

KARL JASPERS
From Selfhood to Being

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INTRODUCTION

1. Opening

In one of his lectures on philosophical intuition, Henri Bergson claimed that every great philosopher ultimately aimed to express in his writings one simple intuition, a point where there “is something simple, infinitely simple, so extraordinarily simple, that the philosopher has never succeeded in saying it. And that is why he went on talking all his life.”¹ That this statement of Bergson’s also appears to be true of the philosophy of Karl Jaspers. This philosophy, that was formulated against the background of the *fin de siècle*, and that dealt with such a wide range of issues—metaphysics, ethics, politics, education, religion, history, art, and more—wished to contend with one fundamental problem: the ability of modern human beings to establish a metaphysical consciousness.² The heart of this book will clarify the formation of metaphysical consciousness in Jaspers’s writings between 1910 and 1947.

The basis of metaphysical consciousness in Jaspers’s thought is the human search for the meaning of life and existence (*Dasein*). This search is grounded in the discontent that accompanies people and in the intuition that there exists some entity beyond the immediate reality in which people live and act. This intuition becomes an evident awareness in Jaspers’s thought. On the one hand, it expresses people’s endeavor to elucidate the discontent they experience within being.

On the other hand, it reflects people’s position in the face of the possibility of the existence of a transcendental entity whose boundaries exceed the realm in which human existence operates. Jaspers’s thought is rooted in the Kantian ethos according to which people act as autonomous entities and create in their consciousness the reality in which they live, but at the same time it challenges Immanuel Kant’s approach that human consciousness has no access to “the thing-in-itself.”

Understanding that metaphysics is embedded in the human condition does not enable people to escape their basic tasks in existence for another reality, which in their distress they can envisage as satisfying and perfect. The hold of metaphysical consciousness over immanence entails the possibility in principle that the feeling of discontent, or more precisely the objective aspects of this feeling, will be accessible to the instrument of formal consciousness. This datum creates what I call throughout this study the “epistemological viewpoint,” portraying Jaspers’s

attempt to encompass what can be known about his topics of discussion, even only partially. For instance, as part of his perception of the field of psychopathology, Jaspers attributed great importance to knowing the physical symptoms of a mental disorder; in his book *Psychology of Worldviews* he attempted to ground his arguments on selfhood in the general and structural features of the phenomenon of multiple worldviews; and in his later philosophical writings he dealt consistently with illuminating the contribution of the objective worldview of the consciousness to the clarification of the issues under discussion: Existenz, the world, and Being.

The epistemological viewpoint does not contradict the fundamental intuition accompanying Jaspers's searches, and we should not view it as an attempt to present a substitute for intuition, which as such needs no establishment in the tools of consciousness. Jaspers's definition that philosophy "rejects the mythos that gave it birth" and presents an argued and rational understanding in contrast to the dreams and deceptions of the history books³ may explain the nature of the epistemological viewpoint in his thought. It uses rational tools to clarify the irrational source of philosophy, whether myth or intuition.

However, Jaspers did not view the experience of discontent as a final state of human existence. His primary aim was to escape this discontent and to formulate, on the basis of the primary intuition regarding the existence of a transcendental entity, an explicit philosophical consciousness of this entity. The understanding that the very experience of discontent indicates the reality of the thing whose absence a person senses served as a basis for what I call throughout the book "the ontological viewpoint." This viewpoint portrays the intention of the consciousness to explicate the existence of the thing at the center of the discussion. At the same time, this consciousness is accompanied by the awareness of the limitations of rational thought in relation to this entity, which Jaspers believed contained transcendent aspects, such that by their very definition they cannot be accessible to people's perception and understanding. For instance, Jaspers argued that the unique personality of each mental patient is not revealed through the physical manifestations of his or her condition, and in his philosophical writing he discussed the limitations of consciousness and its inability to provide complete understanding of Existenz and of transcendence.

Unlike the epistemological viewpoint, which seeks to expose the general and objective aspects of the object and to turn them into a conscious element of the discussion, the ontological viewpoint appeals to its object's particular aspects, and has intuitive certainty of its reality. The transcendental aspects of this entity were perceived as inexplicable using the instruments of consciousness or even those of philosophy, and this obliges the ontological viewpoint to maintain the inexplicable element on which metaphysical consciousness is based. While the presence of the epistemological viewpoint in Jaspers's thought helped clarify the boundaries of the accessibility of human consciousness to the "thing-in-itself," the ontological viewpoint reflected the philosophical position regarding the gap between the

particular nature of a human being's search for experience and the perfection of experience as the "thing-in-itself."

Jasper's statement that philosophy "also rejects theology" due to its connection to revelation⁴ may illuminate a crucial facet of the ontological viewpoint. Philosophy cannot accept the presence of the transcendental experience on which theological thought is based as a datum that is taken for granted. In particular, it cannot accept the attempt to characterize this experience in a concrete way that could be perceived as formal knowledge about transcendence. It is true that, like theology, metaphysical philosophical consciousness recognizes the existence of a transcendental being. However, metaphysical consciousness is not grounded in an approach according to which recognition of a transcendental entity is detached from the unique character of the person establishing a relation toward Being. Jaspers's philosophical effort to regard revelation as "a historic form of phenomenal transcendence,"⁵ grounding it in the immanent starting point of the person relating to it, may cause the loss of revelation's universal character, a character that theology sometimes aims to prove. The concept of historicity will be discussed in Chapter Six. However, only in this way may revelation be a significant component in the framework of philosophical consciousness aimed at explicating the entity of an experience beyond the boundaries of immanence.

Just as mythology, theology, and philosophy were for Jaspers three spheres that together form metaphysics and that exist in constant tension, so, too, we must recognize the inseparability of the two viewpoints, epistemological and ontological, presented in this book as founding elements of the metaphysical consciousness that develops in his thinking. As Jasper says:

Philosophical metaphysics tried by pondering transcendence in existence, by thoughts that reach the ultimate origins and limits of existence, turn somersaults, and require present fulfillment by a historic Existenz. *In philosophical metaphysics we adopt mythical reality from everywhere and seek to understand what is alien to us in mythology and revelation* [emphasis mine].⁶

Metaphysics in Jaspers's thought is not presented as based on objective foundations that may enable communications between people (Jaspers's perception of communications will be discussed in Chapter Five), but as an experience where people meets themselves each time while clarifying their disposition vis-à-vis transcendence.⁷ This process can serve as a basis for an illusion, since neither transcendence nor self can be fully philosophically explicated. However, Jaspers claimed that the effort entailed in fulfilling this double task and the insights formulated as a result may cause a person to

“abysmally delude himself, but as a thinker he can also find there his most profound self-assurance”.⁸

This process of forming the metaphysical consciousness in Jaspers’s thought ultimately reflects the human attempt to find meaning in existence primarily by relying on the intuition about the existence of a transcendental being. At the same time, the reality of this entity is not perceived in Jaspers’s thought as being limited to the relations of people toward it, but instead it exists in its own right, as the “thing-in-itself.”

2. Periodization of Jaspers’s Works

Metaphysical consciousness in Jaspers’s works originates in two basic drives: to elucidate selfhood and to explicate being. Jaspers’s dealing with these two drives was expressed in the works published in the two periods of his life discussed in this book: the medical-psychological period (1910–1919) and the philosophical period (1932–1947), during which his main philosophical works were written. His writings from the third period, the socio-political period, not discussed in this book, include publications written after the Second World War.⁹ In this period, Jaspers showed, both in the theoretical issues he discussed and in his participation in official committees, a public awareness that was not typical of his earlier periods, and this had a deep impact on the nature and contents of his writings.

The criterion for distinguishing the periods is mainly thematic. It relies on the continuity or centrality of the topic under discussion. The writings from the first period, dealing with selfhood, will be discussed in the first part of this book, *Explication of Selfhood*. The second period, characterized by philosophical writing, displayed a displacement of selfhood from the heart of the discussion, in favor of the explication of Being. This period will be discussed in the third and final part of the book, *Explication of Being*. A discussion of the thematic and methodological aspects of the transition from the first to the second period will appear in the second part of this book, *Transition Mechanisms*.

A. The Medical-Psychological Period

During the first period of his writings, Jaspers wrote articles about psychiatry (1910–1913), and the books *General Psychopathology* (1913) and *Psychology of World Views* (1919). Along with his practice and academic study of medical issues related to mental illness, and against the background of positivistic approaches in science in general and in contrast to them, in this period Jaspers tended to examine different aspects related to the patient’s self and private world.

The book *Psychology of World Views*, which Jaspers wrote after leaving the field of psychopathology, expressed his wish to obtain a wider view of human beings, beyond the boundaries of mental psychopathology. The choice to examine

the subjective experience of the individual from a point of view of normality opened new horizons for Jaspers, enabling him to examine more abstract aspects of this experience. At the same time, Jaspers consistently avoided exploring aspects related to the concrete reality in which the subjective entity under discussion lived and operated. These features of the discussion of selfhood in this book testify to the development that occurred in Jaspers's approach compared with his earlier writings. His turning to the abstract aspects of selfhood indicated the philosophical direction he was about to adopt in the coming years. Jaspers himself described this book with hindsight as "my unconscious way to philosophy."¹⁰ However, the separation of the discussion of selfhood from the discussion of concrete reality and the absence of additional aspects that Jaspers saw as essential for philosophical discussion do not enable us to include this book in the second period, when his philosophical writings were developed.

Relatively little research literature exists about Jaspers's writings from the medical-psychological period, and it usually does not deal with the challenge of linking them to his philosophical thought. We may assume that the research literature perceived these early writings as irrelevant to understanding Jaspers's philosophy. Unlike the common approach, the interpretation I offer in this book to these writings deals with the challenge of revealing the complex relation between them and his later thought, and focuses on the perception of selfhood (*Selbstsein*) developed in them.

B. The Philosophical Period

The second period of Jaspers's writings began in the early nineteen thirties, with the publication of *Philosophy* (1932), and it includes his main writings up to the end of the Second World War: *Reason and Existenz* (1935), *Philosophy of Existence* (1938), and *Out of Truth* (1946). In this period, Jaspers, appointed in 1920 as Professor of Philosophy at Heidelberg University, strengthened his position as a philosopher dealing with classic philosophical issues such as consciousness, human beings, the world, and Being. In his writings from this period, Jaspers continued to discuss the issue of selfhood that had interested him already in his early work, and he even dealt with it in greater depth compared with the first period. However, the main issue that interested him during the second period was clarifying Being and transcendence.

Both these periods are at the center of this study, which will show their continuity and development.

