

THE “KARL JASPERS FORUM” UPDATE 14 (3-14-2006)
CYBERNETICS AND KARL JASPERS’ EXISTENZ

Notation: My comments below amount to wonderings and impressions and not meant to be taken as absolute interpretations. Mr. Muller’s Website has offered invaluable assistance in showing the need to see Karl Jaspers from a most comprehensive historical perspective including, no less, the most current trends in thinking. Without his very difficult-to-maintain Website, applying Karl Jaspers’ works and life would be more demanding in some ways, and easier in other ways, and for that I’m grateful, whatever part Mr. Muller played or was played for. I feel no animosity for the his person though at times it may appear not to be the case due to the inimical differences inherits in the issues. The same recognition of appreciation applies to all affected through his Forum, those hopefully can be shown appreciation more at another time. That appreciation extends to the piece below, and includes the assurance that if misrepresentations are brought to my attention, remedial efforts will be made.

PREFACE— This week Mr. Muller’s Website < ww.kjf.ca > assigned the date of March 11th 2006 to some postings, and Stuart A. Umpleby is shown as the author. No reference to Karl Jaspers is made. Stuart’s subject is informative in regard to the history of cybernetics but seemingly too educative due to a growing “Constructivism” slant in his articles. That is, due to the “Constructivism” emphasis more directive teaching is involved than non-directive in steering or designing an intellectual movement. In TA 87 item [23] occurs this comment, “Constructivism is in part a way of incorporating trial and error...into the idealist notion that ‘reality’ is created in the mind of the observer.” (See my item 2. below for discombobulating posting information.) Jaspers made no mention of what has been termed “second order cybernetics” though it would fall under his views on the good and bad of apparatuses. He passed away in 69. But it is probable he would have objections to the ease with which a philosophy of science (second and third Umpleby cybernetic views) can become a pseudo science as such. Below is a clarifying effort, a short synopsis of Mr. Muller’s original postings that occurred beginning on the tenth of March 2006.

Facetious key words: Karl Jaspers applied!

SYNOPSIS OF MR. UMPLEBY’S POSTINGS

1. “The Design Of Intellectual Movements” is a posting designated as a Target Article 86 or 87 (I’m confused about this TA numbering). It was seemingly published in the proceedings of the annual meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences, in Beijing, China, 2002. Stuart relates how that in the late 1970s he became interested in and began promoting “Second order cybernetics” which became a product of an American Society for Cybernetics, a “small group of people”, comprising others and himself from the Biological Computer Laboratory at U of I. “Second order cybernetics” also included some involved in the American Society for Cybernetics, he says. “Second order cybernetics” was apparently formed to transform society and the philosophy of

science. Stuart says he partly fostered the ideas through websites in 1990, 1991, and 1997. At least that is how I read his “The Design Of Intellectual Movements”.

1.2. The Application of Jaspers to the medical significance of cybernetics and computers and maybe some artificial intelligence certainly falls within Jaspers’ appreciation for technical apparatuses especially relevant to the *sensory reflex arc* and some perhaps relative to the *psychic reflex arc* (see his General Psychopathology, section on Objective performances of psychic life). But whether he would consider “second order Constructivism” an ism-like infringement on science on one hand and faith on the other is most likely. Any apparatus such as computers, the part cybernetics and artificial intelligence plays would be of medical benefit with regard to the reflex side of life as a whole as related to fatigue, practice and memory, excitation and suppression, and inhibition. Such could be useful in measuring in some way, but yet indeterminately, the point at which the higher levels of the nervous system takes over and at what point the lower level nervous system returns in full force. But Jaspers points out that painful situations leading to shock involves violent emotional upheavals, and neurophysiologic concepts (and we could add “apparatuses”) applied to psychology may be questionable when applied to the psychopathological part of life. Idealism/realism and pathological ramifications, whether Hegelian or vatic imposed authority, or epistemological metaphysics considered superior due to some alleged cybernetic connection may actually lead to the cosmic discombobulating affect on the constellations of Being--though offering consolation to “Radical Constructivists”. It seems to me that “second order” and Umpleby-metaphysical-cybernetics by design steps beyond the scientific bounds of early cybernetics and is therefore beyond empirical critiquing.

