



## Transhumanism, Post-Humanism, and Human Technological Enhancement

Whither goes *Humanitas*?

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**Abstract:** This essay introduces seven articles on transhumanity from a Jaspersian perspective, briefly discusses the meaning, nature, and scope of transhumanist and post-humanist philosophies in relation to Jaspers' philosophy of the encompassing, and critically engages some key ideas concerning enhancement technologies and enhanced human/trans/post-human beings in the current historical situation. Possible posthuman Existenz remains an open possibility.

**Keywords:** Transhumanism; transhuman; post-humanism; post-human; human; humanitas; technology; technological enhancement; Jaspers, Karl; possible Existenz; Kass, Leon; Sandel, Michael J.; bioconservatives; futurology; social inequality; economic inequality; life expectancy; equality; public health; social determinants of health; humaneness; care; dehumanization.

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As a finite living creature man is subject to the phases of growth, maturity and ageing and also to death. But this sequence of age in man can at the same time contain the progress of his freedom manifesting itself in Time.

Man in his *finiteness* stands *within the infinite*. There can be no lasting coincidence of the two in Time. Only the moment provides a place where both meet in order to break the finite phenomenon apart once more. Hence all human activity and thought is at the service of something incomprehensible within which it operates and by which it is absorbed and overborne whether we like to call it fate or providence.

It is philosophical folly to want to see through this Other and find some way whereby the individual could as it were get control of it, first by knowing it and then by planning and action.

The indefiniteness and incompleteness that stigmatise the Being of the world and of oneself can be regarded by man philosophically but he cannot transform into something finite what remains as an infinity for him, since he stands within the infinite, takes finiteness upon himself, and in this existing situation he founders.

Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*<sup>1</sup>

On March 30, 2013, the Karl Jaspers Society of North America, meeting in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association annual Pacific Division meeting (San Francisco, CA), hosted a group session on the topic: "The Future of Humanity and the Question of Post-Humanity."<sup>2</sup> The articles published in this volume of *Existenz* uniquely address the meaning, nature, and scope of transhumanist and post-humanist philosophies, and critically engage ideas concerning enhancement technologies and enhanced human/trans/post-human being. Invited speakers, commentators, and philosopher participants engaged perennial philosophical questions concerning human nature, genetic engineering, biotechnology, and the future of humanity. This issue of *Existenz* provides a testimony to what Karl Jaspers calls the "loving struggle" for reasonable communication among persons who quite often hold divergent beliefs and worldviews of

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, trans. Julius Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1964, p. 765. [Henceforth cited as *GP*]

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<sup>2</sup> See "Transhumanism," YouTube video <http://youtu.be/7Sr1kcogOoE> [2:49:02].

the idea of the ideal human being, as well as the idea of an ideal human/transhuman/posthuman future.

Max More, President and CEO of the Alcor Life Extension Foundation and de facto founder of transhumanist philosophy in the early 1990s, explains that transhumanism is a contemporary life philosophy, a global cultural and intellectual movement that actively promotes interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and evaluating means to selectively enhance the human condition.<sup>3</sup> Transhumanism refers "to the transformation of *homo sapiens*, step by step, into a species sufficiently different from the genetically-defined human that it counts as a new species" (HCA 3). Transhumanists seek a radical extension of the human lifespan, the eradication of human disease and elimination of suffering in all sentient life, and the overcoming of defects in human nature encumbered by the genetic lottery bequeathed by random evolutionary processes. By means of thoughtful and care self-application of technology transhumanist hope "to become something no longer accurately described as human—we can become posthuman" (PT 4).

Transhumanists desire enhancement of human physical, intellectual, and emotional capacities by the use of psychopharmaceutical drugs, somatic and germ-line genetic engineering, human cloning, molecular nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and cryonic science. Biotechnology powers are to be pursued, if not with a view to complete human perfection as Michael Sandel's critique implies, then certainly toward corporeal, mental and emotional enhancement unencumbered by natural and traditional limitations on the human condition.

Human nature is in a process of perpetual change and not a static state; as such, the posthuman telos may best be understood, to invoke an algebraic metaphor, as aiming toward an enhanced endstate on an x-axis, an asymptotic curve bending toward, but never quite reaching, increasing improvement, enhancement and augmentation of human nature up to the point of a new species that is "post" human. Both the means and the

goals of enhancement are variable among individuals and groups. Both means and ends will change in time, and "there is no single goal toward which all enhancement is directed" (HCA 7).

The means toward various enhancement ends entail the direct application of reason and technoscientific tools that can preserve individual autonomy, procreative liberty, and beneficence by the use of prenatal genetic diagnosis, in vitro fertilization, sex selection, gene-trait selection, and human cloning.<sup>4</sup>

Here, of course, we enter headlong into the realms of public and professional bioethics, public health ethics, and issues concerning safety, scientific possibilities, and public policy that would require much further, and case-by-case, discussion. For example, if we are able to select genetic traits for emotions, we would all agree that "more joy, less anger" (HCA 3) is probably an ethical good. Would more compassion, but lowered super-intelligence quotient find consensus? If trait selection is simply a matter of "whatever changes each individual prefers," (HCA 3) then what role does the child have in any such choice of selection?

Now becoming posthuman does not mean throwing the current human baby out with the transhumanist bathwater. Instead, transhumanists seek to "consciously and deliberately decide" (HCA 3) for themselves those aspects of humanity we want to keep and those that we desire to overcome. What is crucial is that where limits arise, they be self-chosen limits in contrast to those "pressed on us based on a mythical and mystical authority" (HCA 11). This is why transhumanists also generally seek choices for life expansion and various human enhancements undeterred by governmental intrusion or restrictive public policies. These choices are now made possible by nascent and forthcoming biotechnologies.

Max More reminds us that the philosophy of

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller exposition of transhumanist philosophy, see Max More, "The Philosophy of Transhumanism," in *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, eds. Max More and Natasha Vita-More, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Wiley-Blackwell 2013, pp. 3-27. [Henceforth cited as PT] All other More references refer to his essay in this volume unless otherwise noted and are cited as HCA.

