



## MODERN HUMAN CONCEPT PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE KARL JASPER

KONSEP MANUSIA MODERN PERSPERKTIF FILSAFAT  
KARL JASPER

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to understand the concept of modern humans from Karl Jaspers' philosophical perspective. This type of research is a type of library research, using a philosophical approach. Furthermore, the data analysis method is carried out in three stages, namely: the descriptive method, content analysis, and the interpretation and conclusion drawing method. The research results show that modern humans, according to Karl Jaspers, have the challenge of facing their freedom and responsibilities with courage and moral integrity while looking for authentic meaning and purpose in life in the borderline situations they face. Only by developing greater existential awareness and taking responsibility for their own existence can modern humans find true wholeness and fulfillment in life. Jaspers invites modern humans to fight alienation, superficiality, and determinism by developing a deeper existential awareness. Only by reflecting on the conditions of our existence and daring to embrace freedom and responsibility authentically can humans find the true meaning of life amidst the challenges of modernity.

**Keywords:** Human, Modern, Karl Jaspers

### ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini untuk mengetahui konsep manusia modern perspektif filsafat Karl Jaspers. Jenis penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research), dengan menggunakan pendekatan filosofis. Selanjutnya metode analisis data yang dilakukan melalui tiga tahapan yaitu: metode deskriptif, content analisis, dan metode interpretasi dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Manusia modern menurut Karl Jaspers memiliki tantangan untuk menghadapi kebebasan dan tanggung jawab mereka dengan keberanian dan integritas moral, sembari mencari makna dan tujuan hidup yang otentik dalam

situasi-situasi batas yang mereka hadapi. Hanya dengan mengembangkan kesadaran eksistensial yang lebih besar dan mengambil tanggung jawab atas keberadaan mereka sendiri, manusia modern dapat menemukan keutuhan dan pemenuhan hidup yang sejati. Jaspers mengajak manusia modern untuk melawan alienasi, superfisialitas, dan determinisme dengan cara mengembangkan kesadaran eksistensial yang lebih dalam. Hanya dengan merenungkan kondisi eksistensi kita dan berani memeluk kebebasan serta tanggung jawab secara otentik, manusia dapat menemukan makna hidup yang sejati di tengah tantangan modernitas.

**Kata-kata kunci:** Manusia, Modern, Karl Jaspers

## A. INTRODUCTION

When we talk about humans, we think about various points of view. Some argue that humans are animals that think, while others argue that humans are homo fidei, that is, humans are animals that do work. Humans are God's creation with personal freedom, body and soul in harmony, and the ability to live as individuals in a community. Humans are born into this world in a way that is difficult for other humans to understand, so it is not easy to find out why, how, and for what reason they are born. Humans are born from God through other humans, know their own life and existence, and are aware of their own purpose in life. This fact shows that humans are helpless creatures; their continued presence in the world always depends on their creator (God). All potential is completely determined by the creator; humans have no choice but to surrender to the creator (Nur, 2019).

Humans are zootropic politicians, according to one of the Greek philosophers, Aristotle. This means that humans are creatures who essentially enjoy interacting with each other in society. Humans are classified as sociable creatures or creatures who like to interact with other creatures because, in essence, humans always want to socialize with each other.

Ali Shariati stated that humans are two-dimensional creatures. This decree is an interpretation of the verse in the Qur'an that says that humans were created from clay (a symbol of humility) and from part of His Spirit (a symbol of purity) so that humans would not fall into error and so that humans would be on the right path. requires religion, God, the Book, and the Prophet (Baihaqi, 2009).

Humans, according to Murtadha Muthahhari, Basically, humans are a type of creature that has many variations with other creatures. On the other hand, at the same time, humans also have a series of characteristics that can differentiate themselves from other animals. This series is what makes humans superior to animals (Muthahhari, 2021).

