



Posthumanism, Technology, and Education

Stephen A. Erickson

Pomona College

sperickson@aol.com

Abstract: A component of post-humanism is the notion that humanity is a construct, not a given. Jaspers was concerned that technology might increase such dehumanization. Could technology serve as the prime medium through which we reach self-understanding? A technological medium will heighten discursive intelligence, decrease contextual comprehension, and erode empathy. As a medium for *Bildung*, philosophy will undergo constricting pressures. In the absence of a parallel religious education or an institutional grounding for the internalization of "wisdom literature," it is unlikely that spiritual nutrition could be absorbed later in the lifecycle. The human may undergo marginalization in a highly competitive digitized civilization.

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Let me begin with two Jaspers quotes taken from the Schilpp volume devoted to the philosophy of Karl Jaspers.¹ The first, whatever else, is a confession, while the second, whatever else, is a claim. The two remarks belong together, however, for they not only imply but also need each other.

There is a type of thinking which, from the point of view of science is not compelling nor universally valid, which, therefore, yields no results that ... could claim validity as forms of knowability (*Wissbarkeit*). This type of thinking, which we call philosophic thinking, leads me to my very self; its consequences arise out of the inner activity of its own procedures; it awakens the sources within me which ultimately give meaning even to science itself. [PKJ 38]

... philosophy, in the highest sense of the word, is

prophetic philosophy; ... Prophetic philosophy would be a substitute for religion. However, what this type of philosophy is and what it can accomplish, later on became for me the big problem. [PKJ 26-7]

I

How are we to understand and value prophecy, and in particular prophetic philosophy? If we were to refer to someone in our time as prophetic, what exactly would our claim be? In a variety of iterations this was an issue of fundamental and lasting concern to Jaspers for most of his career. Though prophecy was not the label under which their claims were made or initially understood, Jaspers as well as Martin Heidegger were very prophetic in their early twentieth century remarks regarding the dangers of technology with respect to the construction or even possible suffocation of the human spirit, of what Jaspers called *Existenz*.

¹ Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 2nd augmented edition 1981. [Henceforth cited as PKJ]

What sort of understanding of technology, what form of precocity was this foresight? It was surely not simply a shrewd prediction based on statistically probabilities and rational inferences. In this sense it was not scientific. Jaspers and Heidegger spoke out of quiet and utter existential convictions. But out of what realm and in what manner did such conviction arise? Surely it was prophetic. Again, however, what does this mean? Though the distinctions do not get us far, the assessment of technology forwarded by Jaspers and Heidegger was intuitive, not discursive, holistic, nor analytical.

Such somewhat baffling matters were perhaps especially in Jaspers' mind some three decades later, in the context of the lectures he gave at the University of Basel in July of 1947, lectures that he confided to Hannah Arendt might be "inherently impossible" in terms of their content and direction.

What Jaspers conveyed in Basel was later issued under a somewhat misleading English translation as *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*. The English translation of Jaspers' original title, *Der Philosophische Glaube*, is misleading because "perennial" tends to connote such notions as universal or same, whereas Jaspers understood any philosophical form of faith as historical and, as is made repeatedly clear, open-ended. Philosophical faith is a mode of being-in-the-world that, though in some senses of "traditional" is traditional, is also much more than this. Simply put, philosophical faith is unavoidably also prophetic, as prophecy could not but also be philosophical.

Here, then, we stand. To move forward successfully with respect to prophecy, what Jaspers calls "the big problem," will be to have navigated skillfully between the Scylla and Charybdis of scientific knowledge and religious faith. For Jaspers in particular it requires the adumbration of philosophical faith as thoroughly as possible without thereby codifying it into dogmas or reducing it to a set of certainties. Again, though prophecy and philosophical faith will not be identical with each other, their overlap will make it unavoidable that an understanding of one will require reference to the other.

We are helped in our undertaking if we orient ourselves in terms of a pivotal historical moment in the unfolding of twentieth century Continental Philosophy. It occurred in the Spring of 1929 in Davos, Switzerland, and took the form of a disputation. The disputants, as we well know, were Ernst Cassirer and Heidegger, thought then by many to be the most significant representatives of two diverging, if not altogether conflicting, yet dominating modes of philosophical

activity. These modes had emerged from a fundamental and fateful distinction found in Immanuel Kant, that between spontaneity and receptivity.