<sup>4</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of transhumanism in terms of bioethical and public policy concerns delivered as the inaugural lecture in the Technology and Society Lecture Series at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington D.C., see Leon R. Kass, "Ageless Bodies, Happy Souls," *The New Atlantis*, 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 9-28, <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/ageless-bodies-happy-souls>, last accessed February 20, 2014. [Henceforth cited as ABH] The forementioned text by Kass and Beyond Therapy betray the assertion that resistance to transhumanist ideas is "largely unarticulated" (HCA 1). Kass is also critical of Sandel's hubris objection to "men playing God."

transhumanism is an ideology or worldview and not an ontology of human nature. The philosophy is also not about membership in the human species, *homo sapiens* per se, but rather about the qualities of each singularly unique being as such and, more importantly, the personal choices that one chooses to make about self-enhancement and genetic augmentation of offspring. Such individual choices may include unrestricted pursuit of life extension and "morphological freedom" (HCA 8), i.e., greater "physical capability and freedom of form,"<sup>5</sup> which may well include uploading human consciousness into (or onto?) other media platforms or analogic neural substrates (silicon wafers?). The *de facto* goal appears to be progression from the human to the transhuman to the posthuman. How long such goals may take for realization is admittedly an open question.

More argues that the transhumanist idea of hyperagency either attracts or repels advocates or critics of transhumanism. Those who are attracted to the transhumanist worldview understand enhancement of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities—regardless of whether by psychopharmaceuticals, genetics, molecular nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, or cryonics—as axiological goods. Critics like Sandel and Kass see the hyperagency aims of transhumanists as oriented not so much to the cure of disease, but rather to reach beyond health. Transhumanist-cum-Nietzschean "yes-saying" to life is viewed by these critics as lifting oneself, via technological means, above the average norm of *homo sapiens sapiens* and thus, in Sandel's words, prioritizing "willfulness over giftedness, dominion over reverence, and molding over beholding;" thus, transhumanism is disturbingly close to eugenics in his view.<sup>6</sup>

More challenges Sandel's contrast between the

transhumanist "Promethean aspiration" to mold and remake human nature, on the one hand, and the ideas of beholding, giftedness and the given, authenticity, and identity, on the other hand. Sandel sees in such Promethean aspirations a type of hyper human agency, and the values at contrastual stake entail not losing the values of human humility, solidarity, and responsibility that such hyperagency seems to entail.

Hyperagency is precisely the appropriate designation for the transhumanist imperative. The term "effectively conveys the transhumanist imperative to enable us to choose and transform every aspect of ourselves" (HCA 5). Moreover, the transhumanist choice is not an either/or (either molding or beholding) as Sandel suggests, because transhumanists also appreciate beholding what the world has given. Sandel's distinction and preference for beholding rather than molding is merely based "on some religious belief in the creation of the world as it is and the sacred nature of that world; but "if the world is no more than a natural outcome of a natural, unguided process, it is not sacrosanct" (HCA 6).

More also acknowledges the challenge presented by American bioethicist and physician Leon Kass. The transhumanist emphasis on radical choice poses a challenge to human solidarity. Kass' point is that our unchosen and fortuitous situation in existence makes it easier to share, care and be in solidarity with others. An enhanced meritocracy convinced of being self-made and responsible for their enhanced successes would become less forgiving and colder toward the natural-born unenhanced. More responds to Kass with an honest admission about the norm of solidarity in relation to what John Sullins calls the potentially new enhancement divide replacing the existing digital divide:<sup>7</sup> "It is possible that there is something to this [Kass'] point. Sharing misfortune and limitation does sometimes bring solidarity, such as when a society must share privation in wartime against a common enemy. However, these episodes of solidarity are always short-lived. If the privation continues for too long—as in Soviet Russia—then people turn on each other with heightened viciousness" (HCA 9). Kass, unlike Sandel, seems to be more concerned about a narrowing and flattening of human qualities than loss of the given,

<sup>5</sup> More cites Anders Sandberg, "Morphological Freedom – WhyWeNotJustWantIt,butNeedIt," <http://www.aleph.se/Nada/Texts/MorphologicalFreedom.htm>, last accessed February 20, 2014. For a technological critique of why uploading consciousness will not work, see Mark A. Gubrud, "Why Transhumanism Won't Work," *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology & Society*, June 10, 2010, <http://futurisms.thenewatlantis.com/2010/06/why-transhumanism-wont-work.html>, last accessed February 20, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Michael J. Sandel, "The Case Against Perfection: What's Wrong with Designer Children, Bionic Athletes, and Genetic Engineering?" in *Arguing About Bioethics*, ed. Stephen Holland, London and New York: Routledge 2012, pp. 93-104, here p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> See Mark Bauerlein, ed. and intr., ed. and intr., *The Digital Divide: Arguments for and Against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the Age of Social Networking*, New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2011.

respect for life as gift, or the virtue that Nietzsche derided most: humility. Both so-called biotechnological critics seem to Max More to represent an unawareness of the imperative role of hyperagency after Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God. The will to power appears to have become for transhumanists, one might say, the will toward posthuman enhancement.

Natasha Vita-More, the American multimedia artist and cofounder of *Humanity+*,<sup>8</sup> is certainly cautious of what she calls "evolvability risk" entailed by such aims. Techno-scientific risks might well lead to catastrophic risk of extinction and a mean-spirited psychology of human behavior. Tyrants have throughout history tried to cajole, coerce, and control others by means of oppressive social hierarchies, and more recently, economic hierarchies in an age of obscene economic inequality.

Francesca Ferrando explores the different significations shared by posthumanism and transhumanism and argues that posthumanism provides a more complete standpoint to reflect upon possible futures. Posthumanism maintains a critical and deconstructive standpoint informed by the past, gender-inclusive and open-ended, while offering a more comprehensive and generative ecological perspective to sustain and nurture possible futures. Posthumanism offers, in her view, "a unique balance between agency, memory, and imagination, aiming to achieve harmonic legacies in the evolving ecology of interconnected existence."

John Sullins defines the term posthuman as referring "to humans that have used technology to move beyond the limits of their biological bodies (phylogeny)." In contrast, transhuman refers to "theoretical entities that have used technology to move so far beyond human genealogy and psychology that they now count as a separate species or may have moved beyond biology completely and count as an entirely new form of life." There are post-humanists in our midst already, therefore, and we are not ethically required to become transhumanists. Would Karl Jaspers, he asks, purchase a ticket on the transhuman express techno-train? No. Jaspers was weary of the National Socialist desire for the eternal *Reich* and earthly perfection over a more "authentic transcendence."