Meanwhile, Jean-Paul Sartre, who argued that humans are the center of transcendence and that humans are free, said that humans have free will, or freedom is a characteristic and nature of humans. Humans are always in projection and are able to show themselves, so they are able to exist and are limited because humans cannot understand everything that exists in this world, and humans only exist in the human realm itself, not in other realms. The transcendence here is that humans are able to overcome themselves. And to achieve transcendence, humans must realize that they exist.

When philosophy takes human subjects into account, it turns into a science that analyzes human problems. In this example, philosophy will tell us things about humans in a concrete way, both in terms of their elements and their goals in life. If it is related to that character, it is because it is based on that character's deep belief in humanity. In that case, studying philosophy leads to a better knowledge of human nature. Human freedom is something that continues to be debated to this day.

Existentialism also has a role or part that is difficult to deny in the history of modern theology. Therefore, this knowledge does not only examine various discussions regarding philosophy, especially human philosophy. Even existentialism also provides quite strong changes in the relationship between a creature and its creator. This means that the philosophy of existentialism is difficult to separate from the realm of theology itself because the discussion is about humans showing their existence, which in time emphasizes other roles in the existence of the world, including God in it (Hadiwijono, 1980).

Existentialism is a philosophical school that is aware of human existence in the sense that it is a collection of ideologies that focus on humans as their existence in the world. Karl Jaspers stated that personal subjects are different because our perspective on what is fundamental varies when witnessing reality and truth. Karl Jaspers's observations about the world of personal subjects vary.

Philosophy is very close to human life. He examines how humans live in this world with the various problems that exist. The realities of human life, such as suffering, happiness, decisions, and life values, are sharpened in philosophy. Philosophy also examines humans with every result of their civilization, as with technology, according to what was stated by Erich Fromm, currently humans are unconsciously being eroded by their own creations. Philosophy always questions all of this until, at a certain point, everyone who studies philosophy gets a clear picture of the life they have. The

discussion of philosophy as a struggle for life situations is explained in the philosophy of existentialism. Existentialism questions the ultimate existence of humans, namely whether humans have meaning. If this exists, what meaning should be expressed by humans.

As stated by Jaspers, the task of philosophy is to find answers about the purpose of life, but it will be difficult for humans to find out the clear meaning of life. Humans who are able to show themselves are existing humans, and the true meaning of life is difficult to find if we do not exist. With the above background, the author wants to know the concept of modern humans from Karl Jasper's philosophical perspective.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the existentialist movement, the main topic of discussion is human existence, and before we describe how existentialists view humans, we must first describe humans in general. According to Latin, man is mens, which means something that thinks, while in Greek it is Anthropos, which means someone who always looks up, or the face of a human being, and there is another term for humans, namely Homo, which means something that is present in the earth.

The meaning of the word Homo gives two words different meanings, namely: humans are created creatures, which means the same as other created creatures. Second, humans are more than other creatures; namely, humans have a higher level of life, namely the characteristics of life that are spiritual and intellectual. Of these two characteristics, the position of humans is higher than the position of other creatures (Dagun, 1990).

Humans are social creatures who always want to ask questions; the questions they always ask are philosophical in nature. From the beginning, a small child asked about where something came from, where it was going, and why it had to be this way. So, it cannot be denied that, from when he was little, he questioned his own existence and the existence of this world. So in the past, humans always questioned their own existence and why they had to exist, because knowing that they existed was what differentiated them from animals. Humans are always looking for something that can be found in their search, namely possibilities that often occur, because something that they often ask about is radical and humane. Why do humans have to question that? Because it is to know their own existence. Existentialism further shows that humans are always in the process of becoming themselves and that humans always want to actualize their potential. According to Albert Ellis's

theory, humans are not creatures that are completely biologically determined and driven by instincts, and humans as individuals have the power to face limitations to change views and basic values to overcome rejecting tendencies. yourself (Hiplunudin, 2017).

What this means is that humans have their own strengths within themselves, namely in the form of extraordinary potential. We often see humans being able to create or discover something very extraordinary because they use the potential that exists within them. For example, scholars who have "*Qaramah*" are able to see things behind walls (invisibility), can walk on water, and their bodies are not penetrated by sharp objects because they always train their limbs so that their potential can emerge and be actualized.

