It appears Herbert cannot help but fail to grasp the incoming spectrum of the concept of the Encompassing relative to philosophical and biblical faith. He would naturally find the word “subjectivity” meaning something other than being subjected to one side of the dichotomous predicament of cognition. So...:

3.3. Herbert says: “—but to begin with, God was a creation of Abraham, who had imported his family God from Mesopotamia; God’s mind-independent existence was a secondary extrapolation. And indeed all attempts to prove the existence of God start from this secondary step...” One can sense the exuberance emitted from Herbert’s housetop prophetic announcement. He feels he has found the literal biblical basis for atheism. There is no exegetical basis for Herbert’s interpretation, except to mention some exegetic personages. Herbert then turns the podium over to the deceased Kierkegaard, Derrida, and Ortega who need no introduction. Herbert misunderstands Kierkegaard’s comments about subjectivity—to begin with. Removing, deconstructing, traditional philosophical reflection while leaving the “Kierkegaardian subjectivity in tact” becomes a tactic iconologically replacing philosophical faith with “evolutionary faith”—a fixed positive metaphysic of origins. Herbert then presumes to <8> counsel the deceased Derrida that cutting loose would have been easier if philosophy and ontology had been seen as a tool rather than a necessity. Derrida does not respond in the normal way for he’s deceased. I don’t know enough about Derrida to speak for him or determine what is being cut loose from, except in principle to say that if he is as complex as Herbert says, there’s a good chance Herbert as a radical constructivist sees his own reflection while looking at Derrida. As a wayfarer caught up in the circularity of origins, Herbert has little

comprehension of philosophical faith and not much in touch with the periechontological or incoming-encompassing qualities for the critical thinking requisite for hermeneutics. The “God” tool he originated to fit origins is so large it inhibits Herbert and he cannot dance in historical contexts. He needs a conjured universal vatic authority just to carry it, and the organizational force required to apply it increases the “pressures and constraints” he wants to avoid <10>.

3.4. My interpolations are in brackets in the quotes below. I visualize Herbert wants to be the knight of faith (a Kierkegaard phrase) that rides in fully armored with formulae (structures) slaughtering biblical traditions he prefers to see as “pressures and constraints”. Traditions of the sort are to be replaced by the more obscure and limited immortality through mortal successorship: “if one can understand one’s work in the context of history [which Herbert limits to Anaximander’s alleged evolutionism on one end and vatic catholic “church of evolution” or radical infallible constructivism on the other], it becomes easier to comprehend, (the author’s personal difficulties not withstanding, as with Kierkegaard, among others) there can be many who inherit”. So...what are these pressures Herbert wants to eliminate? What are these difficulties to be deconstructed as influences? They are the traditions and the forget-me-nots of life, one being the inner side of periechontology, the wholly other side of perichontology being that which cannot be made into a symbol and interpreted, but is the ground and potentiality of lest-we-forget remembering. Here, then, the application of Jaspers’ “periechontology” is made to Herbert’s created “God” and found to be out-of-synch with Philosophical Faith and Revelation. (See Jaspers’ Philosophical Faith and Revelation, Chapter: The Cipher of Rational Being 201, 203, and Chapter on Basic Philosophical Knowledge, From Immanence to Transcendence, p. 80f. (1967 Collins, London).

3.5. Traditional biblical faith is what Herbert has aversions toward, if he is not simply playing a devil’s advocate, challenging that which Jaspers finds an encompassing necessity. Periechontological thinking is philosophical thinking that spills over into honest intellectual thinking. With this open-mindedness a more scientific field is now entered such as his General Psychopathology (latest English edition) and the section on The Abnormal Psyche In Society and History. He addresses the context of history, that which Herbert reducing to atheism and by formula-principle disregards not wanting certain memories to stand out (mental constructions traditional stand-outs “notwithstanding” to use his word). Jaspers says:

What is founded in history...requires a tradition to hand it on and a continuous appropriation of it by a newly awakened consciousness. We are what we have become as human beings because of the actual historical basis that has been laid once for all, which is exactly what it is and no other and which is not something universally human. But what is given historically can be lost; it can be forgotten when the tradition perishes and later generations have no access to it through any remaining traces of its records and works. Functions become dormant through non-use...[Unlike matters of heredity--GW] ...matters that belong to tradition an absolute forgetting can undoubtedly occur and there can be an irrevocable loss of historical continuity (710).

Herbert's misunderstanding of Abraham's traditional faith can affect such a loss of consciousness' conscience. Herbert cannot justify cutting off biblical traditional faith through a misinterpretation of Kierkegaard's critical thinking about Abraham. Kierkegaard was saying Abraham is not the father of faith. Herbert is saying Abraham is the father of faith and the beginning of a constraining tradition. Herbert seems to be saying Abraham came out of his homeland with gods and projected singularity, i.e., another more ungodly singularity. Herbert misses the imageless imperative. This is not the historical context and certainly not the one propounded by the biblical New Testament Paul or Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard was as much aware of the Islamic/Israel situation as Derrida and Fred Abraham—as much as one can be and not live in the neighborhood.