Some have said that this distinction supports the bifurcation of Continental Philosophy into Enlightenment thinking and counter-enlightenment reactions to it, conceptual analysis and existential pathos. At an extreme, what some claim can be traced and witnessed through the Kantian distinction between spontaneity and receptivity is a cleavage between humanism and anti-humanism, confident reason and its equally insistent, yet illusive and chronically obscure other—somewhat more metaphorically construed, between an emerging dawn and an impending dusk.

Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms forwards the self-assured spontaneity of human rational endeavor. Heidegger's philosophy of thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) and guilt-laden finitude testifies to the priority of what is quite probably a pre- or post-human receptivity. Through Cassirer, the freedom and autonomy of world-making thought is affirmed and celebrated; through Heidegger, what is acknowledged is an insurmountable groundlessness arising from already having found oneself dependently situated in contingent and precarious historical and cultural circumstances not of one's own making.

In Cassirer we meet up with a historically informed reason that is robust, culturally creative and sure of its capacity to engender and transform the parameters of the very world in which it resides. In Heidegger, however, what we encounter is an historically dispensed thrownness, one that is spiritually responsive, though only in severely truncated ways because unsure of its standing in the face of its ominous sense of groundlessness. This groundlessness is itself adumbrated in and through the recurrent sense that what is ultimately on offer is not particular somethings—whether symbolic forms or cultural artifacts, aesthetic or scientific, but ... nothing at all.

I have paused over the meeting of Cassirer and Heidegger, iconic though it was, only to help illumine and perhaps begin to solve what Jaspers has called his big problem, the full comprehension of prophetic philosophy, that which Jaspers lauds as philosophy at its highest. A resolution and focusing of the contours of prophetic philosophy, in turn, should move us toward an understanding of post-humanism. Post-humanism is a prognosis regarding a condition in the direction of which we are said to be moving and which, purportedly, trends in technology and some emerging forms of

education are said to further and serve, however unthematically and even unwittingly.

When we speak of post-humanism, we are surely indicating an existential configuration soon to arrive rather than something already altogether present. To borrow from Michel Foucault, humanism itself may in fact be a "face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea,"² but the tide has not rolled in quite yet – even though on another and adjacent shore, as so haunted the thoughts of Matthew Arnold, the sea of faith is surely receding.

With respect to the onset of post-humanism that we are witnessing, if witnessed at all, there is something on the horizon, however inscrutably, that is beginning to absorb and encompass us, but something that is not yet fully undergone by us – or should we say by *post-us* – as part and parcel of the Encompassing itself. How might this reflective circumstance even begin to be undergone or be comprehended philosophically except prophetically?

As to prophesy itself, we must already admit to a deep quandary that constitutes a decisive dimension of our historical dispensation and thereby cannot but configure and to some degree confound any twenty-first century reflection on purportedly contemporary prophetic modalities. In terms of tradition, a prophetic is said to have been contacted by the divine and to have become one of its spokespersons. We might choose to soften this description, removing some of its anthropomorphic edge, by construing the prophet simply as somehow connected to another realm, one beyond this one. The prophet may not need to be construed as communicating with the divine in a specifically personal way. On such an account features of a world beyond this one, and possibly even demands issuing from it, may be conveyed prophetically to those others in a community who may themselves not be attuned to any other realm than their more immediate one.

Stating the dynamics of the prophetic in this way, however, strongly suggests that any prophetic mode requires an axial age and its then long lingering parameters in which to reside. It may be that without an axial residence prophets could not be prophets and, thus, simply could not be. Must true prophets not channel conditions, if not actual communications, from a realm beyond that surrounding one in which we always already, immediately and overtly find ourselves?

I have just employed the largely non-philosophic term "channel" as a means of further indicating that prophetic philosophizing, for Jaspers' philosophy in its highest form, could not issue from the spontaneity of agency. It must arise in receptive response to something (and even to a somewhere) beyond itself. In short, it looks as if prophetic philosophy could only be undergone, that it could not be done. It might only arise in and through a receptive, somewhat Heideggerian ambience and not by means of the vigorous agency of symbolic form creation and modification, or programmatic conceptual analysis as is exhibited and extended in the work of Cassirer or, say, Daniel Dennett or Hilary Putnam.