So, humans have the ability within themselves to control themselves. When they are able to actualize their potential, their behavior that was previously ordinary can now do something extraordinary, which the normal limits of ordinary humans cannot do. So, because thoughts and actions make themselves extraordinary, there is nothing impossible for humans while they are still able to try to actualize their potential, except for something that has been determined by God.

According to Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), humans carry out their lives individually and do not do it in general. Because humans have the facilities of the world, they must also pay attention to their inner selves to carry out balance, because humans should not only do concrete things. Why does Kierkegaard think like that? Because he adheres to theistic existentialism, there is a balance between the world and the spiritual.

Likewise, according to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1901), Nietzsche considered humans to be a group of superior people or "Uebermensh." It is this human who is thought to be able to bring a perfect world into being. All this will be achieved when humans reflect on their suffering. Nietzsche came to the statement that will and the will to power are fundamental to human beings. This superman is a human who is truly free, starting with things that are material and non-material.

Nietzsche does not believe in the existence of God; in fact, God is dead. By killing God, humans will be free. When he is free, then humans will be free to do things to show their existence, because if God still exists, humans will consider themselves trapped because they think there is a God who is always watching. So, to show human existence, he doesn't need the name God. Why did Nietzsche say that? Because he was an atheist existentialist.

According to Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1988), humans have independence and the freedom to determine themselves and their lives. With this freedom, humans can do whatever they want. According to him, humans were born on this earth without having anything. He is the one who determines whether his nature is better or worse. He is the one who is responsible for the behavior he has carried out so far (Dagun, 1990).

Humans were born on this earth like blank white paper made of black spots; humans themselves created these bits. So, there is a value to the freedom given to humans to determine it. When talking about human nature, we often ask, is human nature determined by God or by humans themselves? If we refer to Sartre's thoughts, humans automatically determine their nature; whether they want to be poor or rich, good or bad, this is a human choice and is free to determine.

God only determines that humans have nature, but whether or not human nature becomes better is what He determines. So, this concept has similarities with the Islamic concepts of *qada* and *qadar*. Humans living in the mini-world have the same *qada*. God does not discriminate. Humans determine their *qadar*. When humans always try, they will get good things. For example, if A is born poor forever, it is possible that he will be rich as long as he is aware of his destiny and changes it.

This is where God's nature toward humans lies. When he wants to be born, he cannot determine which family he will be born into. God knows this, but after humans are born, they can freely make their choices. If they want to avoid poverty, they have to work hard and be serious about it; if they want to avoid ignorance, they have to study diligently. God's decree is absolute, and to get there, humans must fulfill their *qadar*, or measure. So that humans have autonomous freedom. Sartre, strictly speaking, views human freedom as absolute.

### C. METHOD

The type of research used for this research is qualitative. Because the method of collecting data is done using library research data collection methods (Hadawi et al., 1996), So researchers get sources through the method of searching for library data that is in line with the subject of the research. Of course, the guidance for this analysis is published written data. Up to this stage, the researcher concludes the source regarding the concept of human perspective in the philosophy of Karl Jaspers as well as other sources needed in the research.

The source of research data is thoughts about understanding a character; the sources used are library data. There are two methods used, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data, or first-hand data, are all sources of data from first-hand sources that are used as original sources or basic sources (Zed, 2008). Meanwhile, secondary data is testimony or a source that is not directly connected to the original data. Secondary data sources have the aim of providing sufficient primary data.

Data collection methods are the methods used in order to obtain existing validity or obtain the research subject or information source. The way to collect sources used for this research is documentation. Which is a way to obtain data from several sources and based on several bases that are completely related to the topic being studied (Arikunto, 2010). The way to collect data is by using a documentation method because the type of research is library research. Data sources, both primary and secondary, are combined into documents. The data collected is read and understood in order to produce sources that are used to answer the problems in the research.

Using the data analysis method, research moves to search for meaning in the sense of trying to explain the implied or explicit goals as well as connecting them using something that is theoretically logical (Muhajir, 1996). Regarding the methods used, they are as follows: Descriptive method, content analysis, and interpretation method.