C. The Socio-Political Period

In the third period, encompassing the works written after the Second World War—mainly essays and political books—Jaspers became a thinker familiar to the

general public.¹¹ Even when consciously addressing a wide audience of readers, using a simple and flowing style, and trying to participate in the formation of the new social and cultural reality, Jaspers never stopped viewing himself as a philosopher, and in this period he even wrote *Philosophical faith in the face of Revelation*. Jaspers redefined his thinking and changed its name from “philosophy of existence” to “philosophy of reason”—a name he believed expressed the “age old essence” (*uralte Wesen*) of philosophy.¹² However, this book is the exception that proves the rule of this period, when Jaspers discussed mainly social issues that interested Germany after the war: educating the youth; the idea of academia; the question of German guilt; the conditions and possibilities of humanism in the new political and social situation; and especially the question of the role and essence of reason and philosophy in the new reality.¹³ In this period Jaspers was prominent among German thinkers seeking to establish a new identity and to found a “different Germany” on the basis of cosmopolitan values and universal ideals.¹⁴ The new Humanism to whose development he wished to contribute, presented human freedom and its decisions regarding the truth and necessity of values as the corner stone supporting everything. In his introduction to the periodical *Die Wandlung*, reflecting his personal experiences and value decisions, Jaspers formulated the principles of this approach:

By no means can we say that we have already lost everything. As long as we have not wasted in desperate anger everything we could have had as something that cannot be lost: the element of history—for us [this element is] first and foremost a thousand years of German history, and then the history of the West and finally the history of the whole of humanity... We will gain contact with everything human beings have experienced all over the world in the most extreme form. A German outcast in his homeland can find his support in the wide spaces of this humanity [emphasis mine].¹⁵

In his work written after the war, Jaspers sought to express the profound political and cultural changes Germany experienced after the war. Although there exists significant influence of his early work on the writings of this period, these works should be examined first and foremost against the background of the challenges of the period when they were written.¹⁶ This sort of study requires a different methodology and poses different questions than those on which this book focuses, and this book will concentrate only on the works from the first two periods.

3. Philosophizing Framework

Jaspers opened the three-volume work *Philosophy* with the question “What is Being?,” and stated that this question arose from the basic situation of people in the world.¹⁷ This is not just one of many questions people ask about existence, but

a fundamental question (*Grundfrage*) relating to what philosophy has discussed since its inception.¹⁸ Jaspers listed three aims derived from the question of Being: philosophical world orientation, self-fulfillment and the openness toward transcendence¹⁹, and devoted to each of these aims a separate volume: (1) *Philosophical World Orientation*; (2) *Existential Elucidation*; (3) *Metaphysics*. The three volumes, discussing the three classic issues of philosophy—world, humanity and God—include all the issues Jaspers's thought discussed in its different periods. The fact that he chose to present the framework of his discussion in *Philosophy* (1932) is no accident. This book, written after *Psychology of World Views* (1919), was undoubtedly Jaspers's "visiting card," through which he wished to distance himself from the fields of psychiatry and psychology, and turn to the professional study of philosophy. *Philosophy* is in many ways the most mature and systematic of Jaspers's works, and he himself defined it as "closest to my heart".²⁰

Alongside the three areas of philosophy, Jaspers presented three types of existence that were destined to become the basic distinctions on which his philosophy was based: "objective Being," "subjective Being" and "Being-in-itself." Objective Being (*Objektsein*) expressed everything accessible to human consciousness and everything that can become "known being" (*Gewußtsein*) through science. Subjective being (*Ichsein*) is separate from the object being and expresses the unmediated layer of individual human existence.

When people think about their existence in the abstract, they see it as an object, they become in their eyes Being-in-itself (*Ansichsein*) and see all other beings as subject to it.²¹ Just as the three areas of philosophy are not separate from each other, but constitute one whole, so also the three forms of existence are not separate from each other, but together portray the complex where human life occurs. So the question of Being is a sort of *organon* of Jaspers's whole philosophy, meaning that it defines the objects about which he philosophizes, and their combination forms the whole of his thought.

Jaspers apparently based this basic division of fields of philosophy on Kant's division into the three transcendental ideas of pure reason: the idea of the knowledge of the world, which is the absolute idea of all the conditions of the phenomena; the idea of the study of the soul, which is the idea of humanity as the final subject of all philosophy; and the idea for knowing God, which is the total unity of the conditions of all objects.

The transcendentalism through which Kant defined the three ideas shows that unlike the categories, they cannot be derived from the mind, and they do not refer directly to the objects of the mind as such.²² In addition, I argue that the relation between Kant's ideas of reason and categories of mind is similar in principle to that between Jaspers's three areas of philosophy and the disciplines that deal with them formally. Just as Kant's philosophy perceived the ideas as complementing for reason what was missing in the categories of mind, which apply only to experience, so Jaspers perceived "philosophical world orientation," "existential

elucidation,” and “metaphysics” as complementing the three disciplines of their background: science, whose object is the world; psychology, whose object is the spiritual life; and theology, whose object is religion. While Jaspers never indicated his attitude toward Kant’s distinctions, the use he made of them goes beyond the adoption of an efficient method of organization, and expresses the anchor he found in this philosophy that continued to guide him when he wrote his different works.²³

4. Philosophical Method

Alongside the obvious relation of Jaspers’s philosophical framework to Kant’s basic concepts, we can also observe a certain proximity between these two thinkers in their philosophical method. According to Kant’s transcendental method, people cannot achieve knowledge of any state of affairs without revealing the general and a-priori system of rules on which it relies.²⁴ Like Kant’s transcendental method, Jaspers’s method of transcending (*Transzendieren*) also aims to clarify the fundamental premises or a-priori certain logic on which philosophizing is based. This method enabled Jaspers not to see the philosophical framework set out in *Philosophy* as a starting point, but already as the result or the implementation of his method of transcending. In this respect, the three areas included in this framework: (1) Philosophical World Orientation, (2) Existential Elucidation, and (3) Metaphysics, should be seen as an objective framework within which the fields of science, psychology, and religion are rooted.

(1) In *Philosophical World Orientation*, the method of transcending is applied to everything that can be scientifically objectified. The German word *Wissenschaft*, meaning science, has a much wider range of meaning than the English word “science,” which is usually used to mean the exact sciences. The German term indicates a process of methodical investigation both of human existence with all its theoretical and practical aspects, whose results are universal knowledge that can be phrased using accurate definitions. Sometimes this term appears as “science in general” (*Wissenschaft überhaupt*), in contrast to science whose object is single and more limited (*Einzelwissenschaft*).²⁵ The transcendence from this framework should have applied to specific contents of human existence in the world. However, Jaspers clarified that it is based on the understanding that the Kantian perception sees the world as a disintegrating “phenomenon.”²⁶

The transcendence in philosophical world orientation is primary and limited in the horizons it aims at, compared with the two following transcendences, but it serves as an introduction and a condition for them. This transcendence is essential in philosophy aimed at explicating “Being” and “transcendence,” as is demonstrated in the following passage:

We search for coming to the limits that we expect, for the world, *as appearance, does not rest on its laurels, does not have a self-subsistent existence...* These boundaries, in their concrete form, do not allow us to ignore them. *I do not recognize them from general knowledge but I become aware of them only through empirical reality itself.* The more world experience [*Welterfahrung*] is fulfilled in theoretical and practical terms the more lucid is the manner of transcending the world. Without world there exists no transcendence [emphasis mine].²⁷

(2) Within *Existential Elucidation*, the method of transcending is applied to the perception of the individual as a Being existing in a concrete reality in order to expose its selfhood in its peculiar specificity.²⁸ Jaspers presented the experience of Existenz that was shaped in this framework as what exists beyond objectivity but within the boundaries of immanent reality.²⁹ In this respect, the concept of Existenz combines the perception of the individual as a unique being that cannot be generalized, and the understanding that this individual can transcend the level of objectivity and even consolidate a relation toward transcendence.

Jaspers's argument that Existenz itself cannot be understood, but instead reveals to philosophy the incomprehensible (*Unverstehbare*)³⁰, encompasses the basic difference separating the two philosophical frameworks. While in *Philosophical World Orientation* reality and the action of the individual's mind are two sides of the same coin, in *Existential Elucidation* reality and thought are separate, so that what is considered universal in *Philosophical World Orientation* is no longer perceived as such. In *Existential Elucidation*, the one-time uniqueness of individuals is perceived as a basis that enables them to transcend the boundaries of empirical reality. Existenz, as the name for this uniqueness, becomes possible only in this boundary, where it is an experience that is not an individual case of generality. So it is perceived as inaccessible to the tools of objective reason.

(3) In *Metaphysics*, the method of transcending serves as an instrument to breach the other philosophical frameworks, *Philosophical World Orientation* and *Existential Elucidation*, in order to achieve a certainty that does not depend on existence and to form a relation toward transcendence. However, the act of transcending in *Metaphysics* is only possible by Existenz that has achieved philosophical world orientation and whose selfhood is clear to itself.³¹ The implementation of the method of transcending in the two philosophical frameworks presented above should be seen as a basis and a preparation for its implementation in *Metaphysics*. The concept of "transcendence" (*Transzendenz*), whose elucidation is at the heart of the philosophical framework of *Metaphysics*, indicates the existence of a Being that is not existence (*Dasein*), consciousness (*Bewusstsein*), or Existenz. Transcendence, transcending all of these, represents what will never become an object, the complete contrast to finality and the expectation and openness to everything that formal consciousness cannot access.³²

The three forms of transcending presented above are anchored in the idea of the “whole” (*Ganze*).³³ This idea has two faces: the subjective face is based on the origin of the “whole” being in the individual’s drive to reveal the meaning of Being, and we must understand it as being beyond all forms of objectivity. The objective face of the “whole” is based on serving as an object for the person’s desire. This desire does not enable people to be satisfied with their boundaries and directs them to things beyond themselves. The “whole” is perceived in Jaspers’s thought as a substrate in which philosophy is anchored, and that motivates it, and at the same time as a horizon that it constantly aims to approach in order to become an explicit element in people’s consciousness.

The anchoring of the method of transcending in the idea of the “whole” supports the understanding of the three contexts of philosophizing as not only derivatives of different disciplines but as parts of a comprehensive whole that exists beyond them. This shows another similarity between Jaspers and Kant, who deduced from his transcendental dialectic the following:

We easily see that pure reason has no other aim than the absolute totality of synthesis on the side of conditions, and that reason has nothing to do with absolute completeness from the side of the conditioned. For it needs only the former series in order to presuppose the whole series of conditions and thereby give it to the understanding a priori.