Stephen A. Erickson asks if Jaspers had a prophetic mode available to him, and inextricably

linked to philosophical faith. He invokes the dispute between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger over contrasting approaches to the nature of philosophical activity (cf. spontaneity vs. receptivity), the stakes in Jaspers' 1929 disputation for prophetic philosophy, and the potential dangers of technology for *Existenz* siding with Heidegger's receptive response and philosophy of *Geworfenheit* against the spontaneity of agency, but without negating the axial age or philosophical faith. As such, the open-ended nature of philosophical faith leaves a door open for potential shifts to a post-age and perhaps a new post-*humanitas*.

Dale Carrico, in his critique of futurological discourses, seeks to immunize us from "futurological mystifications" and at the same time facilitate progressive techno-developmental social struggle. He does so by offering the reader seven probing distinctions—methodological templates as it were—that are useful for critical analysis of futurological discourses and post-human terrains. Post-humanism really represents the ethical encounters of humanism with itself, "the provocative confrontations of a universalism with its historical and practical limits and contradictions." Post-humanism is best understood as an ethical recognition of the limits of humanism and techno-developmental social struggle; it ought to be an ethical demand that these struggles materialize as a stronger expression of equity-in-diversity.

Michael Hauskeller reveals what he understands as an inconsistency in two transhumanist views of human nature. On one view, there is the idea of human nature that limits us as *Dasein*, confines us to a unique historicity, and inevitably limits our autonomy in actual existence. On the other view, there exist human reason and will, the real human essence, which inevitably revolt against the limits of our nature, and whose final goal is complete dislimitation understood as perfect autonomy. For Hauskeller, "the nature of the enhanced human is in fact an un-nature."

### Whither goes *Humanitas*?

The ideal of *humanitas* may be traced back to Cicero (106-43 BCE) and means, generally, human nature, civilization and, most important, humaneness. Its norms entail piety, morals, dignity, integrity, and sincerity. Will the ideas of humanity and *humanitas* give way in historical actualization to forms of post-*humanitas* and the posthuman? Ought the former ideas to give way to the later? In the remainder of this

<sup>8</sup> See <http://humanityplus.org/>, last accessed February 20, 2014.

Introduction I offer a few comments on the values of solidarity and humaneness in loving communication with the philosophy of transhumanism. In turn, I ask: What assessment might Karl Jaspers make of the philosophy of transhumanism? How would Jaspers view the cipher of human-being qua the cipher of the post-human? How would a philosophy of boundary situations or limit situations relate to the transhumanist criticism of all forms of limitationism?

Leon Kass and Michael Sandel critique the hyperagency of transhumanist endorsements of human cloning. For Kass, there is a certain wisdom in repugnance when it comes to human cloning. The yuk-factor is not an argument as much as an assertion, however, but Kass nonetheless sees repugnance more times than not as an emotional expression of wisdom.

Repugnance...revolts against the excesses of human willfulness, warning us not to transgress what is unspeakably profound. Indeed, in this age in which everything is held to be permissible so long as it is freely done, in which our given human nature [sic] no longer commands respect, in which our bodies are regarded as mere instruments of our autonomous rational wills, repugnance may be the only voice left that speaks up to defend the central core of our humanity [sic]. Shallow are the souls that have forgotten how to shudder.<sup>9</sup>

Is this objection fair to transhumanists? It is difficult to believe that the therapeutic benefits of cell cloning for sick patients and their families ought to be morally proscribed. Transhumanists, in fact, emphasize that prolongation of a healthy life span requires slowing the aging process and replacing senescent cells and tissues. As the *Humanity+* website observes, "gene therapy, stem cell research, therapeutic cloning [cf. reproductive cloning], and other areas of medicine that have the potential to deliver these benefits deserve a high priority in the allocation of research monies."<sup>10</sup>

We live in an era of market triumphalism where laws of supply and demand now extend into the realm of sex trafficking, marriage, children, education, criminal

activity, racial discrimination, political participation, environmental protection, organ exchange, and eugenic interventions in human life.<sup>11</sup> If transhumanism seeks to liberate the human race from biological constraints of disease, then perhaps there is nothing really new about the goal. Who would be opposed to that? Indeed, what is natural is often deadly and detrimental. Our ancestors had no wings, but now we fly. Early hominids lived an average of twenty-five years, but a baby girl born today in Japan, for example, may expect to live to age eighty-six. An enhanced diet is not the only factor in such longevity: equality and public health measures are also critical.<sup>12</sup> The social determinants of health – that is, the conditions in which people are born, mature, live, work, and age – certainly do impact health, quality of life, and human lifespan globally.

The distinction between therapy and enhancement is a difficult distinction to maintain. It is fair to say that medical therapy has been understood in relation to the treatment of disease or disabilities, whereas enhancement entails technological intervention into normal processes of the body and mind.<sup>13</sup> The meaning of the term "enhancement" is by no means clear as Kass adumbrates below.

If "enhancement" is defined in opposition to "therapy," one faces further difficulties with the definitions of "healthy" and "impaired," "normal" and "abnormal" (and hence, "super-normal"), especially in the area of "behavioral" or "psychic" functions and activities. "Mental health" is not easily distinguished from "psychic well-being" or, for that matter, from contentment or happiness. And psychiatric diagnoses – "dysthymia," hyperactivity, "oppositional

<sup>11</sup> The idea that the law of supply and demand governs all of human behavior, rather than merely the production and consumption of material goods, was classically articulated by University of Chicago economist Gary S. Becker in *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Boseley, "Japan's life expectancy 'down to equality and public health measures.'" *The Guardian*, Tuesday 30 August 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/aug/30/japan-life-expectancy-factors>, last accessed February 20, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> From the perspective of persons with disabilities, see also Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch, "The Disability Rights Critique of Prenatal Genetic Testing: Reflections and Recommendations," in *Arguing About Bioethics*, ed. Stephen Holland, London and New York: Routledge 2012, pp. 59-73.

<sup>9</sup> Leon Kass, "Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans: The Wisdom of Repugnance," in *Arguing About Bioethics*, ed. Stephen Holland, London and New York: Routledge 2012, pp. 130-148, here p. 135.