## D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Biography of Karl Jasper

Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) was a German philosopher, psychologist, and doctor who had a major influence on the development of the philosophy of existentialism. Born on February 23, 1883, in Oldenburg, Germany. She comes from a nonconformist family that adheres to Calvinist Protestantism. He was the eldest child of Carl Wilhelm Jaspers and Henriette Tantzen. His father was a banker, while his mother was a businessman. And basically, Jasper's thoughts were influenced by Christianity, but he did not recognize himself as a Christian, so in his travels, Karl Japers did not mention much about his religion (Juhansar, 2022).

Jaspers began his education at an elementary school in Oldenburg, then moved to Bielefeld in 1891. In 1901, he graduated from the gymnasium (high school) in Oldenburg. After graduating, Jaspers decided to study law and took courses at the Universities of Heidelberg, Munich, and Berlin. However, his interests shifted to

medicine, and in 1909, he earned a doctorate in medicine after completing a dissertation on descriptive psychology. Jaspers studied law and medicine at the universities of Heidelberg, Munich, and Berlin.

Jaspers' career in 1916, Jaspers began his career as a lecturer at Heidelberg University, teaching psychology and philosophy. In 1921, he was appointed professor of philosophy at Heidelberg and taught there until 1937. In 1937, Jaspers was dismissed from his job by the Nazi regime for refusing to remove Jewish students from his classes. During World War II, he lived in Switzerland and wrote his works. After the war ended in 1948, Jaspers was reappointed as a professor at the University of Basel, Switzerland, and taught there until his retirement in 1961.

At 38, before Jaspers was a philosopher, he was a scientist. As a scientist, Jaspers always had a thirst for comprehensive knowledge. This then, perhaps, caused him to change his scientific focus, starting from the field of law to the field of medicine, then to the fields of psychiatry and psychology, and ending in the field of philosophy (Juhansar, 2022).

Jaspers' works are as follows:

1. *Worldview Psychology* (1919), which discusses the relationship between philosophy and psychology.
2. *Philosophy* (1932), a three-volume work covering the history of philosophy and problems of metaphysics.
3. *Reason and Existenz* (1935), which introduced the concept of "limit situations" (Grenzsituationen) in the philosophy of existentialism.
4. *On the Origins and Goals of History* (1949), which tries to interpret human history in the context of existence.

In 1957, Jaspers received a peace prize from the German Book Publishers for his work supporting peace and understanding between nations. He also received honorary doctorates from several leading universities, including Oxford University and Harvard University. Jaspers is recognized as one of the most influential thinkers in 20th-century philosophy, especially with his contribution to the development of the philosophy of existentialism and his thoughts on human existence and the search for the meaning of life. Jaspers died on February 26, 1969, in Basel, Switzerland, aged 86. He left a deep intellectual legacy in the fields of philosophy, psychology, and existentialist thought (Papastefanou, 2020).

## **Karl Jasper's Concept of Man**

Karl Jaspers, one of the most influential existentialist thinkers of the 20th century, had a unique understanding of the modern human condition. According to Jasper, modern humans live in a state called "Grenzsituationen," or limit situations. These situations refer to fundamental experiences such as suffering, struggle, death, and mistakes that are inevitable in human life.

Humans with logical capacities can try to manage self-limiting situations, but they will never be able to control them completely. Boundary situations are basic situations, or fundamental situations, because these situations are constitutive, an important part of existence, so they cannot be completely eliminated (Jaspers, 1970).

Boundary situations fall into two categories: general boundary situations and specific boundary situations. Boundary situations in the general category are determined by fate, such as historical background, gender, physical condition, and so on, and are beyond the individual's control. Death, pain, struggle, and guilt are examples of special category situations. Boundary situations, especially in special categories, can cause people to view life as wrong, chaotic, and mistaken.