4. The Historical Traditional Context of Abraham is not Abraham's arbitrary structure, constructed on the basis of ongoing experience. His conscience includes a tradition opposed to human sacrifice amidst an enculturation prone to human sacrifice. Cultural competition involved strengths in numbers like the sands of the sea. The contextual situation showed that a society could lose a tradition and establish human sacrifice as a test of allegiance to a State. It shows what can be sustained through tradition and what can be lost. The tradition of faith did not originate with Abel's murder by Cain, one brother's murder of brother, though there was some conceptual guilt involved. The traditional faith did not begin with the Decalogue, but was traditionally present as with all those who do by nature the things contained in the Decalogue's guide (Paul). The human sacrifice prohibition (murder) is not the origin of guilt for it has always been a qualifying traditional value where family values were transmitted.

4.1. Abraham had violated the traditional prohibition (though pre-Decalogue) when he in effect pronounced a death sentence on his first-born. He deserted the mother and child. Any normal parent involved in family disruption like Abraham's is passionately torn emotionally and has to live with a sense of having sacrificed one child for another. Such an intellectually honest parent then is faced with the idea of being no less equally willing to sacrifice a remaining child who has all the advantages of a secure home including parental guidance, and the advantage of a tradition now emotionally strained but enhanced by its violation. The deserted child was let loose to wander in a dominate society that sacrifices strangers and competitors. The deserted prodigy could find some mortal and immortal consolation in hearing that equal measure was intended by the parent toward the child not deserted, but glad that God intervened, the same intervention that protected the deserted. The deserted progeny would expect fair inheritance from the remnants of Abraham's guilt. Surely the progeny understood then the need for tribal numbers to overcome the threats of human sacrifice in the quest for power. These considerations are the "hows" and not just the "whats" of historical contests. For Kierkegaard the faith encompassed the "whats" and made us think about the "hows" involved in Abraham's child-sacrifice. Kierkegaard said quite rightly that he was both aroused with admiration but also found it appalling, and concludes his pertinent essay with, "Faith is a miracle..."

4.2. Herbert Protests Too Loudly against biblical tradition—Although Herbert talks about historical context, he means postmodern modern radical constructivism. He is viewing history as a whole and as a “what” more than “how”, and Herbert’s “how” is restricted to abstract epistemological considerations. The “how” he sees in the Abraham account is what Herbert constructs; he constructs “how” from the perspective of evolutionism, a rung reached and the origin of origins seen from that “advanced” level. “How” becomes the ontological, and the ontological becomes the barrier to the periechontological. Kierkegaard says meddling about the “what” of the biblical account leads to the loss of the complexity of “how”. “How” permits “the suffering of inwardness to the truth” if the Deity is to lead (Kierkegaard). One unprepared for such inwardness is like a “noise...like wind in the stomach...getting executed in the turn of affairs is not the sort of suffering which essentially characterizes inwardness.” Kierkegaard is referring to those who express an opinion and then expands on it in its defense until it becomes a dogma (Postscript). One can tend to substantiate an opinion by choosing popular dance partners.

5. Choosing dance partners--Declining Jaspers; but Choosing Gadamer, Ortega Gasset, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Derrida, and Heidegger--All but Jaspers are found worthy of mention by Herbert. Herbert makes a footnote reference and relates how Gadamer overheard Ortega tell Heidegger that one must learn to dance with philosophy. Herbert finds something supportive in Nietzsche’s use of the idea, as though the dance could only be beyond tradition and into godlessness. But Jaspers points out that the simile as used by Nietzsche refers to an attitude essential to dancing beyond one’s self, upon one’s own head, a god dancing with a self, and a dance like floating with the wind. One cannot make Nietzsche dance to the refrain of atheism.

6. Heidegger is Jilted--Ortega, schooled within a Jesuit environment (and therefore useful as a replacement for Heidegger’s fundamental ontology) has said that there is “scarcely one or two concepts in Heidegger that are not to be found also in my books, at times with a priority of thirteen years” and insisted that he was hardly indebted to Heidegger (Walter Kaufmann). So Ortega refuses to dance any more with Heidegger. Now we hear Gadamer reporting something Heidegger murmured because he justifiably feared Ortega—an obvious pitch. All that was needed was for Derrida to speak disparagingly of Heidegger to establish the estrangement. Derrida accomplishes this by being critical of Heidegger’s interpretation of van Gogh’s art, saying Heidegger imagined too much in his interpretation of the art piece, an easy thing to do following Gadamer’s refusal also to dance with Heidegger. If it were not for the fact that Heidegger was also of similar schooling as Ortega, Heidegger would not be allowed on the dance floor. (See Kirkbright’s footnote 30, p. 311. Note: my caustic tone and interpretation is in not way portrayed by the scholarly Kirkbright.)

7. Jaspers does not dance with Gadamer--Gadamer (once a student then a competitive critic of Heidegger) said once of Jaspers that he stood as a “light, observing eye” and the “voice of the moralist” (Kirkbright p. 280). Jaspers’ moral stance and image might partially explain his unpopularity, and the intense effort put forward to entice him to dance. Mr. Gadamer was left sitting in a drafty hall while Hans Schaefer, Dean of the

philosophical faculty, presented Jaspers with an honorary doctorate from Heidelberg University. Jaspers refused to dance with Gadamer even after Gadamer's compliment and futile effort to be party to the presentation of the Honorary Doctorate. An honorary doctorate from Heidelberg to Jaspers and his acceptance of it was more like an honorary doctorate from Jaspers to Heidelberg. Apparently no academic competitor wants to dance with Heidegger, and to discredit Jaspers, it would be useful to spread the rumor that they danced together.