2. “Strategies For Winning Acceptance of Second Order Cybernetics” is the second posted Target Article 87 considered here. But there is a disconcerting situation here too. It was assigned the date of March 11th 2006. This TA 87 was found posted on the 10th though assigned the date of the 11th and was apparently replaced by the time I rechecked again on the 12th. TA 87 then occurred as a German work “Intellektuelle Bewegungen schaffen und fordern” and as of today March 14 it remains TA 87. It appears prepared for the March/April 2006 Lernende Organization and seems to me a revised form of “Strategies For Winning Acceptance of Second Order Cybernetics” the latter having been apparently presented at an International Symposium on Systems Research, Informatics and Cybernetics Baden-Baden Germany, August 12-18, 1991. Interestingly, the term “evolution” and “evolve” was not found in this paper. “Constructivist” appears in [23] and [10] in reference to epistemology and as an approach to learning. “Constructivism” is used twice, once as a Key Word, and again in [23] as an idealist notion that “reality is created in the mind of the observer”. If that is not a movement toward a radical constructivism it seemingly contributes to it by kowtowing to artificial language with little meaningful therapeutic affect.

2.1. Later, though it is not clear whether the paper was presented, he was considered a “Guest Scholar” that same month in Vienna. This, according to the footnotes of TA 87 (which I can no longer find posted as a TA, I saved a copy), seems designed to show that there was increasing interest in the ideas of “second order cybernetics” in Europe during

the late 1980s and early 1990s. Stuart indicates that there was little interest during that time in America. Whether appearing as a “Guest Scholar” during that time shows more interest in “second order” and third-Umpleby cybernetics is not established to my satisfaction; the setting involved Medical Cybernetics and Artificial Intelligence which is reality based and anchored empirically in medicine rather than the questionable goal-setting “winning” perspective of an idealism peculiar to “Constructivism”.

3. A German translation is a third posting and listed as TA86, supposedly a translation of “The Design Of Intellectual Movements” (though I may be confused).

It also appears to be an updated and revised version of “Strategies...” in item 2 above prepared for March/April 2006 Lernende Organization. The English version 2002 of “The Design of Intellectual Movements” differs from the German translation 2006. An example is found in the table “Three Versions of Cybernetics, the Umpleby Social Cybernetics column seems to have an incomplete expressed epistemological notion “knowledge is constructed to achieve human [omission]”. It almost appears like an omission because the leap could not logically be made to “Radical Constructivism”. In the German version 2006 the notion is more complete and radical constructivism as knowledge and ideal steers toward the peaks of human achievement. There’s a detected movement from no mention of “evolution”, as stated in item 2 above, to frequent mention, and a German word for ordinary development or building is substituted for the English “Evolution” which has a Darwinian social, religious, meaning within a historical context. It appears when it is used, e.g., in German, it connotes that English complex. And the commitment to “Constructivism” without reference to the greatest systematic and ameliorating thinker, Jaspers, shows a use of something considered stronger because more popular having some popular personages (in Stuart’s updated bibliography) to be imagined, i.e., imaged. And Stuart places emphasis on the value of images in intellectual movements and visual aids. Jaspers not only constructed a philosophical logic but also inherent in it was the design to be constructive in the sense that others (individuals) could reach authentic self-hoodity through therapeutic language. But his system did not substitute a “Constructivism” movement for historical faith.

3.1. One might suspect that the movement that I detect--if correct--toward an increasing use of terms like “Constructivism” and “evolution” (especially since vatic sanctification), i.e., speaking in terms of second and third order cybernetics, is due to the need to capture the attention of computer-programmed search-engine crawlers. That could be a problem with a third-stage uncritical-affectation resulting from uncritical acceptance of cybernetics, computers, artificial intelligence, and artificially devised words.

3.2. Avoiding relating computational mechanisms to Karl Jaspers’ General Psychopathology is like not using the best braking system possible for potential runaway computer-homunculi having hardware for reflexive objective performance, and software for an analytical psyche. Jaspers systematic procedure for hitting bottom in reason and emotion precludes “second order” cybernetics and his philosophical logic precludes and controls a synthetic metaphysical third order.

SUMMATION

4. Idealism or realistic preferences--When Mr. Umpleby states that Hegel's dialectical idealism and resultant dialectical materialistic ramifications was or is a possible determining factor in why German (European) acceptance of second order metaphysical cybernetics, something is possibly and perhaps conveniently being overlooked. It is not necessarily a protestant individuality emphasis that is the main contributing factor to an unquestionable metaphysic of the third estate order in the Umpleby cybernetic "Constructivism" movement, but rather that more comprehensive situation of catholicity, which was enforcing a reactionary recalcitrance. Of course this is recognizing that catholicity can appear and overcome reason in all religious forms, i.e., idealism verses realistic thinking. Jaspers says that the protestant (in principle) "will protest against his own structures if they linger in Catholicism or lapse into imitating what they can never equal." "Constructivism" amounts to lingering in the possibilities too long and losing sight of the impossible, that other wing essential to free soaring. (Philosophical Faith and Revelation, "After Kierkegaard".)