Death is the most chaotic scenario because it causes a person to die before reaching their maximum potential and creates uncertainty in life. Other borderline situations, such as pain in all its manifestations, gradually eat away at Dasein. Suffering may seem preventable, but most suffering is a natural part of life. Avoiding misery often produces new and greater suffering. Individuals can try to overcome the pain. However, there is no perfect approach to alleviating all suffering (Siswanto, 2017).

According to Jaspers, boundary situations and decisions that must be taken show that human life and the universe are not final realities. There is something more powerful, something transporting and elevating beyond what Jaspers calls "transcendence" or "divinity." This divinity constantly communicates through certain indications known as "chiffers.". The term "Chiffer" in Arabic, namely "sifr," is a translation of the Sanskrit word "sunya," which means nothingness or emptiness. A chiffer is a sign or symbol without substance, a sign or symbol issued by divinity and filled by humanity as existence (Juhansar, 2022).

In borderline situations like this, modern humans are faced with the reality of their fragile and limited existence. They lose the certainty and security that religion, tradition, and old authority once provided. Modern humans can no longer rely on traditional belief systems and values to give meaning and purpose to life.

According to Jaspers, the boundary situations that humans must face indirectly show that human freedom inherently requires the existence of human limitations. However, there are some positive conclusions from Jaspers' point of view, which confirm that human life is always evolving. This means that humans must continue to strive for the advancement of their existence. Human freedom, as shown by Jaspers, is one of the topics of concern to this school because it has changed humans into individuals who increasingly respect other people and consider humans or other people as something different and distinct from themselves. Jaspers, as an existentialist figure, has instilled optimism in humanity, especially in facing the borderline situations that humans must face, even though there are still shortcomings in his beliefs (Juhansar, 2022).

Consequently, modern man must take full responsibility for his own existence and choices. They must find meaning and purpose in life through deep self-awareness and authentic decision-making. Jaspers emphasized that modern humans must develop a greater existential awareness, namely an understanding of their own freedom, limitations, and responsibilities.

According to Jaspers, modern humans must face anxiety and uncertainty with courage and moral integrity. They must not shy away from borderline situations but must accept them as part of true human existence. Only by facing these situations with courage and integrity can modern humans find authentic meaning and purpose in life.

Jaspers criticizes modern humans who escape from borderline situations by entertaining themselves in false pleasures or seeking false security in ideologies that offer false certainty. He emphasized the importance of modern humans finding ways to create authentic values and meaning in life, not just adopting existing belief systems and values.

Thus, according to Jaspers, modern humans have the challenge of facing their freedom and responsibilities with courage and moral integrity while seeking authentic meaning and purpose in life in the borderline situations they face. Only by developing greater existential awareness and taking responsibility for their own existence can modern humans find true wholeness and fulfillment in life.

### **Modern Human Challenges Karl Jaspers Perspective**

The modern world is influenced by developments in various areas of human life. Humans used to believe in God's intervention in interpreting life, but now they believe in their own intellectual abili-

ties. In modern times, all ideas that cannot be proven logically are considered nonsense.

In this way, modern humans are increasingly immersed in the deification of the authority of their minds. As a result, human spiritual life is nothing more than a mere formal confession. Man's willingness to surrender himself to the formal rear. Humans' willingness to surrender themselves to divine power becomes mere spiritual romance, which has no concrete relevance to human life (Asy'arie, 1986).

A man's recognition of his freedom is everything in his life. From the other side, we can also see that the development of human thought in the modern era has resulted in progress in various areas of human life, such as in the fields of economics, communication, and technology. In part, the ways of producing goods and services in the modern world are no longer done manually, or traditional, but mechanical. It cannot be denied that the flow of modernization has had very positive consequences for human life, but we also cannot close our eyes to the negative consequences (Susanto, 1991).

Freedom is a problem that humans are constantly fighting for and trying to solve. The human desire to be free is a very basic desire. Freedom is a value cherished by humans. A man can realize himself fully if he is free. Freedom is something that cannot be separated from humans. Humans are free creatures, but humans are creatures who always fight for their freedom. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the history of its development, various opinions have emerged that try to answer this problem. However, it must be acknowledged that the issue of human freedom is an issue that is still open today. Because the starting points used to answer these problems are not only often different but also often contradictory.