...Finally we also come to be aware that a *certain connection and unity* showing itself among the transcendental ideas themselves and that pure reason by means of it brings all its cognitions into a system. To progress from the cognition of oneself (of the soul) to cognition of the world, and, by means of this, to the original being, is so natural that this progression appears similar to the logical advance of reason from premises to conclusion [emphasis mine].³⁴

Although Jaspers’s thought reflects the aim to make the “thing-in-itself” explicit, he avoids presenting his method of transcending as an instrument whose use guarantees the solution of the question of Being. The definition of the method of transcending as “only an act, not a result”³⁵ strengthens the understanding that this method served mainly as an instrument to reveal the three facets of the human being: the wish to make the world familiar, the drive to consolidate selfhood, and the search for God.³⁶ The focus on these aspects indicates that Jaspers’s thought did not concentrate on consolidating the contents to fill metaphysical consciousness, but with revealing the conditions of consciousness or even the state of mind (*Stimmung*) that could facilitate the achieving of this consciousness. Jaspers aims to explicate the ways a person could imagine (*Vergehenwärtigen*) the very possibility of the existence of an absolute being. He also stressed that even within the act of transcending implemented in the realm of metaphysics, the

philosopher remains in dialectic that leaves him in a constant contradiction whose solution, were it possible, would empty transcendence of meaning.³⁷ In this respect, the method of transcending serves as a means for marking new targets for philosophy, which ensures that metaphysical consciousness is subject to a constant process of development. Because it remains unanswered, the question of Being serves as a motivation and as an urge for a mode of being where philosophizing accompanies experience of reality.

5. Philosophical Experience of Boundary

Jaspers's method of transcending relies on the experience of boundary that is one of the primary insights that characterize his thought throughout the different periods. This experience has two aspects: first and foremost it expresses the need of individuals to constantly evaluate the entirety of insights and experiences they have accumulated so far, and to formulate them as assets at their disposal in the future. But what is perceived as an asset is not translated into an experience of self satisfaction or what Jaspers defined as "calmness" (*Gelassenheit*) regarding people's achievements. The basic drive motivating people to appraise their achievements and to focus on what has not yet been achieved reflects the condition of philosophizing that aims to create an approach that unifies all the different philosophical insights.³⁸ Without this drive, what has already been achieved could become fossilized and lose its creative power. The other aspect of the boundary experience was aimed at marking new targets for philosophizing and presenting them to the individual as a demand for perfection, since even if this perfection cannot be achieved, it drives people and does not let them stand still. The very search for perfection and the explication of the experience in its absence are what formulate, in Jaspers's thought, the way for creating a metaphysical consciousness.

In addition, philosophical experience of the boundary reflected the target at which philosophizing was aimed in each of the stages of the development of Jaspers's thought: In *General Psychopathology* this experience served as a basis for determining the boundaries of the science of psychiatry and for distinguishing them from what was known as "the person in his individuality and wholeness."³⁹ In *Psychology of World Views* this experience was at the basis of the aim "to determine the boundaries of our mental life."⁴⁰ In *Philosophical World Orientation* it served as a means for determining the relation between science and philosophy. In *Existential Elucidation* it served to redraw the boundaries between the world and the ways of knowing the particular experience of Existenz. In *Metaphysics* this experience helped clarify the awareness of the limitations of the consciousness grounded in the selfhood of Existenz alone, an awareness that led it to create a relation toward transcendence that exists beyond it. Finally, in *Out of Truth* the boundary experience, which was at the basis of the perception of the

“encompassing,” helped discern the relation between the immanent and transcendent aspects of Being.

The duality typical of the different expressions of the boundary experience, namely between what philosophizing has already achieved and what is perceived as a perfection not yet achieved, is at the basis of the distinction Jaspers presented between contextual boundaries (*jeweilige Grenzen*) and boundaries in principle (*prinzipielle Grenzen*). The contextual boundaries can be crossed, and they present a challenge for scholars and philosophers, even if they cannot serve as starting points for philosophy. The boundaries in principle, however, dispute the world view as a phenomenon, and scientific research reaches the limit of its ability. But although the boundaries in principle denote the end of the area that can be studied using formal tools of consciousness, they open for people the option of philosophical transcending. According to Jaspers, “every boundary immediately raises the question what is beyond it.”⁴¹ Following the relation to the philosophical framework established by Kant, Jaspers’s distinction between “contextual boundaries” and “boundaries in principle” is apparently parallel to two boundary concepts in Kant: the barrier or limit (*Schranke*) and the boundary (*Grenz*). Kant states:

Boundaries (*Grenzen*) (in external things) always presuppose a space that is found outside a certain fixed location, and that encloses that location; limits (*Schranken*) require nothing of that kind, but are mere negations that affect a magnitude insofar as it does not possess absolute completeness. Our reason, however, sees around itself as it were a space for the cognition of things in themselves, although it can never have determined concepts of those things and is limited to appearance alone.⁴²

The “limit” is a sort of “stop sign” indicating the point up to which a person can reach, and no further. The “boundary,” in contrast, turns the discussion to what happens within its framework, perceived as a sign of the end of the realm of experience at a person’s disposal. Like the concept of “limit,” the concept of “boundary” also reflects the end of the area of human experience. From an ontological point of view, we apparently cannot go beyond the “boundary,” just as we cannot break through the “limit.” However, standing at the edge of the “boundary” does not indicate the end of our possible experiences, since from that boundary point are visible the wide horizons surrounding our existence that are not included within our experiential consciousness. In Kant’s terms, we cannot cross the boundaries with our reason, but unlike the “limit,” in the “boundary” people have an idea about the existence of a space beyond us, a space where in Kant’s opinion human consciousness locates the “thing-in-itself.” Ultimately the concept of the “limit” is built by elimination, while the positive concept of

“boundary” originates in a sort of intuition that sees it as a sign of the area of internal and external space.⁴³

Jaspers used the idea of the “boundary” in order to determine the limits of philosophy from which the method of transcending would be implemented was not alien to the usage Kant made of his two boundary terms. Kant used the negative “limit” term to distinguish between the borders of mathematical and natural sciences knowledge and the borders of metaphysics: in the first, the meaning of the restriction is that the knowledge existing in these areas has not yet reached completion, although it is in a constant state of accretion. In these borders there exists movement from one conditioned thing to another. Kant called the concepts determined in these areas dogmatic, in the sense that they cannot be transcended by possible experience,⁴⁴ since he saw their borders as reflecting the limitations of the phenomenon and the way it is represented in our consciousness.⁴⁵ In contrast to the restriction existing in empirical areas of knowledge, in metaphysics the boundary is mainly positive, and as such it creates an insurmountable gap between what is known and what is not known, and must limit itself. In this context the essence of reason is exhausted in the relation to what is beyond it. This relation reflects the effort of reason to extend its boundaries in order to approach what is beyond the “boundary”—although this experience is itself accompanied by the awareness of reason that it cannot cross the boundary between itself and the experience beyond it.

Kant’s philosophy was for Jaspers not only a great source of inspiration, from which and against which he philosophized, but it also provided him with instruments to formulate his own philosophy. Kant’s influence on Jaspers is significantly greater in depth and breadth to the influences he absorbed from other philosophers.⁴⁶ However, Jaspers did not remain committed to the borders set by Kant’s philosophy, and often Kant’s ideas served as vessels into which he poured new and even contrasting contents than those where they first appeared. Jaspers apparently wished to transcend Kant’s philosophy in one step, or alternately to withdraw from it by one step: unlike Kant, who placed at the center of his work the discussion of consciousness and revealing its boundaries, Jaspers’s thought focused on the person bearing this consciousness. This approach helped Jaspers reveal additional forms of human experience in existence, which he thought reflected the human tendency to transcend itself.

The boundary experience and the method of transcending it show us that at the basis of Jaspers’s attempt to form a metaphysical consciousness were the philosophical goals he set himself but had not yet achieved. The very experience of the absence of perfection and its role in determining the targets of philosophy was, for Jaspers, evidence of the reality of perfection itself. In this respect the method of transcending served not only as a “limit” to remaining in what had already been achieved, but also as a means that could lead the philosophers each time to new districts beyond the “boundary” where they were standing.

6. Methodological Approach

In his retrospective essay “About My Philosophy,” Jaspers described the two elements to which philosophical practice is directed: the “being” and the “self.” As he writes:

The philosophical mediation is an execution (*Vollzug*) where I reach the *experience* and *myself*. This is no calm thought where I deal with an object without involvement. Philosophizing is the praxis of my own thinking source in which the full essence of the human is realized in individual people. The peak of the praxis is the internal action (*inneres Handeln*) through which I become what I am. [This action] is *making the experience discoverable* (*Offerbarwerden*), *it is the activity of the selfhood* (*Selbstein*) *which is at the same time experienced as passivity in the turning into the given to yourself* (*Sichgeschenktwerden*) [emphasis mine].⁴⁷

These two components of philosophical practice appear in this book as central axes around which Jaspers’s intellectual biography developed, and as establishing elements of the metaphysical consciousness he expounded. During the earlier stages, Jaspers dealt with the element of “self” from different points of view. This element reached its climax in Jaspers’s philosophical writings with the establishment of the philosophy of existence. The discussion of “Being” took place alongside the discussion of selfhood. However, difficulties that arose in this framework pushed aside the selfhood from the center of the philosophical discussion, and Jaspers formulated a new philosophical framework, at whose center were the concepts of “Being” and “transcendence.” In truth, the selfhood never ceased to interest Jaspers. But its philosophical explication showed him that behind the person’s original drive to reach self-understanding pulsed another drive, deeper and more basic, leading people to search for meaning and intent beyond the boundaries of their self-being. This book aims to show that the two basic philosophical urges—the urge to explicate selfhood and the urge to form a relation toward Being and transcendence—were interlinked and simultaneously influenced the development of Jaspers’s thought in its entirety. The division of Jaspers’s work into periods should be seen mainly as playing a methodical role.

The order of issues discussed in the book’s chapters is determined largely on a chronological basis. By ordering the material in this way, the development of Jaspers’s ideas is examined from a genealogical point of view—what preceded what, which ideas served as a basis for later and more mature ideas, and what the different contexts added to explicating the philosophical questions under discussion. This approach, viewing the order of the ideas’ appearance as critical for their understanding, aims to deal with the difficulty raised by Jaspers’s thought—a thought that does not present its themes in a complete and systematic

way, and necessitates picking out the arguments that appeared in different contexts while clarifying these contexts. The genealogical point of view aims to reveal the dynamic of the development of Jaspers's philosophy from the writings that appeared in the psychiatric period up to those written in the philosophical period.

This approach is not sufficient, since a purely genealogical study would limit the research to "the history of Jaspers's philosophy" without discussing the original issues developed in his thought. Alongside the genealogical issue, sometimes in parallel and sometimes using it as a starting point, the different philosophical issues will be examined from a thematic point of view. One crucial aspect that the thematic examination will deal with throughout the book is the dependence of the understanding of ideas that appeared in the early writings on those that appeared in later writings. However, this dependence is not a disadvantage in the context of a discussion that conducts an immanent phenomenological explication of the philosophical text. The understanding that occurs in this sort of discussion is always "temporary," and reflects the discussion at the stage when it appeared, but will later be formulated differently, more accurately, in the more advanced stages of explication.