<sup>10</sup> *Humanity+*, "Transhumanist FAQ, Section Society and Politics," [http://humanityplus.org/philosophy/transhumanist-faq/#answer\\_23](http://humanityplus.org/philosophy/transhumanist-faq/#answer_23), last accessed February 20, 2014. [Henceforth cited as *SP*]

disorder," and other forthcoming labels that would make Orwell wince and Soviet psychiatry proud — are notoriously vague. Furthermore, in the many human qualities (like height or IQ) that distribute themselves "normally," does the average also function as a norm, or is the norm itself appropriately subject to alteration? Is it therapy to give growth hormone to a genetic dwarf but not to a very short fellow who is just unhappy to be short? And if the short are brought up to the average, the average, now having become short, will have precedent for a claim to growth hormone injections. Needless arguments about whether or not something is or is not an "enhancement" get in the way of the proper question: What are the good and bad uses of biotechnical power? What makes a use "good," or even just "acceptable"? It does not follow from the fact that a drug is being taken solely to satisfy one's desires that its use is objectionable. Conversely, certain interventions to restore what might seem to be natural functioning wholeness — for example, to enable postmenopausal women to bear children or 60-year-old men to keep playing professional ice hockey — might well be dubious uses of biotechnical power. The human meaning and moral assessment are unlikely to be settled by the term "enhancement," any more than they are settled by the nature of the technological intervention itself. [ABH 13]

Cialis and Viagra, once used as therapy drugs for erectile dysfunction, are commercially carpet-bombed on the evening news and primetime TV commercials. The greatest health risk in the world does appear not to be malaria or sleeping sickness, but rather "a rampant epidemic of erectile dysfunction."<sup>14</sup> What were once considered therapies, are now openly bought and sold on the ostensible free market as enhancement technologies. Who is opposed to that? Baseball players that use illegal peptides and testosterone for physical enhancement are being indicted by federal courts for cheating. If all players were to have equal access to such enhancements would that legitimize its use? Is it reasonable to assume that cryopreservation of the human body will be eventually covered by private insurers as long as payers are willing to pay the premiums? Ought universal health care systems in the United Kingdom, European Union, and Canada support cryopreservation endeavors? I offer no answer to these questions, but it is certainly clear that current health care systems are economically unsustainable in

their present form, even as the United States spends more on health care per capita than other countries. Medical demand will always outstrip medical supply.

Apart from issues of safety, libertarian choice and equality, it seems to me that the danger of losing human solidarity, humaneness, and moving toward even greater social, economic, and political inequality becomes more likely if only a select few humans with the money, power, and resources for enhancing themselves above the norm — however the norm might be defined — do enhance themselves so. Similar to the digital divide, we may easily drift into a genetically engineered and pharmaceutically enhanced divide. Transhumanists respond to the social inequality argument in this way:

It is clear that everybody can benefit greatly from improved technology. Initially, however, the greatest advantages will go to those who have the resources, the skills, and the willingness to learn to use new tools. One can speculate that some technologies *may cause social inequalities to widen*. For example, if some form of intelligence amplification becomes available, it may at first be so expensive that only the wealthiest can afford it. *The same could happen when we learn how to genetically enhance our children. Those who are already well off would become smarter and make even more money.* This phenomenon is not new. Rich parents send their kids to better schools and provide them with resources such as personal connections and information technology that may not be available to the less privileged. *Such advantages lead to greater earnings later in life and serve to increase social inequalities.*

Trying to ban technological innovation on these grounds, however, would be misguided. *If a society judges existing inequalities to be unacceptable, a wiser remedy would be progressive taxation and the provision of community-funded services such as education, IT access in public libraries, genetic enhancements covered by social security, and so forth.* Economic and technological progress is not a zero sum game; it's a positive sum game. Technological progress does not solve the hard old political problem of what degree of income redistribution is desirable, but it can greatly increase the size of the pie that is to be divided. [SP np, emphasis added]

Progressive taxation? Community-funded public education? Both of these solutions to gross political, economic and social inequality sound very much like the solutions offered by the so-called early humanism that relied almost exclusively on educational and cultural refinement to improve the human condition.

<sup>14</sup> Michael J. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux 2012, p. 7.

IT access in public libraries? Many libraries have closed down due to lack of funding, transformations from print to e-publishing, and convergence of publishing rights by global monopolistic publishing houses. Genetic enhancements covered by social security? There is no mention of health inequality or the value of universal health care in the Transhumanist FAQ. As of this writing, debates between democrats and republicans over President Obama's Affordable Health Care Act make the idea of genetic enhancements covered by social security politically and pragmatically unreasonable. Insurance coverage for children with pre-existing health conditions like diabetes or heart disease is at the center of Obamacare policy, and even this policy has been repeatedly blocked by mainstream Republicans and Tea-party members.

Are we headed down a road to genetic enhancements covered by social security? It seems unlikely, especially when health providers and insurance companies do not accept the distinction between therapy and enhancement. Private insurers pay for treatment of disease, but not for enhancements (ABH 13), and therapeutic prosthetic devices are often uncovered or minimally covered. Will social security even exist to pay for enhancements when costs of therapeutic intervention are unsustainable under present health care policy conditions. And how will the federal government, moreover, pay social security benefits for persons living well beyond one hundred years of age when we are repeatedly told that demographic shifts resulting from baby-boomer waves is already threatening the social security system put into place after World War II? One thing is certain: We will need to trans-humanize the existing American health care system where so many persons are uninsured or underinsured before hoping for access to enhancement coverages. Many employers do not even provide adequate eyeglass or dental coverage.

With respect to the virtue of "humility" that Michael Sandel affirms about giftedness and the given aspects of the human condition, we may do well to recall Aristotle's table of the virtues and vices in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. When it comes to honor and dishonor in the sphere of action or feeling, proper ambition and even pride is the mean between the excesses of ambition or empty vanity and the deficiencies of unambitiousness and undue humility. Loving communication seeks a middle path between the excesses of philosophical closed-mindedness and the deficiencies of spitefulness, insensibility, and resentment.

### Is Possible Posthuman Existenz Possible?

Let us now consider the idea, not of possible Existenz (*mögliche Existenz*) per se, but rather of possible posthuman Existenz? For Jaspers the modalities of the question of Being become actual and articulated to the human being, not in his or her being of and in the world and not merely by virtue of his being a thinking being, but by being Existenz, that is, by existing self-consciously in temporality. Existenz cannot be approached cognitively, but only by means of transcending thought. Existenz can only be illuminated—and not in its actuality as a living person—but only as possible Existenz. To emphasize the characterization of Existenz as a transcendental illumination of parameters of possibility rather than a description of actualities, Jaspers often speaks in polarities that are reminiscent of Kierkegaard vis-à-vis the finite/infinite, possibility/actuality, etc. The three subjective modes of being, as body, intellect and spirit, represent the human being only as an empirical phenomenon. "All human beings, however, own the ability or possibility of a fourth and nonempirical dimension of being and human self-realization," Kurt Salamun writes in an exposition of Jaspers' philosophical anthropology, and he continues:<sup>15</sup>

From the viewpoint of Jaspers's existentialism this fourth mode is the highest form of human self-realization, whereas the other three modes of being are merely the empirical mediums and necessary presuppositions for self-realization as Existenz. For Jaspers, human self-realization is the concrete realization of Existenz, that is, the authentic ground of human being, the intimate dimension of personal autonomy, existential freedom, undermined moral decision, and the nonobjective actuality of self-being and true selfhood. No empirical studies, doctrines of ontology, or definite ethical frameworks can give an adequate understanding of this fourth dimension of subjectivity and our shared humanity. Such an understanding is possible only by means of actually realizing Existenz in one's own life and/or by "elucidating" Existenz by means of transcending philosophizing.

