



## Jaspers' Treatment of the Human Being as a Whole Relevance to Kahneman's Experiential Self and to the Hard Problem in Consciousness Studies

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**Abstract:** The concept of the experiencing self as described by Daniel Kahneman and his contrasting of it with the remembering or narrating self is relevant to the hard problem of consciousness as enunciated by David Chalmers. Happiness or experienced well-being is obviously a type of consciousness. Both Kahneman and Chalmers work off of a naturalistic ontology, broadly speaking. Both of their work reveals deep paradoxes as regards human consciousness. Karl Jaspers' final section in the *General Psychopathology* that deals with the human being as a whole may help us to expand our ontology and answer some of the problems associated with human consciousness and well-being. Although Jaspers hardly deals with the question of happiness, his expanded treatment of consciousness may help us to place human well-being in the context of Dasein, Existenz, Mind, Consciousness, etc. It may even render the subject of less import. Also relevant to this subject is Jaspers' expanded treatment of the human drives in an earlier section of the *General Psychopathology*.

**Keywords:** Kahneman, Daniel; Jaspers, Karl; General Psychopathology; happiness; consciousness; well-being; *eudaimonia*; hedonic; mind; experience; vital drives; spiritual drives.

The *General Psychopathology* is now more than 100 years old.<sup>1</sup> I believe that it can still shed light on some of the unsolved philosophical and psychological problems that are of practical import to post-modern humanity. I have chosen two topics: happiness and consciousness. I think they are related. I have also selected two important contemporary thinkers. Daniel Kahneman is one of our greatest living social scientists. He won a Nobel Prize in Economics even though he is a psychologist. He and his late collaborator, Amos Tversky, practically invented

the field of Behavioral Economics.<sup>2</sup> David Chalmers is one of the most important philosophers engaged in an interdisciplinary field called Consciousness Studies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The increasing interface between psychology and economics goes both ways. Psychologists have conducted experiments that have meaning to economists in terms of the experienced value of economic goods and services. As a result of the penchant of economics for large scale survey data, a great deal of new information about human happiness is now available.

<sup>3</sup> As an interdisciplinary field it attracts people from philosophy of mind and psychology but also physicists, mathematicians, computer scientists, neurophysiologists, and others.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, trans. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. [Henceforth cited as *GP*]

I have chosen them because they address some of the concerns of Karl Jaspers in the final section of the *GP* entitled "The Human Being as a Whole." Unlike some other contemporary theorists who tend to be reductionist, those two thinkers are both passionately interested in the inner life. Yet, I believe they go somewhat astray because of their limiting orientations, which are radically different from those of Jaspers. I believe that their meta-narratives regarding the inner life lack the spiritual and philosophical depth that Jaspers brought to the subject.

Some, however, say that Jaspers is speculative and does not stick to the facts but is carried away by the tradition of German metaphysics. Although among his German contemporaries he might be among the least susceptible to that, it carries weight in the context of Anglo-American Empiricism and this is something that we do need to keep in mind. Among Continental philosophers Jaspers is somewhat of an exception. But it can be fairly stated that Jaspers was quite concerned with a careful examination of facts that can be observed inter-subjectively. Thus, a comparison of his thinking with that of Kahneman and Chalmers is appropriate. They might indeed have something to say to one another in spite of disagreements about basic intuitions. At the very least, Jaspers anticipated many of their concerns even if he did not investigate them in the same depth.

### Happiness

Let us begin with happiness, something that many of us are concerned with. Charles de Gaulle is reputed to have said that happiness is for idiots. I think that Hegel said something similar regarding its unimportance to history.<sup>4</sup> Aside from the judgment of history alluded to by Hegel it could also be said that pre-historical evolution (metaphorically speaking) cared nothing about the happiness of individuals; it was their reproductive success that mattered. But that very judgment presupposes that happiness is a subjective rather than an objective phenomenon and we have not yet determined what it actually is. Jaspers endorses