The presence of the two viewpoints, genealogical and thematic, inevitably creates tension not only between the different parts of the book, but also within each of the chapters. This tension originates in the basic fact of the hermeneutical circle that for describing the stages of development requires the writer to have already a thematic understanding of the issues discussed, but this understanding only becomes clear to the reader after completing the entire move, at the end of the book. We should aim to understand the study as one whole, like the way Jaspers wished his book *Philosophy* to be read:

The meaning of philosophizing is a single thought, ineffable as such: the *consciousness of being* [*Seinsbewusstsein*]. In this work it ought to be approachable from every chapter; each should be the *whole in detail*, though leaving dark what will first illuminate itself through the rest [emphasis in the original].⁴⁸

The book focuses then on clarifying Jaspers's wide-ranging work, first and foremost from within itself and from studying the complex mutual relations between its parts. The choice to conduct a critical phenomenological explication of the philosophical text makes the writings of the philosopher himself the focus and main sources for the study. The research seeks to illuminate the different facets of Jaspers's thought and its dynamic motion through an immanent penetration of Jaspers's thought as reflected in his writings, without requiring an external justification and without proposing a critical judgment of the validity of his arguments. This understanding of the role of the interpreter is at the basis of the decision not to deal in this book with questions about the range of influences

on Jaspers's thought, and not to try to discover the similarities and differences between him and other thinkers of the existentialist tradition, or to locate his work within the historical context of his time.

The scholarly literature about Jaspers focuses mainly on his philosophical writings, and places special emphasis on the three-part work *Philosophy*—the first and most systematic of them. This literature, a large part of which was written during Jaspers's lifetime, contains two main trends: one aims at a particular issue and presents an immanent interpretation of the sources dealing with it directly. Among the authors belonging to this trend we can list leading scholars of Jaspers's work: Richard Wisser, who discussed the concept of truth; Leonard Ehrlich and Aloys Klein, who dealt with perceptions of faith and religion; Sebastian Samay, who discussed questions of objectivity and science; Hans Kunz and Alan M. Olson, who focused on transcendence; and Kurt Salamun, who illuminated the ethical aspect. The other trend is an attempt to formulate a general impression of Jaspers's thought, often without grounding in a systematic explication of his writings. The second trend can be exemplified by the work of Fritz Heinemann, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, Heinrich Knittermyer, and others.⁴⁹ The literature included in these two trends does not address philosophically Jaspers's early works, dealing with psychiatry, and the ideas developed in *Psychology of World Views* are hardly mentioned.⁵⁰ Apart from the clear break with these early works, characteristic of most interpretations in both trends, they lack an integrative view of Jaspers's work grounded in an analysis of his entire corpus.

However, despite the large scope of scholarly literature in the two trends presented above, indicating the interest and challenge Jaspers presented to those who dealt with his work, it would be difficult to remain unaware that Jaspers's thought remained to a large extent on the margins of the philosophical discourse of the past few decades. This phenomenon may be explained in several ways. The first explanation involves the character and great influence of Martin Heidegger. Jaspers was Heidegger's contemporary, and they were both perceived as representing the German existentialist current. The dominance achieved by Heidegger with the publication of his book *Being and Time* in 1927, five years before the appearance of Jaspers's *Philosophy* in 1932, made gaining their place and status quite difficult for Jaspers and other contemporary philosophers. Even the thought of Husserl, Heidegger's teacher, was gradually pushed aside from the philosophical discourse, while Heidegger's gained a status and importance that was already indisputable, and even today is at the center of philosophical activity. While Jaspers had to deal with the ban on publishing his writings in Nazi Germany, Heidegger, who joined the Nazi party, continued to publish and establish his status in Germany during the Nazi regime's years in power. It was during the nineteen thirties and forties, when Jaspers's philosophical writing reached its maturity that his way to the contemporary philosophical discourse was barred, even before his thought became available for public criticism.

Alongside this historical-biographical explanation, we can suggest another explanation for the relatively marginal status of Jaspers's philosophy. This explanation involves his style of writing and the premises on which his thought was based. Jaspers deliberately avoided coining distinct philosophical terms, and in practice allowed his ideas and concepts to draw their meaning from the general context in which they appeared. This approach contributed to the unsystematic nature of his thought, and made expressing his already complex and vague ideas difficult, which often left his readers with the impression that they were not accessible to rational analysis.⁵¹ In this respect we can argue that Jaspers's philosophy gave its readers a task that he himself did not achieve: exposing the basic structures and formulating the fundamental concepts in which it was grounded. Jaspers largely missed one of the central challenges facing any philosopher: presenting efficient thought patterns or instruments to help deal with philosophical problems even outside the boundaries of his thought.⁵² Readers undertaking the challenge of Jaspers's complex philosophy are required to follow the development of Jaspers's ideas and concepts throughout his writings and formulate for themselves their overall meaning.

The interpretation I propose in this book attempts to deal with the challenge of revealing the unity of the world from which Jaspers wrote—from his beginnings as a young psychiatrist and up to his late maturity as a philosopher with his own original approach. The analysis wishes to complete what is missing in existing research literature about Jaspers, to conduct an immanent phenomenological explication of his writings, and at the same time to crystallize an integrative interpretation of the range of issues they discuss. Yet, this will not take place in a vacuum. The different approaches and interpretations in the secondary literature are perceived in this framework as part of Jaspers's text. In the interpretation offered in this book, and in the illumination of the different facets of Jaspers's thought, I will not argue with them and where possible will build upon them in offering an original interpretation of this philosophy. The current research literature about Jaspers largely focuses on different issues about his thought and activity in what was earlier called the "third period," and so it will not be discussed in this book. As explained, the research literature dealing with Jaspers's philosophical thought in the two first periods of his thought, mainly in the second period, was mostly written during his lifetime and so can be seen as part of the contemporary discourse. The discussion of the different interpretations of Jaspers's thought will be an integral part within the process of developing the interpretation offered in this study to Jaspers's thinking. The critique of these interpretations does not presume to offer the "correct method" of studying Jaspers's work, and does not claim exclusivity.⁵³

7. Structure

After the Introduction, this book is divided into three parts comprising eleven chapters: Part One, containing four chapters (One to Four), deals with the explication of selfhood. This part discusses the writings of the first period and some of those from the second period that deal with selfhood. The perception of selfhood presented in this part relies on the concepts “self” (*Selbst*), “mental” (*Seelische*), and “subjectivity” (*Subjektivität*) that typified Jaspers’s early writings. From the book *Philosophy* onwards, these terms made way for the concept of “Existenz.” This study seeks to illuminate the development of Jaspers’s thought by following his use of these concepts. It also studies the process of widening the philosophical framework from the pathological-psychological viewpoint in the early writings to the philosophical viewpoint typical of his writings in the second period, when Jaspers established his philosophy of existence. Jaspers, like other philosophers of the philosophical trend called Existentialism, preferred to remove this definition from his thought. The term “philosophy of existence” (*Existenzphilosophie*) was first coined by Friz Heinemann, considered one of the important German scholars of this trend already while it was in formation, in his book *New Way of Philosophy* (*Neu Weg der Philosophie*) (1929). In his later, more mature work, Heinemann discussed the characteristics that could include Jaspers’s philosophy in this trend, and its uniqueness compared with other thinkers of this trend.⁵⁴

My main argument in this part is that the philosophical effort to explicate selfhood is influenced by its solipsistic image, but at the same time contains several attempts to deal with this image. The first stages of his work, mainly in the psychiatric period and to a large degree also in *Psychology of World Views*, were characterized by an almost complete dominance of the solipsistic understanding of selfhood that led largely to a subjugation of the different issues under discussion to the question of their relevance to the understanding of selfhood. However, the discussion in Chapter Three and Four suggests a process of the formation of Jaspers’s critical awareness of his early approaches and an understanding of the difficulties arising from them. This awareness enabled Jaspers to abandon some of the insights of his early work and prepared the ground for the inclusion of new philosophical concepts, through which Jaspers aimed to ground Existenz in a wider context. This book examines the influence of the new issues discussed in his philosophical writings on his perception of selfhood.

Part Two includes an introductory methodological chapter, three chapters (Five to Seven), and a chapter of conclusions. This part discusses three of Jaspers’s central and most original ideas—“communication,” “historicity,” and “boundary situations.” These ideas, which I define as “transitional mechanisms,” are presented as central instruments that helped Jaspers rescue the perception of

selfhood from the influence of the solipsistic image that had accompanied its discussion up to the appearance of these ideas. These three ideas, discussed mainly in the *Existential Elucidation*, helped expand and deepen the perception of selfhood. These ideas also opened new horizons for Jaspers that served as a foundation for the establishment of a new philosophical axis in his work, aimed at explicating Being.

Part Three contains four chapters (Eight to Eleven), and deals with the explication of Being based entirely on writings included in the philosophical period. Even in this framework Jaspers continued to discuss selfhood, but the developments typical of it, first and foremost the distancing from solipsism, diverted it from the center in favor of the concepts of “Being” (*Sein*) and “transcendence” (*Transzendenz*). The primary motive for discussing the question of Being and for seeking transcendence was presented as belonging to Existenz; however, it ceased to function as a touchstone of the different issues that arose in Jaspers’s philosophy.

Finally, a note about the style of writing. The choice of a phenomenological method conducting an immanent explication of the original texts leads, almost inevitably, to a style that humanizes the different concepts under discussion, abstract though they otherwise are.

Four

SELFHOOD IN ITS OWN EYES

1. Back to Existenz

Elucidation of Existenz was Karl Jaspers's last setting where selfhood constituted the main subject of discussion. Unlike the previous contexts, this time Jaspers examined it without the mediation of other issues (such as: mental illness, world views, and the world). In this respect, this framework of discussion can be seen as the climax of the philosophical move directed at the explication of selfhood in Jaspers's thought. The fundamental insights achieved regarding selfhood continued Jaspers's early perceptions of it, deepened them, and even gave them new validity. However, Jaspers only achieved this continuity through a dialectical move where the early perceptions were critically re-examined. The same insights that in *World Orientation* diverted selfhood from its central status did not prevent its restoration to the focus of philosophizing in *Elucidation of Existenz*. The return of Existenz to the focus of discussion, and the renewed interest in the implications of its perception as a worldly Being in *Elucidation of Existenz*, did not express a withdrawal from the basic insights achieved in *World Orientation*, but instead an attempt to complement them and to determine their importance in his philosophical perception of selfhood. After Jaspers had discussed, in *World Orientation*, the objective aspects that create the Being of Existenz—a discussion reflecting the epistemological viewpoint of selfhood—in *Elucidation of Existenz*, he tried to express the way Existenz views itself. In this context, the ontological viewpoint became more prominent, seeking to represent the particular aspects of this Being.