Can one "hear" in the posthuman and the

<sup>15</sup> Kurt Salamun, "Karl Jaspers on Human Self-realization: Existenz in Boundary Situations and Communication," in *Karl Jaspers's Philosophy: Expositions & Interpretations*, eds. Kurt Salamun and Gregory J. Walters, Amherst and New York: Humanity Books 2008, pp. 243-62, here pp. 245-6.

posthuman future a cipher of Transcendence? Will the embodiment of the singularly unique individual take shape in a global culture marked by posthuman historicities and enhanced human communication, mobility, and experientiality? Might transhumanism provide an entirely new basis for a second Axial Age? Might it be the case that humanity is on the cusp of a new Axial Age, rather than a Renaissance of the earlier one (800-200BCE), one grounded on faith in applied technoscientific enhancement of the human animal and devoid of metaphysical superstitions, religious mythology and belief in fate or a God? What is living and what is dead in Jaspers' philosophy in relation to the philosophy of transhumanism, a philosophy of the human future? If "the educational ideal in which humanism and the realism of the natural sciences are completely joined to one another for their mutual enlightenment has never as yet been fully realized,"<sup>16</sup> as Jaspers says in *The Idea of the University*, might the philosophy of transhumanism provide a spur for educational unification of technology and the arts in our current biotechnological age?<sup>17</sup>

There are various dimensions of Jaspers' philosophy that prima facie stand-out as repellant to the philosophy of transhumanism; and yet, there are some other key aspects, such as the transhumanist emphasis on science and applied techno-science in the service of human well-being and greater freedom that certainly can be understood as an attraction.

First, a clear attraction between Jaspers and transhumanism is Jaspers' own affirmation of life and health and the self-discipline entailed thereby. In his

<sup>16</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Idea of the University*, ed. Karl W. Deutsch, Preface Robert Ulich, trans. Harold A. T. Reiche and H. F. Vanderschmidt. Boston: Beacon Press 1959, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> See Natasha Vita-More, "Aesthetics: Bringing the Arts & Design into the Discussion of Transhumanism," in *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, eds. Max More and Natasha Vita-More, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Wiley-Blackwell 2013, pp. 18-27, here p. 24: "If human-computer interaction is now a developed field of study, and bioart has become a promising field within the arts curriculum, is there potential that human enhancement and life extension might follow suit? Possibly." This is one of the few essays in the Reader that addresses the question concerning arts and education today.

"Philosophical Memoir" Jaspers recalls the impact of his early medical diagnosis on his philosophy of existence, or life philosophy, and his affirmation of his disciplined will to health.<sup>18</sup>

One basic fact of my existence qualified all the decisions of my life: I was organically ill from childhood on (bronchiectasis and cardiac decompensation)... I was eighteen by the time Albert Fraenkel ... made the correct diagnosis. Until then, false treatment of my condition had brought on frequent fever spells; now I learned to adjust my life to this disease. I read a treatise by Rudolf Virchow which described my ailment in every detail and gave the prognosis: in their thirties at the latest, these patients die of pyemia. I realized what mattered in treatment. I slowly learned the procedures, partly inventing them myself. They could not be carried out properly if I led the normal life of the healthy. If I wished to work, I had to risk what was harmful; if I wished to go on living, I had to observe a strict regimen and to avoid what was harmful. My existence passed between these poles. Frequent failures, by allowing fatigue to poison the body, were inevitable, and every time recovery was essential. The point was not to let concern about my illness turn the illness into the sum and substance of life. My task was to treat it properly almost without noticing it, and to keep working as if it did not exist. I had to adapt everything to it, without giving up to it. Time and again I made mistakes. The exigencies arising from my illness touched every hour and affected all my plans.

Jaspers' prolific corpus is all the more remarkable in light of his illness and the socio-historical conditions in which he lived. One may only wonder if he would have been able to accomplish all that he did had he been able-bodied. The same may be said for both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard also, both philosophical disturbers of late nineteenth century modernity. The appellation of hyperagency would seem apropos to all three thinkers but as a result of different challenges to self-overcoming in Nietzsche's positive sense of the will to power.

Second, as noted in the introductory quote (*GP* 765):

all human activity and thought is at the service of something incomprehensible within which it operates and by which it is absorbed and overborne whether we like to call it fate or providence.

It is philosophical folly to want to see through this Other and find some way whereby the individual

<sup>18</sup> Karl Jaspers, "Philosophical Memoir", in Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy and the World, Selected Essays and Lectures*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company 1963, pp. 193-314, here pp. 198-9.



could as it were get control of it, first by knowing it and then by planning and action.

While this statement was written in the context of the analysis of the psychopathology of psychic life, the "complex unities" that comprise the individual, and the idea of the human being as a whole (cf. the seminal thinkers – Plato, Augustine, Immanuel Kant), Jaspers may have viewed the technological overcoming of corporeal, intellectual and mental (*geistige*) limitations and the transformation of human-being into a species sufficiently different from the genetically-defined human as virtually impossible. Gaps inevitably remain between Reason and Existenz,<sup>19</sup> and between Life and Freedom. Reason and Existenz are located within the subject-object split where we can confront them in cognition only in their being appearance. Philosophy understands that it is not a science. Philosophizing thinks in terms of the Encompassing, i.e., not collapsing into the observation of empirical objects alone by way of instrumental rationality or the intellect. Propositions of science are direct and are correct, whereas philosophical thinking searches for an encompassing meaning of truth that embraces all partial aspects of being correct out of the encompassing. Philosophic thinking is expressed indirectly in ciphers, including "the cipher of Man" (through existential illumination) and by reading the diverse and multifarious nature of ciphers, both immanent and transcendent (metaphysics). As for the gap between life and freedom, Jaspers puts it this way:

It is wrong to put Nature and Freedom (Life and Mind) side by side as if they were factors on the same plane and as if they interacted. Rather it is that the one form of approach – whether that of the Natural Sciences [*Naturwissenschaften*] or that of Understanding [*Geisteswissenschaften*] and its accompanying Illumination – comes up against its respective limits, not however to absorb new factors of explanation but to become aware of its own limitations in the face of Being as a whole. Thus causality comes up against freedom and, vice versa, understanding comes up against the meaningless (the ununderstandable) in the form of the causal connections of biology or in the form of Existence itself. [GP 755-6]

In the context of his critical analysis of the nature of psychotherapy, Jaspers observes that as a psychopathologist he can treat the life of the patient, but

to Freedom he may only make an appeal.<sup>20</sup>

Third, all varieties of transhumanism seek to overcome so-called natural and traditional limitations of the human condition. In this respect, what both Sandel and Kass share in common in their bioconservative criticisms is what More calls limitationism. Limitationism is "the general attitude that the fundamental limits that have been part of human nature – cognitive, somatic, sensory, emotional, mortal, etc. – are sacrosanct, or crucial to dignity, humility, or meaningfulness" (HCA 5). Jaspers' philosophy is a philosophy of limits *par excellence*. The human experience of boundary situations<sup>21</sup> or limit situations – of death, suffering, struggling, and guilt – are basic to human existence and Existenz and these limit situations inevitably shape our fundamental orientation to the world (scientific world-orientation), self (existential illumination), and transcendence (metaphysics). For the philosophy of transhumanism the key aim is to surpass the constriction of human limits as expressed in the extropian principles of "perpetual progress" and "self-transformation" (HCA 7). One may at least wonder if the surpassing of human limitations does not already presuppose some understanding of an end-state or ideal of the unity of the person as a whole to which one hopes to reach and at the same time surpass. Here again, we may have something to learn from the humanist Karl Jaspers, who never believed that authentic humanism had been reached in the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup>

The belief that it was possible to develop methods which would enable us to comprehend man as a whole (as to constitution, character, body-type, and disease-entity) persisted, in ever new guises. Despite the fact that, within limits, all of them were fruitful, the supposed totality every time proved to be a totality within the one comprehensive totality of being human,

<sup>20</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Nature of Psychotherapy: A Critical Appraisal*, trans. Julius Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton, Chicago, IL and London, The University of Chicago Press, first Phoenix edition 1965, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy, Vol. 2, Existential Elucidation*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1970, pp. 177-222.

<sup>22</sup> On Jaspers' understanding of humanism in relation to changes in German and global higher education in the twentieth century, see Alan M. Olson, "The Idea of a University in the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers," in *Karl Jaspers's Philosophy: Expositions & Interpretations*, eds. Kurt Salamun and Gregory J. Walters, Amherst and New York: Humanity Books 2008, pp. 197-218.

<sup>19</sup> See Karl Jaspers, *Reason and Existenz*, trans. with intr. William Earle, London, Toronto, and New York: Noonday Press, 1955, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956.

never this totality itself. For the totality of man lies way beyond any conceivable objectifiability. He is incompletable both as a being-for-himself and as an object of cognition. He remains, so to speak, "open." Man is always more than what he knows, or can know, about himself.<sup>23</sup>

Fourth, transhumanism is not an ontology; it is, rather, an ideology or worldview. Jaspers' philosophy is an attempt to overcome both ontology and ideology where ideology is understood as masking ignoble motives. The motives of transhumanism are highly noble because they serve life and life enhancement and healthspan. Jaspers' philosophy is also not an ontology; it is, rather, a periechontology, a circling around the subjective and objective modes of being that encompass the self and world, and marked by the open-ended method of transcending in world orientation, existential illumination, and metaphysics.

Similarly, Nick Bostrom uses "modes of being" in his definition of a posthuman. By a posthuman capacity Bostrom means

a general central capacity greatly exceeding the maximum attainable by any current human being without [sic] recourse to new technological means. I will use *general central capacity* to refer to the following:

- *healthspan*—the capacity to remain fully healthy, active, and productive, both mentally and physically
- *cognition*—general intellectual capacities, such as memory, deductive and analogical reasoning, and attention, as well as special faculties such as the capacity to understand and appreciate music, humor, eroticism, narration, spirituality [sic], mathematics, etc.
- *emotion*—the capacity to enjoy life and to respond with appropriate affect to life situations and other people.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, for Bostrom, a mode of being refers to "a set of capacities and other general parameters of life. A posthuman mode of being is one that includes at least one posthuman capacity" in relation to healthspan,

<sup>23</sup> Karl Jaspers, "Philosophical Autobiography," in *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers, Augmented Edition with New Section on Martin Heidegger*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company 1981, pp. 3-94, here p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> Nick Bostrom, "Why I Want to be a Posthuman When I Grow Up," in *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, eds. Max More and Natasha Vita-More, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Wiley-Blackwell 2013, pp. 28-53, here pp. 28-9.

cognition, and emotion.

Now the transhumanist emphasis on self-applied technology and empirical intelligence in order to overcome corporeal biological and genetic limitations could be interpreted, perhaps erroneously, as a collapse into an understanding of possible Existenz as primarily oriented toward *Dasein*-oriented enhancement control, or an extreme rationalistic reductionism of the self to consciousness as such (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*), which in turn mediates control over both Geist and World. Transcendence, as the other objective pole of the encompassing of objectivity is entirely excluded as a transcendent mode of being-human and perhaps as merely mystical mythologizing. Eliminative materialism might rather think of talk of transcendence as related to a God-gene. Here again, and in a rather sharp contrast, Jaspers might remind us that

Existence is made absolute in so-called pragmatism, *biologism*, psychologism, and sociologism; [consciousness-as-such] in *rationalism*; the mind in "erudition"; Existenz in existentialism (which becomes nihilism); the world in *materialism*, *naturalism*, idealism, and pantheism; Transcendence in a-cosmism.<sup>25</sup>

Fifth, Jaspers' emphasis on the distinction and relation of philosophy and science is apropos to the conversation between Jaspers' philosophy of reason and transhuman-ism. For Jaspers, Marxism, racism, and psychoanalysis have all conflated science and philosophy. A central task of contemporary philosophy requires overcoming the confluences between philosophy and science so that true science can emerge.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Jaspers maintains that whoever is not a scientist, or has not practiced science, cannot really engage in philosophical reflection. It is only when we understand the limits of empirical scientific

<sup>25</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Philosophical Faith and Revelation*, trans. E. B. Ashton, New York: Harper and Row 1967, p. 83 (emphasis added).