Nietzsche's statement that "every nature has its own philosophy, so has everyone who is unhappy, evil or exceptional" (*GP* 805). He seemed to be referring to "psychiatric tolerance" regarding those who are abnormal (including some unhappy people) by nature. For now, however, let us not concern ourselves with the subjectivity or objectivity of happiness and simply admit that this is a popular concern, not only of the average person or those in the Humanities but also for the Social Sciences. For example, Springer Verlag now publishes a *Journal of Happiness Studies*, there is also a branch of psychology called positive psychology with its *Journal of Positive Psychology*. Within that field of happiness studies there are two different camps. One claims to follow Aristotle in being mostly concerned with a normative view of human functioning or flourishing (eudemonic happiness).<sup>5</sup> The other is mostly concerned with subjective feelings of well-being that need not be justified by any philosophical or ethical theory (hedonic happiness) but are conceived to be both easily ascertainable and real. Kahneman is generally considered to be within the latter camp and Seligman within the former, though Kahneman has modified his views in recent years and Seligman always included pleasure as a necessary ingredient in the good life.

Kahneman has become well-known for distinguishing between different types of thinking. Regarding happiness, there are two types of cognitive activity. The one is our actual experience of living. It is the one we call upon when someone asks us how we are feeling now. Then there is the other kind of cognition that involves remembering the past and planning for the future. We all know that memories vary according to purposes. Interestingly, our memory of past events is often quite different not only from the events themselves but even from the way we remember ourselves feeling at the time of the event. Here is an example that Kahneman often gives about a vacation that went wonderfully until the very end. He knows (because he remembers) that he enjoyed the vacation

<sup>5</sup> I have deliberately spelled the word "eudemonic" due to its use in contemporary happiness literature, where it is typically spelled that way. This "happiness literature" is more psychological and social scientific than philosophical. For example, see Christopher Peterson, Nansook Park, and Martin Seligman, "Orientations to Happiness and Life Satisfaction: The Full Life versus the Empty Life," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 6/1 (2005) 25-41, for the use of the spelling "eudemonia."

<sup>4</sup> See Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Reason in History*, trans. Robert S. Hartman, New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1953, pp. 33-4: "But actually history is not the soil of happiness. The periods of happiness are blank pages in it....The world-historical individuals who have pursued such purposes have satisfied themselves, it is true, but they did not want to be happy."

for most of its duration. But there was a very significant mishap on the return trip and whenever he thinks about that vacation it has a negative tinge to it. Perhaps an even better example is the following: Imagine that you are listening to a brilliantly performed piece of music, enjoying it very much and at the end the violinist produces a horrendous screeching sound. The whole thing is ruined! Why is this? According to Kahneman, we are hardwired to desire good endings. The rest of the narrative is unimportant because the individuals who survived the rigors of evolutionary competition were not those who enjoyed smelling the flowers but those who escaped from danger. They were concerned more with outcomes than with experiences.<sup>6</sup> This makes a lot of sense but by following it we might never get to enjoy our lives. It is an example of inaccurate (perhaps even illogical) thinking that is heuristically sound and practical. All is well that ends well, and if it does not end well it may just as well not have happened! That may be corroborated by evolutionary theory but Kahneman and his associates have found independent empirical methods of proving it by asking subjects to record their actual experiences from moment to moment and then compare those ratings with the more retrospective ones after the events have been concluded.<sup>7</sup>

Kahneman uses the phrase "experiencing self" to describe a self that lives its life. Consider the following experiment: The subjects' hands are held under 14° centigrade water for 60 seconds. The same subjects are also held under 14° centigrade water for 60 seconds but then the water was gradually raised to a slightly more tolerable 15° for another 30 seconds. From an objective or logical perspective the second trial involves more pain but the subjects still preferred it to the objectively less painful original trial. What is going on here? The feeling of relief is more important to these subjects than the duration of pain. Are those subjects really experiencing more pain in the first trial and if so do we mean by "experience" a conscious awareness and not merely a physical registering of the amount and duration of the painful stimulus? And if the former is the case, do we then need some more qualitative measure of happiness