Humans, as subjects, certainly have a role in their actions. This is different from when humans are objects because humans are outside of humans, so when humans are objects, humans do not have freedom in determining their actions. When humans determine an action based on a choice, at that moment, freedom appears to make that choice, but at the same time, when making a choice, freedom appears. Human actions are a form of emphasis on freedom and human existential awareness. Freedom is the most basic essence of human existence. Freedom is a form of human existence because, with it, humans can make choices about their actions. Action creation is closely related to human freedom or unfreedom. In Islamic theology, there are several schools that discuss freedom regarding human actions. The Qadariyah school uses the

ideology of free will and free action, which descended from the Mu'tazilah school. The Jabariyah sect uses the ideology of fatalism, which is descended from the Asy'ariah sect. Karl Jaspers, as a figure of existentialism, has a unique view of freedom that can be projected into several schools of Islamic theology so that it can be used as a basis for interpreting freedom today.

Freedom is not something that must be proven or talked about, but something that must be lived and experienced. Human freedom is the absence of coercion in choosing between existing possibilities and in determining decisions and responsibilities regarding them. Each existentialist, with different emphasis, speaks about the issue of freedom (Roswantoro, 2008).

The existence of freedom, choice, consequences, and responsibility shows that there is something higher than humans. Something beyond human reach but existing together with human existence this is what Jaspers calls transcendence. Humans need symbols that lead to understanding existence and transcendence; this is what Karl Jaspers calls chiffre. Chiffre is a mediator between existence and transcendence, where divinity remains hidden, but humans can read through existence with freedom. Karl Jaspers thought that humans are not only free and will encounter limitations, because in freedom everyone will definitely encounter limit situations that accompany this freedom (Waskito et al., 2017).

According to Karl Jaspers, modern humans face a number of significant existential challenges. As one of the main figures of the philosophy of existentialism, Jaspers really emphasized the importance of contemplating the conditions of human existence amidst the reality of life, which often feels absurd and meaningless. Jaspers saw that modern humans often lose grip on the greater meaning and purpose of life. In the midst of technological progress, industrialization, and rationalization, humans tend to get caught up in their daily routines and forget the basic questions about their existence.

Modernity has created human alienation from themselves, from each other, and from nature. Humans live in an increasingly fragmented world and have lost connection with the transcendent or spiritual. As a result, many people feel existentially empty. Although modernity promises freedom, Jaspers argues that true freedom is threatened. Humans are trapped in large systems such as bureaucracy, technocracy, and capitalism that stifle authentic individual freedom.

Jaspers proposed the concept of "borderline situations" (Grenzsituationen), which refers to fundamental experiences such

as suffering, guilt, struggle, and death. These situations bring humans face-to-face with their fragile existence and raise fundamental questions about life. To overcome the existential crisis, Jaspers calls for the need for modern humans to seek transcendent meaning that goes beyond the limits of mere rational thinking. He emphasized the importance of openness to the spiritual and metaphysical dimensions to find the eternal meaning and purpose of life (Jaspers, 1971).

Therefore, Jaspers invites modern humans to fight alienation, superficiality, and determinism by developing a deeper existential awareness. Only by reflecting on the conditions of our existence and daring to embrace freedom and responsibility authentically can humans find the true meaning of life amidst the challenges of modernity

## E. CONCLUSION

Karl Jaspers, one of the most influential existentialist thinkers of the 20th century, had a unique understanding of the modern human condition. According to Jaspers, modern humans have the challenge of facing their freedom and responsibilities with courage and moral integrity while seeking authentic meaning and purpose in life in the borderline situations they face. Only by developing greater existential awareness and taking responsibility for their own existence can modern humans find true wholeness and fulfillment in life. Jaspers invites modern humans to fight alienation, superficiality, and determinism by developing a deeper existential awareness. Only by reflecting on the conditions of our existence and daring to embrace freedom and responsibility authentically can humans find the true meaning of life amidst the challenges of modernity.

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