Having now sketched, if not fully demarcated the boundaries and some of the more basic hash marks of a particular and potentially prophetic field of play, we must hope to return our central philosophical player to this most spiritually serious of venues. How does Jaspers stand in the midst of this scene? If his big problem was once and long remained getting a grip on that highest form of philosophy that he termed "the prophetic," what resources were in fact available to him from within his own philosophy for its pursuit?

Note that it was Jaspers himself who gave us our most articulated and schematized understanding of the axial. We have been led toward the view that, absent the axial, prophetic philosophy becomes a most precarious, if not utterly antiquated and thereby impossible undertaking, anachronistic at best. This in turn leads us to consider at a minimum two questions regarding Jaspers' own resources and, perhaps more crucially, the presumed resources of philosophy itself.

Firstly, does Jaspers in fact have a prophetic mode available to him, neither religious nor scientific in its dynamic? In other words, what scope can be ascribed to these resources that comprise and define philosophical faith? Whether he himself actually came upon it, what might Jaspers have on offer to those who are and remain philosophically minded and do continue to find themselves living in an axial mode – more strongly and metaphorically stated, who still find themselves in an axially constituted world?

Secondly, and more disturbingly so, if ours is an existence no longer axial, with what philosophical opportunities, means, and methods might Jaspers nonetheless still provide us? How might we live thoughtfully in such a vacant historical landscape? How might we be equipped to cope within a spiritually impoverished dispensation? The foundation of

² Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books 1970, p. 387.

any culturally responsive and thereby continental philosophy might be coerced into constituting itself as variations of existential despondency, that much traversed transitional bridge built by the likes of Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. This outcome is realistically possible and not to be casually discounted.

Difficulties mount, but they are almost perversely intriguing. Consider the following. If Jaspers' own responses to these concerns would turn out to be insufficient, if not largely absent, meager if not lacking, we might be drawn toward a further and quite overarching diagnostic inference. It is that Jaspers possible inadequacy regarding provisions for the philosophical life might in no way be unique, but in fact regrettably paradigmatic. Prophecy as philosophy's purported highest form may simply no longer be possible. To be viable philosophy might require a lingering and somewhat robust axial environment in which to survive. If philosophy were actually to be defined through its highest, quite plausibly prophetic form, philosophy as a living practice might purely and simply be over. It may cease to exist except in an historical memory structured by the history of ideas. And there are those who have already announced the death of philosophy. On this view the remains of philosophy can still be found, but only within the parameters of commentary and scholarship—or just perhaps as a ghost feasibly pursued through what Nelson Goodman called world-making—or more problematically and in differing ways through what Ludwig Wittgenstein and, later, Jacques Derrida came to think of as deconstructive linguistic therapy.

What Jaspers himself provides with regard to prophetic possibilities is surely both mixed and uncertain. Let us take at least a glancing note of what Jaspers makes available, keeping in mind that if we were to be faithful to Jaspers' own notion of *Existenz*, we would not only report Jaspers' stance, but also try it on, so to speak, if only as a thought experiment. We must not only analyze Jaspers' philosophy, but also undergo it. To hearken back to the quotation with which this exploration began, we must find out for ourselves whether

the type of thinking, which Jaspers calls philosophical thinking, leads us to our very selves.

We must hope to determine whether the consequences of such thinking arise out of the inner activity of its own procedures.

We must consider whether such thinking awakens the sources within us, which ultimately give meaning even to science itself.

Now obviously this is a very tall and also very awkward and humbling order. It is made even more so to the extent that we acknowledge the radically existential demand that it puts on those who would be philosophers. This demand is for a most fundamental form of self-encounter. If existential philosophers are right in claiming that the only genuine philosophical questions are those that also bring their questioners into question in their very acts of asking such questions, then we are surely in the domain of core philosophical activity if and as we pursue Jaspers' prophetic project.

We can drive this account of philosophical authenticity home even further through reference to a letter Heidegger writes to Jaspers in June of 1922. Jaspers is clearly in assent with its contents.