<sup>26</sup> Gerhard Knauss, "Karl Jaspers on Philosophy and Science: Distinction and Relation," trans. Edith Ehrlich, in *Karl Jaspers's Philosophy: Expositions & Interpretations*, eds. Kurt Salamun and Gregory J. Walters, Amherst and New York: Humanity Books 2008, pp. 69-86. Jaspers regarded the relationship between philosophy and science as a basic philosophical question. Knauss' analysis of why and how Jaspers treats both the historical and the systematic aspects of the distinction and relation of philosophy and science is relevant to the present historical and biotechnological situation.

methods that we can begin to understand the tasks of philosophy in relation to science. Without science, in fact, philosophical work is meaningless. Jaspers' transcending method represents a systematic-methodical transgressing of the limits of objectivity, but without ever falling into the void, or crystallizing into a new holistic objectivity. When all previous philosophy is discarded and a new philosophy is proffered as a strict science of logic and epistemology, philosophy turns itself into the handmaiden of science. Philosophy becomes defined as merely one science among many. In an age of biotechnological transformation philosophy might become practiced, for example, only by laboratory specialists in search of extended biological lifeform, perhaps even lifespan and healthspan. Lifespan and healthspan must be differentiated. There is an ongoing debate between cell biologists in search of an anti-aging drug and evolutionary biologists over the science of biological immortality. It is empirically possible to pharmacologically increase lifespan, but evolutionary biologists have predicted adverse side effects for human healthspan in so doing.<sup>27</sup>

Sixth, in his work *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*,<sup>28</sup> Karl Jaspers warns against the demonization of technology and like contemporary transhumanists held general expectations about continued technological advance in a time of mass production and obliteration bombing in warfare. Here again we may see a point of attraction between Jaspers' philosophy of reason and transhumanism. At the same time, however, Jaspers also warns against the naïve embrace of technoscientific applications as a solution to problems besetting the human condition. Contemporary debates between trans/posthumanists and bioconservatives such as Leon Kass, Michael Sandel, and Francis Fukayama are not much different, even if the gen-bio-nano-robotic techno-scientific stakes for the development and transformation of human nature are higher today. At the height of the Cold War, in

1958, Jaspers warned against the twin threats of human annihilation and political totalitarianism. He called for a "new politics" that could transform the Realpolitik of past history. Techno-scientific thinking and planning alone, however, would not provide a way forward for humanity confronted with the twin "boundary situation" of annihilating human existence or losing human freedom. Technological panaceas provide a false solution to moral and political challenges in our current human condition.

Seventh, most transhumanists "see no evidence for a God" and certainly not one "who insists on controlling our fate" (*HCA* 7). Indeed, persons with strong religious beliefs tend to have a negative view of transhumanist thinking. Transhumanism rightly reminds us that the world doesn't need another totalistic dogma. Jaspers could not agree more. The question concerning the relation and distinction between philosophy and religion is a large topic, and beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that philosophy does not possess any absolute foundations and must repeatedly rely on premises that cannot be substantiated by knowledge, but only appropriated by faith. Jaspers' philosophical faith always separates itself decisively and critically from religious faith. Philosophical faith does not know or invoke revelation. It contains no creeds, dogmas or absolute statements about God. Religions falsely teach as objective truths what possess merely existentially effective images, parables, or ciphers of transcendence. Philosophical faith disassociates itself from the error made by religion of turning symbols of transcendence into an objective reality. This confusion and the obedience to revelational faith demanded by the authority of religion, endanger human self-determination and reasonable communication. Philosophy and religion do share consciousness of having to believe as constitutive of the human condition, but they do not share the contents of their respective faiths.<sup>29</sup> Transhumanist concern to avoid totalistic dogma, and Jaspers' liberal ethos of humanity certainly hold much in common.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See Michael R. Rose, "Immortalist Fictions and Strategies," in *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, eds. Max More and Natasha Vita-More, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Wiley-Blackwell 2013, pp. 196-204, here p. 200.

<sup>28</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, New York: Henry Holt & Co., and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1933, cf. the new edition Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959 and 1966.

<sup>29</sup> See Andreas Cesana, "Daring to Live Out of Uncertainty: Karl Jaspers on Philosophic Faith, Transcendence, and Ciphers," in *Karl Jaspers's Philosophy: Expositions & Interpretations*, eds. Kurt Salamun and Gregory J. Walters, Amherst and New York: Humanity Books 2008, pp. 169-94.

<sup>30</sup> Kurt Salamun, "The Concept of Liberality in Jaspers's Philosophy and the Idea of the University," in *The Tasks of Truth: Essays on Karl Jaspers's Idea of a University*, ed.

Eighth, transhumanists all hold similar views about overcoming aging and the inevitability of death, but it is wrong to impute that they loathe the body and fear death. Death is not to be feared because it is nothing. As Max More states, death is simply "the end of experience. What makes death extremely undesirable is not that it is a bad condition to be in, it is that it means the end of our ability to experience, to create, to explore, to improve, to live" (PT 15).

According to Jaspers, all of human existence is encompassed by life and death. Life begins at birth as an event without consciousness, and in time only the knowledge of death makes us aware of it as a reality and limit situation of existence. The knowledge causes stress because we grow fully conscious that those I love and I myself will die. Existential awareness of myself provides an answer to the limit situation. "What is born must also die," Jaspers writes.

Biological knowledge is not content with this. It wants to know why. In what living processes is this necessity grounded? One thinks of slowing down the aging process and even has the idea: What has been born can perhaps be kept alive as long as one wishes by controlling the living processes leading to death, once they are known. But even if the artificial prolongation of life were to be extended indefinitely, nobody doubts that in the end death is inescapable. Death like sex belongs to life. Both remain mysteries at the very source of our being.<sup>31</sup>

As death is for transhumanists, so too is death for Jaspers. Death is the end of experience. In the linearity of time the human being has only one life chance for the realization of possible Existenz — authentic being in freedom, integrated personal development and growth, and self-realization. The integrated self qua possible Existenz comes by means of everyday actions and the balancing of the modes of being that we are as subjects and in our orientation to the modes of being that exist or appear as world and transcendence. At the end of the day, there is no consolation in the symbolization of immortality or the continuation of existence via the memory of others, by living on in the embodiment of a good family heritage, through scholarly works, or even fame and honor. The bronze statue erected in memoriam

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Gregory J. Walters, Peter Lang Verlag 2006, pp. 39-53.