The following passage reflects the clear awareness of the restrictions imposed by external reality of the world that is independent of Existenz and of its options for self-actualization, but at the same time reveals Jaspers's difficulty in continuing the philosophical move that had diverted Existenz from the center of philosophizing:

... What satisfies me in knowing the world is ambiguous: either the world is *desired* as my realized existence-wish; ... [since] it is inevitable for me to desire the world in which my Being exists; but as an absolute drive this desire becomes destructive for me; against [this desire] I hear the demand

from my possible Existenz: to detach myself from the world into which I am in danger of sinking. Or else I perform [an act of] transcendence within the world... in which I see, think, and act.¹

Jaspers here reveals the two motives that Existenz could have for knowing the world reality external to it. It can aim to know it because it is the realm where it finds its existence. In this respect, the knowing of the world is motivated by a positive motive, and can be seen as part of Existenz's self-knowledge or as a complement to its self-knowledge. Existenz's attempt to know the world can also result from a negative motive, its wish to identify the differences between itself and the surrounding reality in order to establish self-awareness as a Being separate and distinct from the world. These motives lead to the two options facing Existenz. The first, appearing here implicitly, directs Existenz to see itself as part of the world and to act on this awareness. This option is derived from the basic view of Existenz as a worldly Being. The second, more explicit, option faces Existenz with the extreme possibility of detaching itself from the world, and should be understood in the context of its uniqueness as revealed through the discussion of formal knowledge. The discussion of the possibility of detaching Existenz from the world has consistently made its mark in the interpretations in the secondary literature about Jaspers's perception of Existenz, which tend to present his philosophy as extreme subjectivism.² These two options portray the two centers of gravity that were constantly and mutually tempting at this stage of the explication of selfhood. Considering his awareness of the limitations of objective knowledge as a tool for elucidating Existenz, Jaspers aimed at establishing a channel of discussion where Existenz perceived itself as separate from the world. However, since the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being became in his thought after *World Orientation* an undeniable datum, Jaspers tried to offer his version of the way Existenz is anchored in immanence.

2. Separating Existenz from the World

Against the background of clarifying Existenz's fundamental difficulty in expressing its particular uniqueness in the external world reality, Jaspers examined the possibility of detaching Existenz from the world. However, the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being, previously formulated in *World Orientation*, did not enable him to argue that separation from the world could constitute a real option for Existenz as a concrete Being. The question under discussion is apparently related to the nature of the existentialistic consciousness formulated in the face of reality. The question is whether Existenz can exist in reality, but at the same time perceive itself as detached from this reality. To what extent can the self-consciousness of Existenz ignore the necessity forced upon it by external reality?

The early writings contained no space to discuss this speculative possibility, and this is not coincidental, since the perception of selfhood formulated there was not grounded in seeing the external world as a factor in reference to which the self-consciousness of Existenz is formed. The perception of reality at the foundation of the different world view types in *Psychology* largely reflected fulfilling the self-understanding needs of the subjective Being.³ Jaspers perceived the world *view* that served as a framework for the formation of the individual's self-awareness as more real than the *world* it apparently wished to view. However, the external world's reality and the restrictions that its formal knowledge imposes on its representations became founding elements in the philosophy of Existenz, and as such they could not be seen as barriers that could be removed or overcome by any particular viewpoint. This implies that the discussion of the possibility of Existenz perceiving itself as detached from the world, with which Jaspers opened *Elucidation of Existenz*, does not deal with its relation to the reality that was recognized as we learned in *World Orientation*, but with the reflexive process that accompanies the formation of Existenz as a self-aware Being. Jaspers's answer to the question presented above is therefore negative. Existenz cannot perceive itself as isolated from the world's reality.

Even at this stage, despite the deep modifications that had occurred in his views, Jaspers's thinking preserved the motivation to find expression for the individual's subjective Being. The clarification of the objective aspects relating to the Being of Existenz did not weaken this motivation, but merely focused the essential difficulty of realizing it within the boundaries of a philosophical approach. The method of transcending, which had already become an overt and conscious element in his philosophical writings, could not enable Jaspers to be satisfied with achieving transparency regarding the situation of Existenz in the world. This transparency itself served as a basis from which Jaspers wished to transcend. Jaspers's attempt to remain attached to Existenz's viewpoint is evident in his frequent usage of the first person to characterize Existenz, as if it were the one revealing the philosophical insights about itself. The reexamination of Existenz's relations to the world's reality, which at first appears to be an unnecessary repetition or a regression to the earlier stages of his thinking, was also aimed at illuminating the attitude of Existenz toward its situation, and in particular at preventing the possibility that the objective aspects of existential existence revealed in the discussion would be its bottom line. The return to the viewpoint of Existenz is demonstrated in the following passage:

The dissatisfaction that I experience ... is a negative source that allows me, while pulling Existenz from the world's reality, to feel the reality in this pull.... This dissatisfaction cannot be sufficiently established, it is the expression of the Being of possible Existenz, which when it expresses its lack of satisfaction does not understand the other, but itself.⁴

The experience of dissatisfaction described here relies mainly on the interpretation Jaspers offered to objectivity from the existentialistic viewpoint. His main argument was that formal knowledge that generalizes about objects existing in the world could not serve as an instrument for elucidating *Existenz*, which is a potential and unique Being. Here Jaspers expressed the Hegelian idea that self-awareness was formed by elimination and motivated by the experience of dissatisfaction.⁵ However, unlike Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Jaspers's rejection of the objective viewpoint was a positive facet that affirmed the particular Being of *Existenz* on the same level where the negation itself appeared: in the framework of the explication of selfhood.⁶ The rejection of the possible contribution of formal knowledge to the explication of *Existenz* becomes in its eyes "its thorn of becoming,"⁷ meaning that the dissatisfaction is a positive expression of *Existenz*'s internal truth as a particular Being that perceives itself as separate from the world.

The dissatisfaction that *Existenz* experiences when it wishes to express itself becomes a starting point for understanding its stance vis-à-vis the world. This is not a surrender of the search for self-understanding of its place in the world, or an attempt to ignore the way the world and *Existenz* itself are perceived from the objective viewpoint of consciousness. Without these, *Existenz* would cease to be what it was. However, since the world's reality does not appear to *Existenz* as an arena where it can realize the possibilities it identifies as its own, it is obliged to form a consciousness that separates the world's reality and itself. It vacillates between two insights that both have strong significance for it. First, "the whole reality of the world is lost before the isolation of the possible."⁸ The world's reality is not expressed in what *Existenz* considers the possibility that exists for it, and so this reality no longer finds a place in *Existenz*'s consciousness, or is "lost." The second insight, which is merely the other facet of the first, is the ultimate demand *Existenz* makes of itself, "to be from the source of my selfhood."⁹ This requirement projects *Existenz* on itself,¹⁰ when it experiences isolation, disappointment, and detachment from the world in which it finds itself existing.

The presence of the formal viewpoint of consciousness within the framework of the discussion of *Existenz* did not merely fill a role in the perception of *Existenz* as a worldly Being experiencing types of existence that non-*Existenzen*s also experience. It made more severe the aim to grant expression to the particular aspects of the self-Being. Those aspects that established the perception of *Existenz* as a worldly Being were capable of disputing its very reality. The philosophical starting point for the discussion of selfhood did not deny the position typical of Jaspers's early thought, but confronted it, and created contradictions and tensions that could not be resolved within the boundaries of the explication of selfhood. These were expressed in the different interpretations presenting Jaspers's perception of *Existenz* as a Being that was relativistic, irrational, idealistic, and unknowable by the scientific approach.

Otto Friedrich Bollnow interpreted Jaspers's philosophy of Existenz as an attempt to reveal the person's "last internal core."¹¹ In his opinion, Jaspers's opposition to the ontologization of the concept of Existenz through consciousness and the very possibility that it could be understood as a category capable of objective knowledge was intended to defend the aspect of freedom, which had served as the cornerstone of the perception of Existenz.¹² In Bollnow's opinion, these premises made Jaspers's perception of Existenz an "extreme radicalization of the original life philosophy," which in itself represents an extreme relativistic position.¹³ Bollnow eventually argued that Jaspers's perception of Existenz shows the nature of human beings as contentless internality.¹⁴ He argued that this perception cannot be understood at all, and is impossible as a philosophical position.¹⁵ Like Bollnow, Joseph Lenz also understood Jaspers's perception of Existenz as an extreme form of the philosophy of life based on deep skepticism and leading to the perception of human Being as relativistic, subjectivistic, and irrational. The understanding of existentialist philosophy as an irrational position appears consistently in William Barrett's interpretation of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean Paul Sartre (whose references to Jaspers were marginal). This interpretation is present in the secondary literature about Jaspers, to different degrees.¹⁶ In Lenz's opinion, in human existence's "escape toward internality," Jaspers's perception of Existenz led to a narrowing of the area of philosophizing.¹⁷ Similarly, F. Imle argued that the selfhood arising from Jaspers's view of Existenz is "closed contingency hinting at the absolute."¹⁸ In his opinion, the positivistic statements made by Jaspers did not exceed the boundaries of the self.¹⁹ However, the attempt to search for God within the boundaries of this subjectivistic thinking divided it between pantheism and vague theism, and made it and the other subjects derived from it incomprehensible.²⁰

The interpretation that Jaspers's perception of Existenz was a sort of idealism continued the interpretations of Bollnow and Lenz, stressing the subjectivistic and unknowable aspect of Existenz.²¹ However, this interpretation is established mainly by revealing the relations between Jaspers's thought and classical philosophical approaches, especially those of Immanuel Kant and Hegel. Leo Gabriel argues that Jaspers's perception of Existenz summarizes Kantian idealism and even extends it by the openness to transcendence.²² On the one hand, this openness is not structured into a particular religious position such as Kierkegaard's, but on the other hand it does not arrive at a rationalistic position such as Hegel's.²³ Gabriel argues that already in *Psychology*, Jaspers discovered the boundaries of objectivistic thinking. Gabriel's interpretation shows that in using the different philosophical influences that fed his thinking, Jaspers sought to express the Being existing beyond the boundaries of the representation of the consciousness grounded in the dialectic of object-subject relations.²⁴ This attempt, which does not allow the classification of Jaspers's thought as merely

transcendental philosophy, is reflected in the identification of the concept of Being with the concept of selfhood as a Being existing beyond consciousness, the concrete I, and reason.²⁵ Gabriel characterized this Being as “pure spontaneity of self-realization, absolute freedom exhausted... in the realization of the whole of the world through the I existing as Existenz.”²⁶ According to Wolfgang Stegmüller, Jaspers presented an extreme version of Kant’s theory of knowledge, centered on the claim that it was impossible to know the “thing-in-itself.”²⁷ This attempt results not only in the concept of Existenz, but even in Jaspers’s entire philosophy becoming incomprehensible and even dangerous.²⁸