The psychological is not something that man "has," whether consciously or unconsciously, but something that he is and that lives in him. That is, in principle: There are objects that one does not have, but that one "is" ... The old ontology ... must be restructured from the bottom up—if one means to be serious about grasping and guiding one's own present life in its fundamental intentions.³

An assent to Heidegger's reflections here is an acknowledgement that self-encounter is at the heart of the philosophical enterprise. It is the preparatory phase of ontology, if not finally ontology itself, both in its underlying dispensation and any possible prophetic manifestation. Clearly, Jaspers has resources for an existential self-encounter. To what extent would or does he construe these resources as an avenue to the prophetic? These must be core questions for Jaspers and not easily worked through.

II

Let us turn at this point to a consideration and placing of a post-human moment within prophecy. The notion of our pending arrival in a post-human future is receiving considerable attention. Again, we will continue to

³ Karl Jaspers, "Letter of June 27, 1922," in *Martin Heidegger und Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1920-1963*, eds. Walter Biemel and Hans Sauer, trans. Edith Ehrlich, Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, Munich/Zurich: Piper & Co 1990, p. 26. I first found this in the superb volume edited by Kurt Salamun and Gregory J. Walters, *Karl Jaspers's Philosophy: Expositions and Interpretations*, Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books 2008, p. 178. It appears in the essay by Andreas Cesana, "Daring to Live Out of Uncertainty," pp. 169-94.

explore prophecy along Jaspers' highly suggestive, if indeterminate lines as a contemporary possibility open to philosophy, perhaps philosophy's highest and most significant opportunity. What can be said here can only emerge as a thought experiment and even then can only be projected tentatively and in outline.

What might it be to be legitimately characterized as post-human? Before answering this question, however, a prior question must be considered. Is the human condition—that which defines our humanity—subject to very substantial historical reconfiguration, or is it an unalterable state, mutable at the margins, but not in its essence? The preparatory and provisional answer I recommend is that humanity requires some form of overarching narrative to be fully humanity. Were one to grant that such metanarratives rise and fall, it is feasible to entertain the notion that humanity itself rises and falls and that there may well be in-between times when there is no humanity in any robust sense. This deficiency will be a function of no new metanarrative yet having arisen to replace a largely deteriorated or departed one. (Friedrich Nietzsche labeled such a period one of decadence).

On such an account we confront the disconcerting notion that differing metanarratives may well, even necessarily engender different humanities. If some metanarrative or other is essential to the human, and metanarratives can and do significantly differ, it couldn't be otherwise. Anyone holding to this view, however, will need to respond to an obvious objection: there must be something common to allegedly differing humanities and thus a common humanity. This is only common sense stripped of science fiction spin.

The response to this objection, I believe, might take the following tack: whatever those common features of humanity are, they are not particularly informative nor interesting except in a barbaric time when some groups need to be reminded of them. In times of barbarism, however, reminders, even threats accomplish next to nothing. Military force is almost always needed, and when successful it is simply viewed as victorious, not as instructive or educational.

But let us turn to a very benign example of the issue at hand. Contemporary citizens of Athens, and those Athenian Greeks taught, criticized, and celebrated in Ancient Philosophy classes, do share characteristics. These characteristics, however, are not nearly as engaging nor productive of insights as are those properties possessed by our celebrated Athenian forbearers alone. We should quickly add that what

contemporary Athenians do not share with their ancient ancestors is bound to be more revelatory of them—and of more cultural-philosophical importance—than what they do share.

Some have claimed that an extraordinarily defining characteristic of our age has been the utter breakdown of metanarrative credibility altogether. Our most recent metanarratives, it has been said, have collapsed, and no further, thus future metanarratives are even possible. These are very strong, in ways startling claims. They are frequently forwarded as defining features of postmodernity and provide the underpinnings for many an assertion that ours is a post-human era.

Considered somewhat narrowly, then, on the thought experiment in which we are engaged, postmodernism and posthumanity would be both heralded and constituted by one and the same event. Insofar as this event has been anticipatorily undergone—for it is not done, but happens—any sustained announcement of its pending occurrence in the larger society and culture cannot but be construed as prophetic. If this announcement is itself far-reaching, consistently coherent, spelled out in its likely implications, and its components are at least partially systematized, we have what looks to be a quite compelling candidate for a place within the domain of prophetic philosophy. We cannot be sure, for neither Jaspers nor we are demonstrably certain of what form prophecy might actually take in our era.