<sup>31</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy is for Everyman, A Short Course in Philosophical Thinking*, trans. R.F.C. Hull and Grete Wels, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1967, pp. 106-7. [Henceforth cited as PFE]

perishes too. "What I am, what others are, all mankind and everything it produces and accomplishes, has an end. It sinks into oblivion as though it had never been" (PFE 108).

The difference, however, is that for Jaspers the desire for immortalization is not meaningless, but he rejects Nietzsche's belief in the circular time and eternal recurrence. It is only in linear time that what is decided can become as eternal to the self. Circular time and linear time are incompatible ciphers,

immortality...means eternity, in which past and future are canceled. Though the moment is temporal, it nevertheless participates, when fulfilled existentially, in time-transcending eternity. The "eternity of the moment" is a self-contradicting thought. It seeks to express the truth, in which the reality of temporal embodiment is one with timeless ideality of Being: as the eternality of the Real. [PFE 111]

While there is much more that could be said, and needs to be said, about the comparative and contrasting views of death and immortality here, perhaps the following quote captures the Jaspersian sentiment best:

We are mortal as mere empirical beings, immortal when we appear in time as that which is eternal. We are mortal when we are loveless, immortal as lovers. We are mortal in indecision, immortal in resolution. We are mortal as natural processes, immortal when given to ourselves in freedom. [PFE 112]

Given to ourselves in freedom? Yes. Possible Existenz stands in relation to Transcendence, or it does not exist as all. Here we may have a non-negotiable contrast between transhumanism and the philosophy of the Encompassing.

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In spite of over hundreds of years of philosophical discourses on the meaning and goals of humanism, we are still a long way away from the actualization of its core values, whether articulated by Cicero, Pico della Mirandola, or Kant's project of Enlightenment. Jonathan Glover's brilliant exposition of the moral history of the twentieth century, especially the roots of tribal conflict in group think, ought to be proof enough of this fact.<sup>32</sup> The problem may not so much

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<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Glover, *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, New Haven and London, Yale Nota Bene, Yale University Press, 1999, pp. 141-52.

be the overcoming or transvaluation of humanism's core value of humaneness and *humanitas* as much as overcoming the problem of dehumanization.<sup>33</sup> In a world of increasing economic and healthcare access disparity, where global social, economic and political inequalities grow, where homelessness increases in wealthy nations, where the rich get richer and the poor poorer, we may simply be a long, long way away from a trans- or posthuman future and the *humanitas* that Cicero spoke of over two millennia ago, or the backside of what Jaspers understood as Modernity's historical challenge to Axial Age insights and spiritualities now confronted by the splintering and modern tripartition of science, philosophy, and theology.

Whatever futurological projections come to pass in the next few decades, one may at least appeal *hic et nun* to existing moral resources of humanity. "Remember your humanity and forget all the rest," Bertrand Russell once said after the invention of the hydrogen bomb and in the Cold War context of potential nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States in the early 1950s. Humaneness, sympathy, and the enhancement of ethical values may be *sine qua non* for any meaningful transhuman or posthuman future. Care for others, and the resources it takes to sustain caring for others by means of mutual respect rather than pharmacological fixes, may well remain outside the realm of human solidarity for an indefinite period of human history.

Jaspers insists that the human being is incompletable as a total object of cognition, and that the individual always remains an open being. The human being is always more than what he or she can know scientifically about him or her self. Jaspersian loving communication with transhumanist/posthumanist thinking, therefore, also looks less like checking a box pro or con and more like a middle path between extremes of any totalist, reductionist, obfuscatory

worldview masking self-interest or, as in our time, the economic approach to life where markets and market-oriented thinking have reached in modes of existence that were traditionally governed by non-market values. Culturally-bound ideologies, however, where ideology is understood in a neutral sense, that is, ideology as ideation, remain inevitable. Openness and tolerance of thinking remain an ongoing task of the quest for peace in both the nuclear age and the biotechnological age.

Is a possible posthuman Existenz possible? Yes, I think so as a matter of logical principle and in spite of the attractions and repulsions noted above. For the human being remains an open being. The quest for enhanced loving communication between humans and posthumans remains a challenge of utmost importance.

Peace is not the absence of struggle. But man can convert the struggle from a violent one into a spiritual and loving struggle. The violent struggle dies in communication. Instead of superiority in victory, the result is communal truth. By means of such struggle each individual comes to him or herself. The loving struggle places all means of power, also the means of intellectual forcefulness, which as a stronger rationality corresponds to physical strength, at the disposal of the partner in the same manner in which one makes use of them himself, and thereby cancels its fatal effects.<sup>34</sup>

Transhumans want to elevate and extend life ... let us choose to be transhumanist not only in our bodies, but also in our values ... toward diversity, multiplicity ... toward a more humane transhumanity ...<sup>35</sup>

Mapping a posthuman future also requires awareness of the past; here Jaspers' project of world philosophy provides a potent methodology to strive toward world peace.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Karl Jaspers, "Wahrheit, Freiheit und Friede," in Karl Jaspers, *Hoffnung und Sorge. Schriften zur deutschen Politik 1945-1965*, München: Piper 1965, p. 174 (my translation).

<sup>35</sup> Transhuman Manifesto (1983), cited by Natasha Vita-More, "Aesthetics: Bringing the Arts & Design into the Discussion of Transhumanism," in *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, eds. Max More and Natasha Vita-More, United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Wiley-Blackwell 2013, pp. 18-27, here p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> See Anton Hügli, "World Philosophy: On Philosophers Making Peace," in *Philosophical Faith and the Future of Humanity*, eds. Helmut Wautischer, Alan M. Olson, and Gregory J. Walters, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer 2012, pp. 335-45.

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With respect to the fear of personal identity becomes "unglued" (HCA 5) as a result of transhumanist interventions in genes and biology, it is a truism that tribal membership and loyalties are linked to persons' sense of their own identity, and this cuts in many directions. As Glover rightly notes, "tribalism is linked to our need to create something coherent out of ourselves and our own lives...its roots go very deep in our psychology. Its [tribalism's] elimination may be impossible and, at the least, dauntingly difficult" (p. 145).

<sup>33</sup> Nick Haslam, "Dehumanization: An Integrative Review," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10/3 (2006), pp. 252-64.