A study of Jaspers’s philosophy from the viewpoint of philosophy of science leads to a conclusion similar to those of the interpretations anchored in the “life philosophy”, and of the idealistic philosophies. Jürgen von Kempfski defined Jaspers’s philosophy as a “call” aimed at the individual Existence only.²⁹ In his opinion, this call, sounding beyond any binding scientific understanding, makes Jaspers’s concept of Existenz unknowable. Werner Schneiders criticized von Kempfski’s interpretation, arguing that it was grounded in a progressive perception of science, aiming to apply it also to the field of philosophy.³⁰ However, what von Kempfski presented as a criticism of Jaspers’s thought, Jeanne Hersch considered as the advantage of this thought. She believed that the illusion accompanying philosophy from its inception regarding its ability to obtain objective knowledge ended in Jaspers’s philosophy.³¹ As an alternative to this illusion, she believed this philosophy offers a clear judgment in favor of the subject that is in a constant process of becoming self-aware. A similar approach guided the interpretations of Johannes Reis, Heinrich Knittermeyer, and Hans-Rudolf Müller-Schwefe, who argued that Jaspers’s Being of Existenz expressed a judgment in favor of the subject.³²

Jaspers’s negative attitude toward the contribution of formal knowledge to the explication of Existenz, and his discussion of its drive to separate itself from the world, probably influenced the interpretations presented above. Perhaps the separation between *World Orientation* and *Elucidation of Existenz* was also seen as expressing a retreat from the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being. In any case, these interpretations did not usually identify the positive arguments Jaspers formulated from the discussion of the boundaries of formal knowledge in the representation of the uniqueness of Existenz. Nor did they express Jaspers’s consistent effort to reveal the objective aspects of the Being of Existenz. All these indicate that Jaspers’s discussion of Existenz’s drive to separate itself from the world expressed for the holders of this interpretative approach a real option that existed for Existenz.

I believe that the difficulties these interpretations raise are the direct result of missing the dialectical element in Jaspers’s concept of Existenz, and evidently of the formative tensions of the whole perception of selfhood. This statement is especially true of the sweeping conclusion that Jaspers’s philosophy of Existenz

was relativistic. This conclusion originates in the lack of distinction between two types of relativism: as the philosopher's *starting point* and as the *conclusion* formulated from the philosophical discussion. The first type of relativistic position seeks to refer in a balanced manner to the different aspects of the issue it discusses, and overtly avoids determining a hierarchy among the different components composing the discussion. The certainty regarding the individual's unique subjective Being and the central status granted to its particular aspects already in Jaspers's early thought do not allow us to attribute to it the motivations typical of the first type of relativism. With hindsight, we can identify in Jaspers's concept of Existenz the second type of relativistic position—a position grounded in completely different considerations aimed at reaching positive statements about Existenz. One example of such a positive statement is the argument that human beings' formal knowledge cannot serve as a tool for representing the particular aspects of Existenz. Unlike the first position, the relativism in this position constitutes a conclusion of the explication. Schneiders phrased this well when he stated that Jaspers's presentation of Existenz was the highest authority for its self-evaluation and for examining what surrounds it in the widest sense of the word (objects, values, norms, etc.), and does not reflect the arbitrary nature of this philosophy, but constitutes an expression of what this philosopher saw as an inescapable necessity.³³ These words of Schneiders's appear as criticism of Reis's religious position regarding the role of conscience in Jaspers, but they appear relevant also to the typical critical position from the viewpoint of philosophy of science.

The interpretation presented below of the second possibility through which Existenz is examined, as acting in the world with a clear awareness that it is part of it, is grounded in the basic insights presented in the previous chapter regarding *World Orientation*. At the heart of these insights is the argument that with the transition to philosophical discourse, Jaspers could no longer hold the perception of selfhood as a Being closed within its own boundaries. Dealing with the objective viewpoint of consciousness and its perception of selfhood as a worldly Being is a formative element of Jaspers's philosophy of Existenz. This statement also confirms the interpretation that Jaspers's handling of the possibility that Existenz could perceive itself as isolated from the world was part of a dialectical move aimed at establishing its perception as a worldly Being. This argument can benefit not only from the detailed discussion of the first possibility that was rejected, but also from the attempt to trace the roots of the interpretation that views the second possibility as an exhaustive expression of Jaspers's philosophical perception of selfhood.

3. Returning Existenz to the World

The immanent starting point that anchored Existenz in the world of phenomena, or as Jaspers put it, in the “situation Being,” served as the background for the philosophical move that “returned” Existenz to the world after examining the speculative possibility that it could perceive itself as detached from it. In this context Jaspers was unambiguous: “possible Existenz *differentiates* itself from the world in order to really enter it afterwards.”³⁴ This means that the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being does not contradict its perception as a unique Being, but these two coexist. Even when he saw the chasm between Existenz and the world as perceived through formal knowledge, and even when he needed it to fortify the unique status of Existenz, the cracks that appeared in the early solipsistic approach to selfhood forced him to reestablish the status of the two objective aspects in his perception of Existenz.

We should not be surprised that when he sought to examine the possibility of returning Existenz to the world, Jaspers presented a positive attitude toward the possible contribution of objectivity and generality in clarifying Existenz. While *World Orientation* stressed the differences between the validity types of “knowledge in general” and “causal self-understanding,”³⁵ when he wished to reanchor Existenz in the world, Jaspers viewed positively the possible contribution of knowledge and generality in elucidating selfhood. Jaspers argued that since the explication of Existenz was aimed at concrete “situations,” it required an objective examination of the possibilities existing in the world and standing before Existenz. Objectivity serves as a basis from which the thinking transcends in order to achieve explication of Existenz. In *Elucidation of Existenz*, Jaspers differentiated between two stages: in the *first stage*, called “first transference,”³⁶ objective thinking has a crucial role. It provides the philosophical thinking on which the elucidation of Existenz is based with the logical clarity essential for the implementation of the method of transcending, and it also “ignites the spark of selfhood.”³⁷ Objective thinking is essential not only because it serves as a central tool for clarifying the immanent aspect of the Being of Existenz, but also because it eliminates the possibility of seeing Jaspers’s attempt to separate Existenz from the world as a real option. It affirms the discussion of this speculative option as part of a dialectical move aimed at establishing the self-perception of Existenz as a worldly Being. In the *second stage*, called the “second transference,” the choice of the concrete possibility happens as a space for realizing the selfhood of Existenz.³⁸ The same objects that earlier confirmed that Existenz was a worldly Being undergo at this stage a process of “being raised while being dismissed” (*Aufhebung*), they become a tool through which “Existenz rises.”³⁹ At this stage, Existenz attributes to the objects a wider significance than that given to them by consciousness. It identifies them with the very possibility in which it will realize itself. The vagueness accompanying Jaspers’s arguments in

this context results from the explication of Existenz revealing the very existence of possibilities for Existenz, but not presenting them concretely or elucidating the way in which Existenz experiences them. Here we discover the basic difference between the philosophical viewpoint of the possibilities in existence and the one Jaspers attributed to objective consciousness. The first examines the nature of Existenz itself through the existence of different possibilities in existence, while the second makes a logical evaluation of the possibilities of realizing the options themselves. Even if Existenz becomes aware of the self-realization options available in the world through objective consciousness, it alone determines their meaning for it. As he says:

If I want to know what I am, then my objective existence presents itself, in the thinking moves I experience, as a scheme of my Being. I perceive myself inside it, but I experience that I am not completely identical with it: *what thus becomes an object cannot attain absolute identity with me myself*, since in my expansion I must lose myself in this scheme.⁴⁰

The dialectical discussion of the relations between Existenz and the world finds in these words one of Jaspers's most concise formulations. Existenz sees the reality outside it, or as he puts it "objective existence," as part of itself. The process of forming its self-consciousness does not occur in a vacuum, but with reference to the external reality forced on Existenz, in the presence of the "necessity" aspect that is an integral part of the "situation Being." However, Existenz does not identify itself with this reality, since no identity exists between the access ways for clarifying this reality, between the objective viewpoint of consciousness and the explication of Existenz. The objects can help Existenz in the process of self-clarification only after Existenz has applied to them its typical reflexive process, thanks to which it can identify them as related to its self-realization.

The perception of Existenz as a worldly Being now receives its precise meaning. Existenz exists in the world and is formed with conscious relations aimed at itself and at this world. However, the element of freedom—the other facet of the "situation Being"—enables Existenz to transcend the "necessity" involved in the situations where it already finds itself. The same "necessity," or objectivity, in which its perception as a worldly Being is grounded may also be pushed aside in favor of a speculative option that does not yet exist in reality, but which Existenz aims to realize in its existence. The potential entailed in the existential freedom to transcend situations thus prevents the identity between Existenz and the totality of the situations in which it finds itself. So we can describe existentialist existence as a conscious movement between the reality that actually exists and a possible reality, or as a movement between two languages—the particular existentialist language in which it refers to itself and the language of objective thought in which it refers to the reality external to it.⁴¹ Jaspers presents

this movement as a process spread across an entire lifetime, with the individuals experiencing it as long as they try to live as an Existenz:

... The separation is always available to be performed again. For existence as such the purely empirical forces serve merely as a condition, [while] the existential [forces] reach consciousness and reality only through pressing and penetrating: the process of separation that in an eye-blink exists in full clarity to the world can never be fully completed.⁴²

This *in-out dynamic* typical of Existenz's relation to the world, or what Jaspers termed "penetrating" and "pressing," demonstrates the struggle for supremacy, and perhaps even for exclusivity, arising in his discussion between the two representations of Existenz. This dynamic no less expresses the establishment of the philosophical insight that Existenz itself is anchored in the same world to which objective consciousness refers, and the relevance of objective consciousness to a more complete understanding of Existenz as a worldly Being. Although the discussion of the concepts of "consciousness" and "world" within the explication of Existenz undermined the earlier perception of selfhood that tended toward solipsism, the functional nature of the discussion of these terms affirmed this perception, or at least the difficulty in detaching from it. In any case, even if the detaching from the early perception of selfhood was incomplete, the tendency toward solipsism that typified it did not remain an innocent or unconscious position in Jaspers's philosophy.

Support for the proposed interpretation, according to which the reality of the external world and the objective viewpoint of consciousness became for Jaspers data he could not retreat from in his philosophical writings, is expressed not only in the perception of Existenz, as presented above, but also in Jaspers's perception of Being. The "encompassing" and the "cipher"—key concepts in Jaspers's perception of Being, to be discussed in detail in Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten—were grounded in the necessitating of the immanent world's reality and of the viewpoint of consciousness accessible to the objective aspects of this reality. But in the context of the explication of Being, where these concepts were clarified, Jaspers developed a metaphysical view of immanence, and in this respect immanence did not exhaust the meaning granted to the world's reality. In addition, the positive attitude toward the viewpoint of consciousness did not make it the main instrument on which the explication of Existenz relied. The immanent world's reality and the objective viewpoint of consciousness served for Jaspers as a basis on which he implemented the method of transcending, and his main object of philosophizing was beyond them. However, although Jaspers manifested toward these two components a functional attitude harnessing them to the purposes of the explication of his main object of philosophizing—first selfhood,

then Being—they continued to accompany his philosophical writings and became stable elements therein.