An account such as now being explored risks sounding overwhelming, convulsive, dramatically apocalyptic, and thus perhaps preposterous. It has somewhat the ring of Derrida, specifically Derrida's invocation in the late 1960s of the total trembling together with its world transforming consequences. In no obvious way have these consequences yet occurred, nor may they occur at all. But there is another, more plausible route open to us than this totalizing one. We might accept and underscore the notion that is already guiding us, *viz.*, that what converges when humanity and postmodernity meet is just post-modernism and then postmodern humanity—not something deserving the label of post-humanity as some historical totality now falling into complete and thorough extinction. Humanity remains, but now stripped of the narratives of modernity. These narratives will still be capable of statement. They will simply no longer be compelling nor integrating in the lives of those who utter them.

If we at least allow ourselves this set of possibilities, we can then wonder whether a subsequent and thus

postmodern prophecy is possible, *viz.*, a prophecy within the contours of posthumanity construed as a post-modern, nonetheless very human condition. This form of prophecy will anticipate a new humanity, inclusive of yet transcending that humanity that we acknowledge as remaining in and through the arrivals and departures of far more robust and narratively nurturing dispensations of humanity. Is such prophecy possible, credible, even called for, or is it merely fanciful because anachronistic, based on an historical misunderstanding of the very parameters of any prophetic undertaking?

We have in fact seen such a prophetic modality within Continental Thought, boldly in Nietzsche under differing labels and in more tentative and nuanced ways in Heidegger under very few and mostly nondescriptive and thereby unhelpful labels.

Unlike either Nietzsche or Heidegger, what I believe we find in Jaspers is far less prophetic declaration than restorative hope. Though in the Schilpp volume Jaspers construes an account of prophetic philosophy to be his big problem, it does not appear that he resolves it. He does not offer a great deal regarding any impending future. But Jaspers does convey a considerable concern over a return to a human condition and attendant dignity damaged to the point of nearly irreparable dissolution by atrocities issuing from the Nazi mentality. We might thus consider Jaspers more recuperative—and thereby conservative and traditional in aspiration, whereas Nietzsche and Heidegger are more open to discontinuous rupture and transformation, thereby more radical in stance.

It is quite likely that we are in fact in an unavoidably transitional moment. This transition, however, is not so much from a two-plus millennial or longer period of normatively construed humanity to its irretrievable loss as from a modernist-postmodernist metanarrative to a successor narrative yet to have emerged. All of this may be transpiring within the metanarrative orientation of a late-stage axial life that may either be coming to an end or has already ended. So at least Nietzsche, for one, would have us absorb, then accept and move beyond. By late-stage axial life I mean an existence within those parameters or vestiges of the axial laid down in that 800-200 BCE era so labeled by Jaspers. On this somewhat extended interpretation, it is Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God that marks the public, though lingering closure of the axial era's existential credibility for us, soon transient evictees.

If in fact axial modalities themselves are ending

or going into eclipse, we may be in the early throes of a disorienting *Übergang* not undergone since the dawn of the axial age itself. What would one be called upon to do in such times, and by this I mean do philosophically? In those terms counseled by Nietzsche in his *Untimely Meditations* one could become critical as opposed to being antiquarian or monumental. One would hope to locate and investigate historical periods similar to the one we may be currently undergoing and closely consider what might be learned from them. Some underlying dynamics might be brought to light that could be preserved and transported into that unknown, yet soon unfolding future that, under the thought experiment we are currently exploring, we may soon enter. Ian Morris and others now pursue this in somewhat specific ways in terms of possible absorption of the human into a genuinely post-human, not just post-modern techno-cloud. Fanciful it sounds; visionary it is; and possibly credible it may come to be. Is there a non-reactionary response to this particular genre of impending transition sensibility that philosophy should hope to mount? In the light of Jaspers' forebodings regarding technology and his unequivocal affirmation of the central significance of the prophetic in his Schilpp volume statements, we cannot conclude but that Jaspers would have construed such a response as altogether necessary, at the core, in fact, of the philosophical enterprise as he had come to understand it.