rather than the quantitative method of Kahneman? He actually goes a long way in his studies in utility toward such a qualitative account but still attempts to integrate it into a quantitative model. For example, Kahneman recognizes that the order of experiences matters a lot. An individual who first wins \$1,000 and later wins \$1,000,000 in the lottery will have higher utility than if the reverse is true even though the arithmetic total is the same. One who wins a million dollars might have to win \$100,000 in a subsequent lottery in order to even equal the total utility of the former example (*LT* 293). This tendency to discount what one considers inferior gains is intuitive but it is somewhat less obvious that later interpretations of prior events might lead to far reaching consequences in terms of happiness. In fact, this notion seems to conflict with Kahneman's concept of experience of life. Perhaps a person with an ascetic philosophy who does not pursue pleasurable experiences could actually be happier (in the sense of satisfaction or delight) than one who takes advantages of fortuitous events in order to obtain those pleasurable experiences.<sup>8</sup> Yet there does not seem to be room for that in a quantitative utility methodology because that methodology requires some stable units that are not subject to interpretive modification, generally called utility. For example, while Kahneman admits that the order of events give rise to different utilities he still insists that the utilities themselves are separable, time neutral and therefore commensurable or additive (*LT* 292-3). This seems to deny the possibility that a person could legitimately discount her own pleasurable experiences themselves as of no ultimate value.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> I am not denying that happiness is experiential but only attempting to differentiate it from what is usually called enjoyment. Recent psychological studies suggest that the reason for the normally unpleasant upheaval in adolescence is the striving for new experiences. See Laurence D. Steinberg, *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013. Steinberg explains the adolescent thirst for experience by reference to brain plasticity. On the other hand, older adults less open to new experience often report greater happiness.

<sup>9</sup> Part of the problem here regards a conceptualization of time in terms of quantitatively additive moments of equal value. This is obvious in the experiment regarding holding one's hands in cold water for various durations of time. While it may seem utterly absurd to endure additional pain in order to experience some relief in terms of a bookkeeping metaphor of duration

<sup>6</sup> There is some empirical evidence to the contrary, see footnote 17.

<sup>7</sup> See Daniel Kahneman and Jason Riis, "Living, and Thinking About It: Two Perspectives on Life," in *The Science of Well-Being*, eds. Felicia A. Huppert, Nick Baylis, and Barry Keverne, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press 2005, pp. 285-306. [Henceforth cited as *LT*]

I would also like to suggest that much of the time our registering of such fortuitous stimuli are somewhat below the threshold of consciousness and that moment to moment awareness is not to be equated with a fully conscious life experience. Some of us (like Kahneman himself) do sometimes remember that our actual conscious experience contradicted our present narrative. But how does he know that the moment to moment experience is more valid than the retrospective account? We are dealing here not with memory so much as with evaluation and there is also an element of will in all of this that has not yet been adequately discussed.

Kahneman's notion of experience might not be adequate, but I agree with him that the experiential self is a victim of one's story-telling self. The question that has not been answered, however, is whether this ought to be. Kahneman has recently reworked his position to include a greater appreciation of life narratives as something of independent value and validity and not simply distorted recreations of life experiences (*LT* 289).

Studies in hypnosis confirm the fact that our most intimately conscious experiences can be blocked from our access. A hypnotized person might lose access to pain. Now, it is sometimes believed that nothing can be more conscious than pain so we are not even clear about what we mean by pain. Is the hypnotized individual in pain or not? Despite the fact that the hypnotized subjects continue to show many of the objective signs of being in pain (increase in heart rate and blood pressure), they deny being in pain.<sup>10</sup> An individual suffering from blindsight may be able to sense a ball thrown at her and catch it but will then deny having seen it. One can perhaps infer from these examples that a person might well block access to her experiences of happiness as well. After all, happiness is something that we are less sure about than pain or visual sensation and might be easier to mistake for something else. For example, some people conflate satisfaction with happiness though people can be persuaded to be satisfied with little in the way of subjective experience or objective well-being.

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of time, it is not absurd from a more qualitative perspective involving hope, meaning of life, meaning of suffering, and so on.

<sup>10</sup> See Ned Block, "On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness," in *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, eds. Ned Block, Owen Flanagan, and Güven Güzeldere, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1998, pp. 375-416, here pp. 405-6.

Yet (considering the teachings of Victor Frankl) that kind of deprived life could be quite meaningful.

So perhaps positive experience of the present is not what life is about. Those who are deprived of their past, such as Alzheimer's patients, are also deprived in a sense of their lives even when they are still able to experience the present. If happiness is about interpretation and has little to do with experience, our memory of the past and our planning for the future might very well constitute our authentic existence as human beings. It may even be that the suffering of the sort occasioned by remembrance and planning is part of authentic human existence but such suffering may only be meaningful in a worldview that stresses the inherent goodness of life. It has been noted by psychological researchers (utilizing Kahneman's paradigm of the experiencing self and remembering self) that people in the West tend to think that life is basically good whereas in the East it is often thought that life is good and bad.<sup>11</sup> The former attitude tends to lead to greater expectations and therefore the need to justify suffering. This brings us to the more general subject of consciousness.