4. Freedom as Will

The two alternatives facing Existenz, separating itself from the world and finding itself within the world, rely on the premise that it has the freedom to move between them. Apart from this concept expressing a central element in the Being of Existenz, discussing it constitutes another layer in the elucidation of Existenz's complex relations with the world. For Jaspers, will is the main expression of freedom.⁴³ Will is perceived as based on freedom, while freedom is embodied in will. However, the separation between will and its object, or between will and what is desired in it, did not make the objects of will into an independent subject of the discussion, but instead served as an additional means of making claims about Existenz itself and maintaining its dominance in the discussion. As he phrased it: "will is not the activity that pushes only forwards, but its freedom is [in] desiring *itself* simultaneously."⁴⁴

Jaspers did not focus on the psychological phenomenon of will, on the expression of activity people show in a certain state of affairs as a means of achieving their aims in existence. His interest was directed at a different, more general, human experience, not necessarily restricted to a concrete situation; experiencing "will that desires itself," defined as one of the expressions of Existenz's self-consciousness. Jaspers believed that psychology could help investigate the unconscious and covert motives of will, taking account of the general urges and the individual conditionings, but stated that it could not help elucidate Existenz. This reflects Jaspers's criticism of his earlier position in *Psychology*, through which he aimed at expanding the boundaries of psychology using the method of "understanding psychology" (*verstehende Psychologie*).⁴⁵ Even the existentialist will manifests the activity that people conduct regarding themselves;⁴⁶ however, this activity is not directed at what is beyond Existenz, but at formulating its own selfhood. Jaspers referred to Kierkegaard, who argued that the more individuals want, the more they are themselves.⁴⁷ Jaspers clarified that experiencing the "will that desires itself" is possible only where "the deepest clarification of the mental background succeeds, where through self-reflection the will achieves clarity and strength from its original contents,"⁴⁸ where consciousness turns to elucidate the options Existenz identifies as belonging to it, but has yet to realize.⁴⁹ Only then does philosophy replace psychology, and a philosophical approach to the existential desire is enabled.⁵⁰

From the viewpoint of the explication of selfhood, we can observe two facets of the existential desire through which people see themselves: the conscious facet and the metaphysical facet. The *conscious facet* of the existential will is revealed in the argument that will appears "only where there is clarity of the 'choosing

I'."⁵¹ The discovery of will depends on the existence of self-consciousness or conscious reflection of people about themselves. To the same degree that self-consciousness constitutes a condition for the arousal of the existential will, it also portrays self-consciousness, since self-consciousness guides it and determines its nature. The ontological Being represented in this concept of will is Existenz itself, revealed as a Being that is aimed toward itself. C. D. Rollins identified this directedness of people toward themselves (self-seeking) with egoism, which he considered one of the meanings of solipsism.⁵² The anchor of the perception of Existenz in the immanent reality of the world does not enable us to see this will as a reflection of a fantasy in which people sometimes err. However, the statement "will as thinking consciousness makes the *distinction* between dream and reality significant"⁵³ serves as the basis for explaining the nature of the relation of Existenz toward this reality, a relation anchored in the immanent reality that serves as an arena for its realization.

However, the concept of reality has a wider significance not exhausted by its contrast to dream. The reality to which existential will refers is not only the one realized in practice, but it also includes possibilities not yet realized that Existenz identifies as belonging to it.

[The will's energy] is a continuum in the meaning of continuity of sense; it does not perceive ad hoc aims, but perceives at once [aims] for life, the latter aims are desired in what is still outside everything that is known.⁵⁴

The reality of the possibilities not yet realized by Existenz in existence is no less than that portrayed by the concrete reality. It seeks them for itself and sees them as "aims for life," although their existing outside immanence leaves them on the level of "what is still outside what is known." Existential will is grounded in the two facets of the situation Being that forms the concrete Being that Existenz experiences: the "necessity" that does not allow the existential will to err in false dreams, and the "possibility" embodying all that Existenz has yet to achieve but is entitled to desire. The perception of Existenz as a worldly Being is thus reconfirmed through the "will" constituting one of the more typical expressions of the Being of Existenz.

The *metaphysical aspect* of existential will is expressed in Jaspers's statement that will originates in "*wholenesses* related to each other and serving it as an inclusive thing in the one-time action of will."⁵⁵ Existential will does not rely on itself alone, but is itself an expression or a realization of an entity or Being more encompassing than it. While this facet of will also expresses activity, this is not the activity of Existenz, but as he says, it is "active certainty of Being that it desires something,"⁵⁶ of a Being or entity beyond the limits of its immanent existence. The conscious aspect of the existential will transpires as a partial revelation, like the tip of an iceberg, of an encompassing Being on which it

depends. In the context of this discussion, aimed mainly at the explication of selfhood, this Being is only implied, and while the reality in the background is perceived as immanent, the infrastructure essential for its full elucidation is lacking. However, even this covert presence can be seen as a prefiguration of the metaphysical perception that was to develop later in his thinking, including a far-reaching understanding of the world of phenomena transcending to the layer of potentiality embedded therein. This perception, like that of Existenz, was to be grounded in the immanent reality. Just as this aspect of the perception of Existenz left a wide field for the realization of the existential will, so in the perception of Being the anchor in immanence will not serve as a barrier to the development of a metaphysical perception of Being that will also include transcendent aspects. The metaphysical perception of Being is presented in Part Three of the book.

The distinction between the two facets of existential will—the conscious and the metaphysical—reveals a fundamental contradiction regarding the degree of autonomy Existenz has in the reality it experiences. On the one hand, the conscious facet of existential will presents Existenz's ability not to be tied to the factuality of existence and to form itself in the more open spaces of the possible. In this framework, Existenz is perceived as a source of will and as an autonomic Being. On the other hand, the metaphysical facet is where the will is revealed as an expression of what is beyond it. As Jaspers says: "Only in the idea and from the idea can I desire."⁵⁷ From the point of view of the explication of selfhood, we cannot resolve this contradiction between the two facets of existential will. Only in the context of the explication of Being, where Existenz turns away from itself and directs itself at the more encompassing Being, can the contradiction be resolved, or, more precisely, it is revealed as only an apparent contradiction. It transpires that in the transition from the conscious layer of existential will to its metaphysical layer, the area of the realization of will is expanded, and with it also the autonomy of Existenz. As a result, existential will discovers not only the selfhood of Existenz but also the Being beyond it.

The epistemological viewpoint, which revealed the conscious aspects of the perception of selfhood, transpires against the background of the discussion of the concept of existential will as having a metaphysical depth that cannot leave the discussion solely in the realm of the explication of Existenz. Although this insight relies, for the time being, on the rather vague hints that accompanied Jaspers's discussion of will, the doubt that it awakened regarding the degree of autonomy that should be attributed to Existenz formed another crack in the solipsistic understanding of selfhood, even though Jaspers's philosophy had yet to mature enough to relinquish it. In any case, although the full implications of the discovery of the metaphysical aspect of will would only be clarified later on, its importance for the perception of Existenz stems from the tension it created not relating only to its attitude to the external world. It was revealed as the depth aspect of its most basic qualities. The separation between the two facets of existential will

demonstrates a more fundamental tension typifying the Being of Existenz: between the immanent facet that anchors it in the world and its transcendent facet that is revealed in its attitude toward an entity that transcends the boundaries of its real existence as such. This interpretation, strengthening the dialectical understanding of the consciousness that forms Existenz as a worldly Being from another angle, indicates the nature of the consciousness that forms Existenz vis-à-vis existence as a reality independent of it. It perceives itself as part of it, but at the same time seeks to form a relation toward what is beyond it.⁵⁸ So the depth of philosophical clarification of the Being of Existenz stems from the really present immanent aspect both in *World Orientation* and in *Elucidation of Existenz*. This aspect not only explains the tension in Existenz's relations with the world and with consciousness, but also indicates the continued existence of the solipsistic perception of selfhood even at this advanced stage of Jaspers's thinking. The attempt to examine the character of Existenz through its own eyes following the insights that arose from *World Orientation* put the solipsistic approach to a difficult test compared with the challenges it faced when it was discussed with the mediation of other topics. There Jaspers had been involved in defending his perception of selfhood from viewpoints that appeared to him likely to lead to its misunderstanding. Conversely, when Existenz was confronted with itself in *Elucidation of Existenz*, its internal vortex was revealed and the meanings it had been granted might become worthless considering the acquaintance with the encompassing Being in which it was contained. Only a wider viewpoint than the one in which Jaspers's perception of selfhood was grounded could rescue Existenz from this concern. This point of view, typical of the writings published after *Philosophy*, not only reflected another significant distancing from the solipsistic perception of selfhood, but also enabled Jaspers to develop a new perception of Existenz.

The philosophizing that led to the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being, originating in Jaspers's discussion in *World Orientation*, and continuing in *Elucidation of Existenz*, would later transpire as an immanent infrastructure essential for Jaspers's perception of Being, also grounded in immanence. Just as the existential meaning granted to objects in the context of the explication of selfhood did not negate their immanent and objective aspect, but instead relied on it, so Jaspers was to claim in his perception of Being that immanence contained a metaphysical depth beyond what we are used to identifying with the boundaries of existence. The anchoring of metaphysics in immanence—as the consciousness of Existenz and as an expression of an entity existing beyond it—would later transpire as a depth aspect linking the two main axes of explication in Jaspers's thought.

5. The Tension between Objectivity and Subjectivity

The two viewpoints that examined the relations between Existenz and the world—the objective, presenting Existenz as part of the world, and the subjective, in which the world was perceived as the world of Existenz—were clarified as two sides of the same coin. This understanding was based on the wide genealogical vision of Jaspers's thought, hinting at the future directions where the contradictions that arose in the explication of selfhood would be resolved. However, this genealogical explanation cannot suffice for the framework of the explication of selfhood, since it lacks an integrative understanding that could connect the objective and subjective facets of Existenz. Without such an understanding, not only is the basis of the contradictions that refer mainly to Existenz itself undermined, but it is also impossible to defend the very existence of a real perception of selfhood in Jaspers's thinking, leaving only a few single insights that do not add up. This is exactly what happened in the interpretations of Jaspers's perception of Existenz presented above. In the absence of a thematic viewpoint aiming at consolidating the different aspects of the perception of Existenz, these interpretations were unable to progress beyond exposing the contradictions it contained. Also, in the absence of the genealogical viewpoint, they were unable to identify the points where the perception of Existenz prefigured his perception of Being, and the possibility of a comprehensive solution of the basic problems in the perception of Existenz as a whole. Either way, the sweeping conclusion was that Jaspers's perception of Existenz was incomprehensible and impossible as a philosophical position. In the following passage, Jaspers points to the difficulty in connecting the objective and subjective aspects of the Being of Existenz, but also indicated their connection:

The result of the possible misunderstanding of the entire elucidation of Existenz (mistakenly replacing Existenz with the empirical individuality of the individual's existence, identifying the existential internality with mere subjectivity) is the result of seeing this philosophizing [as a perception that considers] objectivity as dismantled within subjectivity, as losing the world within the abundance of its existence...