There are serious problems involved in an undertaking such as I have been proposing yet, as was the case with Jaspers himself, only adumbrating. As has already been implied, one concerns philosophy itself. Heidegger, Derrida and others have claimed that philosophy itself is over, that to be appropriate to our times we must be in a post-philosophical mode. I believe that those who hold this view identify one of the essential, otherwise dealbreaking features of philosophy to be that it travels between and negotiates relations between a here and a beyond – or an empirical and a transcendental—however saturated with metaphoricity these genuinely problematic distinctions are. This, of course, is to claim that philosophy, whatever other projects it might choose to undertake, needs an axially bifurcated world in which to undertake them. Lacking such a world, there could be no philosophy.

Numerous responses are available as means of rejecting such claims. Semantically, though only superficially, one could let the term "philosophy" recede into the history of ideas, replacing it as Heidegger

does, for example, with the term "thought." But this is surely more a dodge than a solution – not to imply that Heidegger's work itself is merely dodgy. It is clear that it is not.

Another response asserts the unavailability of conserving certain dimensions of axial thinking, even if the underlying axial framework, presupposed for ages, comes over time to be as much relic in our thinking as are the conceptual features of ancient Egyptian religion. A justification for this approach might grow out of a highly plausible claim. It is that beneath the comings and goings of historically sequential metanarratives, there may be enduring, if not invariably philosophically engaging human elements. Though subject to limited historical transmutations, these elements may be enduring, especially so if they are incubated and nourished through enduring educational and religious institutions within societies. But where are these institutions now to be found, and will they survive?

Another response grows out of the acknowledgement that there may be axial renewal after the demise of a long axial period. I have recommended this possibility to the Jaspers Society before. If it is at all cogent, the attempted preservation and nurturing of axial elements in the midst of a twenty-first century *Übergang*—Nietzsche, as we know, said that his prophecies would take about two centuries to play out—would be more than a pedestrian undertaking. It would be more than an essentially futile attempt to italicize those unchanging though possibly prosaic and quotidian features of humanity. This would involve an advocacy of dimensions of reality, human reality, that might otherwise go into eclipse or be lost—these two overlapping outcomes rendering the same consequences and thus being at one with each other.

We need also to keep open and further emphasize a possibility that could not be closed in any case, *viz.*, that extraordinary transitions of the sort we are engaged in, thought experiments regarding human existence, are for the most part far more undergone than chosen. We less take them up than suffer them. We are less their agents than their often unwitting vehicles. Hegel had something like this in mind, of course, in his account of world historical individuals.

I will now leave these matters as they have been experimentally introduced, selectively summing them up in the following way: humanity may be divided into the enduring but philosophically largely unrewarding and the spiritually extraordinary but nonetheless subject to arrival and departure in terms of metanarrative

emergings and submergings.

A prophetic posture would involve elements critically investigated and then forwarded from the past for purposes of conveyance into a largely unknown because as yet undetermined future. Such conveyance could only live as hope, not as guaranteed certainty. Yet was it not Kant, endorsed in this regard by Jaspers, who made the content of hope one of philosophy's three most fundamental concerns? Part of such hope must involve the conviction that what is conveyed is significant and potentially world forming, not just abstract or academic. But what in this sense might prove significant might well also be precarious and fragile, thereby subject to an oblivion not under anyone's power to avert. How else to account for the decline and fall of those earlier historical metanarratives that histories of ideas partially excavate and then hope to resuscitate and examine?

This same prophetic posture must also stand open to initially inchoate possibilities, themselves quite possibly opportunities to be sensed and problematically undergone, if only then to be better disclosed and communicated. We find this captured in the Heideggerian notions of *Erschlossenheit* and *Entschlossenheit*.

As a final word—spoken in a world and historical situation harboring no final or conclusive words anywhere near our horizon—it is not at all clear that any form of humanistic education currently in play would have, much less be allowed the wherewithal to engage prophetically. Without hard, predictively fertile data from which to draw quantified inferences, the prophetic mode would be viewed as not only pretentious but probably destructive and therefore dangerous. This would be true whether prophecy was fitted out in the garb of philosophy or of something else.

What is clear is that whatever opportunities might emerge for the prophetic will need to swim in the rising and advancing tide of a technological sea. Might prophetic thinking nonetheless take hold? I hope that most of us would like to see this happen and that most of us believe that in many of Jaspers' reflections we find reason to believe that he would have welcomed it too.⁴

⁴ An excerpt of this essay was presented at the meetings of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America (Session 2) held in conjunction with the 87th Annual Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, San Francisco, 30 March 2013.