Some view consciousness as raw experience devoid of interpretation. This perhaps has been the standard psychological account. But others argue that other sentient animals are not conscious the way people are because they lack understanding of duration of time, the future, personal identity, etc. and all of those things are interpretative to an extent. Hence, consciousness is perhaps dependent upon narrative even though it is generally believed to be more than a narrative, as meditative practice enables a person to see through one's own narrative.

### Consciousness

Happiness is often considered a kind of consciousness, as is experienced unhappiness. Perhaps an expectation of happiness almost inevitably brings forth unhappiness. But there is also a relationship between the paradox of happiness and another evolutionary paradox. Metaphorically speaking, evolution appears to care nothing about experiential happiness but mostly about reproduction and survival. In this context, consciousness in general seems unnecessary and perhaps even dangerous. A physical creature without

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<sup>11</sup> See Shigehiro Oishi, "The Experiencing and Remembering of Well-Being," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28/10 (2002), 1398-1406.

all of that troublesome, uneconomical but vivid inner life would certainly be more adept to perform the adaptive actions needed without all of that experiential stuff. Scholars of consciousness studies have assumed that consciousness must confer some sort of adaptive advantage. Allegedly, it allows us to plan ahead, profit from our mistakes, fine tune our responses, and so on. But David Chalmers insists that there is no contradiction in imagining an exact replica of a conscious human being who can do all of those things but without that inner experience—he calls them zombies. Over a long enough period of evolutionary time they should have arisen and beaten us out in the competitive adaptive evolutionary game simply by virtue of their more efficient design. And yet, there are no zombies! His critics consider the whole idea of zombies to be absurd. Since they seem to be logically possible, this might place the burden of proof on those who maintain that they are in some other sense impossible. And if they are not impossible, then the fact that they do not exist should tell us something about reality.

Chalmers has figured out a way of integrating non-material properties into what is still basically a naturalistic metaphysics.<sup>12</sup> This is no mean accomplishment! While the fullest exposition of Chalmers' views are in his 1996 book, he discusses them succinctly at the first consciousness conference in Tucson, Arizona in 1994. He distinguishes between easy problems and hard problems. The former include explaining the following:

- The ability to discriminate, categorize, and react to environmental stimuli;
- The integration of information by a cognitive system;
- The reportability of mental states;
- The ability of a system to access its own internal states;
- The focus of attention;
- The deliberate control of behavior;
- The difference between wakefulness and sleep.<sup>13</sup>

As it turns out, however, there is really only one hard problem.

<sup>12</sup> David J. Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind: In Search of a Fundamental Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. [Henceforth cited as *CM*]

<sup>13</sup> Chalmers, David, "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness," in *Toward a Science of Consciousness: The First Tucson Discussions and Debates*, eds. Stuart R. Hameroff, Alfred W. Kaszniak, and Alwyn C. Scott, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1996, pp. 5-28, here p. 6. [Henceforth cited as *PC*]

The really hard problem of consciousness is the problem of experience. When we think and perceive, there is a whirl of information processing, but there is also a subjective aspect. As Nagel (1974) has put it, there is something it is like to be a conscious organism. [*PC* 6-7]<sup>14</sup>

Chalmers goes on to ask: "Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all" (*PC* 17)? This is the truly hard problem. He then argues that all of the attempts to explain this have really turned out to be explanations of the aforementioned easy problems. We have been victims of a bait and switch (*PC* 20).

Really effective zombies would appear to be conscious. They would express fear, anger, love, understanding, etc., because those theatrical performances have adaptive value in human society, at least in societies populated by non-zombies.

Chalmers assumes that consciousness is real and argues that since evolution cannot explain its occurrence, it must be one of the basic constituent aspects of reality, just like time and space. Chalmers assumes fundamental laws, and, as in any fundamental theory, it will not "tell us why there is experience in the first place." After all, "nothing in physics tells us why there is matter in the first place" (*PC* 17). The following quotation will expose how his views are much more aligned with science than they are with the humanities or religion.

A fourth motivation to avoid dualism, for many, has arisen from various spiritualistic, religious, supernatural, and other antiscientific overtones of the view...On the view I advocate, consciousness is governed by natural law, and there may eventually be a reasonable scientific theory of it. There is no a priori principle that says that all natural laws will be physical laws; to deny materialism is not to deny naturalism. A naturalistic dualism...does not invoke the forces of darkness. [*CM* 170]

Furthermore,

a theory of consciousness will have more in common with a theory in physics than a theory in biology. Biological theories involve no principles that are fundamental in this way, so biological theory has a certain complexity and messiness to it; but theories in physics, insofar as they deal with fundamental principles, aspire to simplicity and elegance. [*PC* 18]

One could question whether consciousness is quite

<sup>14</sup> Chalmers refers to Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?", *The Philosophical Review* 83/4 (1974), 435-450.

as deeply imbedded in natural reality as Chalmers thinks. In fact, useless things do endure for rather long periods of time; Steven Jay Gould called them spandrels. But we could say that Chalmers' explanation is quite plausible under certain naturalistic assumptions.

### Karl Jaspers on Consciousness and Being

Jaspers' treatment of the human being as a whole at the end of *GP* is so profound that I can hardly do justice to it but I will attempt to use it to illuminate some of the issues that we have been discussing. He explains, "To the empirical statements of the first five parts we now add a sixth and final part. It does not increase our knowledge but in it we reflect upon some fundamental philosophical questions" (*GP* 747).

At times Jaspers calls such understanding that is not knowledge faith and on at least one occasion he calls it pre-knowledge. I think it is not what most people mean by faith but from the standpoint of the history of religious ideas it is relevant to it. It is not a set of beliefs provided by organized religions but it may be the wellspring of those beliefs.

The fact that man senses this finiteness everywhere and cannot be satisfied with any of it points to a hidden possibility in his nature....If he had no pre-knowledge of the unknowable he would lack urge to enquire. But *he seeks after Being itself, after the Infinite and the Other*. Only this can give him satisfaction...The finiteness of man finds rest in this faith in the Being of God. [*GP* 763-4]

Jaspers has a number of important things to say in this section even if he would not classify them as knowledge. First of all, his notion of the human being as that which encompasses.

Kant grasped that the World is not object but idea and that which we know is always *in* the World but never *the* World. This World and Transcendence encompasses us in a reality that is independent of us....But when our own Being is that which encompasses, this bears a different meaning:

1. We are *human existence* (Dasein): that is, we are life in a world as with everything alive. That which encompasses all living things becomes objectified in the products of that life yet... life itself is never exhausted in these products but remains that which encompasses whence everything emerges...
2. We are *consciousness in general*, that is, we partake in the generally valid which through the division of Being into subject and object allows all objectivity to be

known formally to the subject. Only what enters into this general consciousness becomes Being for us. We ourselves are that which encompasses, within which everything that is, can be thought, known, recognized, touched upon or listened to in objective form.

3. We are *Mind*, that is we are always being led by ideas to a complex unity of meaningful connections within ourselves and within all that we have produced, achieved and thought. [*GP* 759-60]

Jaspers' perspective on consciousness is rather remote from those of the authors discussed above. Nonetheless, his perspective is relevant and reveals a restriction in the range of their thinking. That is not necessarily a bad thing, especially in science where such restriction allows for universality. It may be more of a problem in philosophy, where more fundamental questions are asked. This will become apparent in the following discussion of how most of Jaspers' modes of being are not included in their writings.

### Relevance to the Previous Discussion

Of those three modes of being, Chalmers and Kahneman only really give credence to the first. We saw how Chalmers takes a decisive step away from that bias but I think his views still lack the concept of an encompassing other than the physical world (albeit containing non-physical properties). That restriction in the very horizon within which human reality appears is significant. It might mean that ideas as well as consciousness can only be considered real to the extent that they supervene on physical reality.

When non-material properties might be allowed into our metaphysics (as with Chalmers), there is still a tendency to think that the human being is only authentic when she seriously acknowledges the physical world that encompasses us. This is where well-being (or happiness) enters in, even if Jaspers does not explicitly discuss it. For example in the aforementioned hypnotic studies, there is a prevalent belief that the denial of pain when the neuro-physiological correlates of pain clearly exist is somehow inauthentic. In the same way, Kahneman assumes that his denying that the vacation was good is inauthentic. But if we consider the individual human being to be an encompassing, all of those assumptions are called into question. The most obvious question is whether one's considered judgment of an event after it is over might be in some sense superior to what one was experiencing while it happened.

## Jaspers' Basic Methodological Considerations

Jaspers is not nearly as taken with physics as Chalmers is. A glance at the general index of the *GP* reveals no references for physics but many for biology. Jaspers was a physician and biology was of great importance to him but his interest may have gone beyond that understandable preference. In an earlier section devoted to causal connections, he declares that causal relations in general and also in biological systems do not "run only one way, but take reciprocal effect; they extend in this circular fashion so that they either build life up or as 'circuli vitiosi' foster a process of destruction" (*GP* 454). While Chalmers asserted that there are no fundamental principles in biology, Jaspers finds something in living organisms that is fundamental. What he focusses on is the integrity of the particular organism, which in human beings is enlarged even more into not only a biological disposition but a more mysterious existential will.

### Existenz

Jaspers was both, scientist and philosopher. For him, despite his indebtedness to science, there is something deeply individual and experiential about the human reality that might reflect something about the nature of Being itself. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in his essay on Leonardo where he writes the following:

The objection has been raised that knowledge and vision are two different things, that to see is not to know, that clear form is a question of aesthetic judgment and not a scientific finding. This is not so. In all morphology the draftsman works under the guidance of the scientist, the scientist himself works as a draftsman. This visualization, to be sure, cannot discover any natural law requiring measurement, experiment, formula. But it opens up a characteristic field of knowledge, which is first discerned in the image, though like all science it requires language for explanation.<sup>15</sup>

So the beginning of knowledge is in a vision of things and not perplexed testing and experimentation. Those latter phenomena come later on and eventually produce laws and formulas. But in the beginning comes the ability to see or understand the nature of what one is studying. Therefore, how we view something is not

simply a reflection of our ability to test it empirically but is the starting point of empirical investigation.

Jaspers issues the following prescient warning regarding existentialist psychology, one which uses a demonological term rather uncharacteristic of him in order to express his utter fear of a misuse of the science of psychology as a means of obtaining a false understanding of the human reality.

Those authors who apply this ontology in their psychopathology seem to me to be in constant contact with philosophical essentials but to be treating them as if they were something objective, known and discovered...I miss any decisive reaction to ideas and methods which in a philosophical sense conceal, destroy and indeed exclude human life; in short, any reaction to the "devil" in psychology. [*TE* 777]

## Jaspers' Psychology of Human Drives

Jaspers' philosophical views regarding the human reality both inform and are informed by his psychological views regarding the complexity and multifarious nature of the human drives. It is sometimes difficult to know where the psychology ends and philosophy begins. But in theory at least he made an effort to keep them distinct even while recognizing the value of philosophy to psychology, psychopathology and, indeed, to all of the sciences. I will provide this material from a completely different section of the *GP* that deals less with philosophical foundations yet clearly reflects existential philosophical understanding, as he classifies three levels of drives.

*Group 1. Somatic, sensory drives.* Sexual drive, hunger, thirst—need for sleep, drive for activity—pleasure in sucking, in taking food, in anal and urethral excretion.

In this group the basic polarity is that of *need* and *satisfaction*. All the drives have some bodily correlate. The drives are positive only with no other positive drive opposing. The negative would be disgust or aversion.

*Group 2. Vital drives.* They have no definite localization in the body but are directed out towards human existence as a whole. They are:

(a) *Vital drives for existence.* The will to power—will to submit; the urge to self-assertion—urge to surrender; self-will—social drive (herd instinct); courage—fear (aggressive anger—retreat for help); self-importance—urge to humility; love—hate.

In this group the drives fall into pairs, each drive with its counter-drive. The *preservation*

<sup>15</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Three Essays: Leonardo, Descartes, Max Weber*, trans. Ralph Manheim, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World 1964, p.15. [Henceforth cited as *TE*]

and *intensification of life* seems to be of objective significance in them but only at the price of conflict which makes at any time the exact opposite possible – the destruction of life, whether of oneself or another and ultimately perhaps the urge for universal destruction...

(b) *Vital psychic drives*. Curiosity, protection of the young, the drive to wander, to find ease and comfort, the will to possess.

In this group the drives are defined by their particular content at any time.

(c) *Vital creative drives*. The urge to express, to demonstrate, make tools, work and create.

*Group 3. Drives of the human spirit*. Drives to comprehend and give oneself to a state of being which manifests itself as an experience of absolute values, whether religious, aesthetic, ethical or pertaining to truth. Philosophy undertakes to examine this world of values and clarify it independently from subjective psychological experience. It is a psychological fact that there is a basic experience of this sort, qualitatively different from that of the two previous groups and extremely complex and rich and derived from dedication to these values. It is an instinctive longing for them when they are absent and a sense of delight incomparable to any other pleasure when the longing is fulfilled....Although as a group these drives may sometimes recede to vanishing point they are never quite absent in any man.

The common factor in this group is the *drive for immortality*, not in terms of temporal duration but in the sense of participating in some temporal form in a pattern of Being that cuts across Time. [GP 319-20]

Jaspers' understanding of drives may constitute a foundation for current normative or even prescriptive discussions regarding happiness, since much of the psychological literature fails to ask fundamental questions regarding the distinctions between statistical norms and value norms and between satisfaction and happiness. Such questions are essential for philosophical analysis even if answers are not readily forthcoming. They may seem to confuse things for psychology but ultimately such confusion needs to be dealt with, both for practical purposes as well as philosophical ones.

### Back to Happiness

Tolstoy famously said: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps this is true but it does not tell us about individuals and their quest for fulfillment. Jaspers' treatment of the vital drives, not to mention the drives of the human spirit, suggest that at least some individuals are much more varied and possibly remote from the statistical norm but may be closer to what he calls a value norm.

Despite survey data to the contrary, some people may ultimately find happiness or fulfillment in their own very peculiar ways.<sup>17</sup> Jaspers was one of the few thinkers to truly appreciate the individual in his or her uniqueness while never losing sight of the universal knowledge attained in science. While it is possible to break down human consciousness into atomistic elements and the same can be said of happiness, I am suspicious of such sciences. As Jaspers' study of Leonardo attests, it is the concrete individual as a unique and perceived being that is really the most important thing. In fact, that is also his characterization of the philosophy of Leonardo. Yet, in obvious contrast

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<sup>17</sup> Some of the empirical literature might seem to conflict with my claim. The weak point in much of it may be the working definition of happiness since we have already asserted that it is a very open-ended concept. See, for example, Ed Diener and Martin E. P. Seligman, "Very Happy People," *Psychological Science* 13/1 (January 2002), 81-84. The overall definition of happiness that was employed seems mildly eudemonic and not hedonic but it never actually defines what the good life is. One important result was that the very happy people were not dysfunctional in the sense of being cut off from either their own negative feelings or that of others. They were also significantly more extraverted, more agreeable, less neurotic and scored lower on psychopathology scales. Some of the findings conflict with other survey data. Using college students gets at basic personality factors rather than habits that have a longer-term effect on happiness. Later studies suggested delayed effects of more eudemonic motives and methods. See Veronika Huta and Richard Ryan, "Pursuing Pleasure or Virtue: The Differential and Overlapping Well-Being Benefits of Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 11/6 (2010), 736-762, here p. 760. Most troubling of all the findings of Diener & Seligman is that: "The very happy group spent the least time alone and the most time socializing...(p. 82). Obviously that group didn't consist of great thinkers. The working definition of happiness here seems very close to life satisfaction and this is problematic. Yet this study may well get at natural propensity to be happy.

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<sup>16</sup> Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Constance Garnett, New York: Random House 1965, p. 1.



to that appreciation, he criticizes Leonardo for failing to appreciate transcendence and the ultimate source of his unique creative genius. This is a clear value judgment, which may indicate the ultimate dependence of critical thought on some value norms. This seems quite relevant to the subject of happiness and has implications as regards how we conceptualize certain states of consciousness that are not strictly speaking awareness of the physical world.

Jaspers does not discuss happiness in the *GP* nearly as much as he discusses consciousness and it may have

been a subject that did not interest him much. In contrast, his great interest in consciousness could not be clearer. His attempt to bridge the gap between the scientific worldview—and what one might term the idealist/religious perspective—without erasing the overarching importance of the individual, is strikingly absent in current studies. Unlike simplistic perspectives on consciousness, Jaspers welcomes cognitive dissonance, uncertainties, and perplexities. This makes his approach to psychology of greater philosophical interest.