[However] *Existenz is always in objectivity and subjectivity*. It is revealed to itself only in the world divided between subject and object, in other words in the interrelation between them. This existential problem—which by meaning is dialectical and has no solution—is the source and the target, the philosophical beginning and the inability of the philosophizing to stop.⁵⁹

This clarification that the explication of Existenz takes place within the boundaries of the split between objectivity and subjectivity leaves no doubt that

the two alternatives through which Existenz was examined in *Elucidation of Existenz* do not represent two different directions to self-realization. These are two philosophical moves aimed at one target: elucidating the nature of Existenz as a worldly Being. So the location of Existenz at this stage of the range of possibilities between objectivity and subjectivity is not a return to the basic framework of *Psychology*, also committed to “the range of connections between subject and object.”⁶⁰ The reality of the world as an external Being was not reflected in Jaspers’s perception of selfhood in *Psychology*. The context of object-subject relations in which his perception of selfhood was at that time anchored—a framework that Jaspers defined as “our prison,” from which we cannot escape, although “we would like to get outside ourselves and move beyond ourselves and find an Archimedes point outside any subject-object relations...”⁶¹—did not reflect the view of external reality as a significant datum for understanding selfhood.

For the first time in *World Orientation*, Jaspers acknowledged the world’s reality, and in the context of his perception of Existenz he was able to show a positive attitude toward objectivity, and to view it as relevant to understanding the individual’s subjective Being. In his words: “a philosophical clarification of Existenz must preserve... the meaning of objectivity within its truth,”⁶² both as a source of stability for Existenz⁶³ and as a means of obtaining knowledge and a basis for its validity. Sebastian Samay provides an interesting interpretation of the German term *Gegenstand*. The word *Gegen* expresses the contrast in objectivity, while the word *Stand* represents the element of validity. Samay relied on Dufrenn and Ricouer’s distinction between the two forms Jaspers uses to denote the term “object” throughout his works: *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*. I believe the first term denotes the meaning the object has for the subject, while the second denotes the meaning the object has for scientific knowledge.⁶⁴ This change of attitude toward objectivity did not change the element of contrast it contained just from being a method of “standing against” Existenz. Maximilian Beck argued that the contrast exhausts the meaning of objectivity for Jaspers. Ludwig Armbruster’s perception of the meaning of object in Jaspers stressed mainly the pragmatic and empirical meaning that Jaspers attributed to objects. My position is closer to Samay’s, presenting objectivity in Jaspers as multi-faceted and as having many meanings.⁶⁵ Samay expanded the meanings that Jaspers granted to objects in general. These were no longer perceived only as a “means of self-knowledge,”⁶⁶ but had additional aspects originating in the consciousness directed at the objects themselves.⁶⁷

The new attitude toward objectivity did not make its discussion into an independent element within the explication of selfhood, where the boundaries of the discussion were still fixed on the issues accompanying selfhood according to their relevance to its elucidation. Jaspers made the relation toward objects in the world into part of the process of constituting Existenz’s self-consciousness.⁶⁸

Jaspers defined subjectivity as “consciousness in general” (*Bewußtsein überhaupt*), as “individual consciousness” (*individuelles Bewußtsein*), and as “consciousness of validity” (*Bewußtsein des Gültigen*).⁶⁹ The process of admitting the existence of a reality external to Existenz, which progressively expanded the viewpoint from which Jaspers examined Existenz itself, demonstrated the maturation of his perception of selfhood. Unlike his early perception of subjectivity, Existenz was no longer presented as a whole and uniform Being experiencing a divided world, but as a Being whose maturing self-consciousness enabled it to turn away from its exclusive occupation with itself, and to observe what was beyond it. This explicit understanding of the Being called Existenz allowed Jaspers to phrase the two possible forms of “betraying Existenz”: The first reflects a bias toward subjectivity, expressed in the introspection of Existenz and the resulting rejection of objectivity from its world. As he says:

The subject as an individual existence is not pleased with the multiplicity of objects of the world reality, the people who cross his path, and the aims in which he must participate. Where he wants to separate himself in the world, he has the urge to alienate himself. He attempts to close himself as subjectivity. However, a “Being for itself” that is not subject to any restriction is impossible. In his isolation [the subject] would become unsure, everything would be rejected from him. He would be unable to be decisive regarding things and would not be honest with himself. The self wish of sensory existence would have had to turn against itself and remain a vortex of the multiplicities of nothing without existence and without freedom.⁷⁰

The second form of betraying Existenz reflects a bias toward objectivity expressed by “accepting the thing exclusively.”⁷¹ Jaspers described this betrayal as follows:

The certain satisfaction that Existenz experiences in devotion to the multiplicities of objectivity has boundaries within Existenz itself. This is because *the origin* from which objectivity is perceived... remains Existenz. When the slide into violent objectivity subjects itself to blind obedience, Existenz is shocked where people surrender themselves to almost mechanical obedience. The fossilization of objectivity is the annihilation of Existenz.⁷²

The integrative understanding of the subjective and objective aspects discussed in the explication of selfhood finds its direct expression in the two forms of betraying Existenz described in the passages cited above. At the peak of the explication of selfhood, Jaspers chose to adopt these two aspects, and at the same time to qualify them from each other. Now objectivity is no longer understood as the contrast of subjectivity, but instead as including within itself subjectivity that faces it and

provides it with its meaning as objectivity. However, the recognition matured in Jaspers's thought that isolating subjectivity as a means of protecting it was no longer beneficial, since without the objective aspects accompanying it subjectivity has no existence as such.

This integrative insight could not remove the basic tension between subjectivity and objectivity that was no less typical of Jaspers's thought than handling the tension itself. The two forms of betraying *Existenz* contain a double anxiety. In the first form, the attempt to separate *Existenz* from its environment may prevent the discovery of its multifaceted nature that relies on its different relations with the things beyond it, and lead to a limited perception of *Existenz*. In the second form, the betrayal may lead to the identification of the world with the objects within it, preventing its perception as a whole anchored in the relation of *Existenz* toward it as a store of possibilities that exist for it. Jaspers's definition of the relation between objectivity and subjectivity as a polarity not only strengthens the observation of the continuing presence of the tension discussed in this context, but also demonstrates his commitment to his early intuitions that determined his solipsistic relation to *Existenz* and made it difficult for him to assimilate objectivity into his perception of selfhood.

The idea of polarity between objectivity and subjectivity did not first appear in *Elucidation of Existenz*, but already in *Psychology*.⁷³ Jaspers's handling of the solipsistic perception of selfhood, or more precisely the implications of this perception within the context of the philosophical explication of *Existenz*, determines the basic difference in the meaning attributed to the tension in these two contexts. In *Psychology*, the framework of object-subject relations was perceived as a datum existing beyond the boundaries of the philosophical discussion. Since the possibility of explicating the tension between objectivity and subjectivity was restricted a-priori, there was no choice but to seek an escape from this polarity, portrayed as other types of world views or in the "Spirit types."⁷⁴ In contrast, in *Elucidation of Existenz*, where awareness of the problematic implications of the solipsistic perception of selfhood already existed, Jaspers was able to conduct a real discussion of the meaning of objectivity and subjectivity for *Existenz*. This enabled the viewing of the tension between objectivity and subjectivity as an integral part of the complete Being of *Existenz*. *Elucidation of Existenz* expands the ability of *Existenz* to contain as part of its self-consciousness things different from it. Objectivity was presented as "pending" within the Being of *Existenz*,⁷⁵ while subjectivity was described as a space where objectivity itself finds expression and realization.⁷⁶ This avoided the possibility that the attempt to examine selfhood through adopting its own viewpoint of itself would lead to renewed entrenchment in the positions typical of his early thinking—a possibility that at the early stages of the discussion appeared real, and some of Jaspers's scholars have even understood it as such.

The attempt to examine Existenz by adopting its point of view transpired as problematic and dissatisfying for the Being of Existenz formed by the very clarification of the relation between subjectivity and objectivity as its two foci of attention. This insight paved the way for the elucidation of additional aspects related to human existence (such as “consciousness” and “world”) within the explication aimed at Existenz. At this stage, Jaspers was able to overcome to some extent the influence of Kant’s transcendental view of subjectivity that was apparent in *Psychology*, which eventually prevented any predication of “the thing-in-itself.” At this stage of the development of Jaspers’s philosophy, when alongside the viewpoint of Existenz new insights were added that were not directly derived from its selfhood, it was no longer possible to continue defining the split between objectivity and subjectivity as “polarity”. Now Jaspers aimed to indicate the “unity from subjectivity and objectivity.” As he put it:

Such unity is in no place an *asset* that can be perceived *without misleading*. Only the push from the subjective to the objective and back is real: the stored internality becomes itself real when it achieves objectivization through the external.

However, whatever exists as purely objective is known by the subject only through its assimilation through the translation into the subjective reality: the truth is for me only if I understand it, the world is only the one where I act or in which I am contemplative. The idea is only what motivates power in me.⁷⁷

These clear words cannot be misinterpreted. They confirm Existenz’s search for its self-exposure. In this process, subjectivity is not supposed to be denied, or in Hegel’s terms “placed above” (*aufgehoben*), since objectivity is once more translated into the world of subjectivity and assimilated by it. Existenz itself is responsible for unifying objectivity and subjectivity, so that they have meaning for it. Recognizing the relevance that objectivity has for Existenz itself did not provide it with an independent status in the framework of the explication of Existenz. The union between these two foci of reference continued to be subject to the continuity of the philosophical praxis that every time would connect these two components, whose polarity appears not to have been completely blunted. The philosophical explication of selfhood as Existenz reflects Jaspers’s continual vacillation between his commitment to his early intuitions regarding subjectivity and his aim to escape them due to their restrictive solipsistic implications. However, before the status of Existenz changed and before Being and transcendence became the foci of Jaspers’s philosophical discussion, he was able to close already in the explication of selfhood the circle where the discussion in this chapter started: the same Existenz that was presented as apparently wishing to

isolate itself from the world found its way back into it on the same path it planned to escape from it.

PART TWO

TRANSITION MECHANISMS

Introduction to Transition Mechanisms

FROM THE EXPLICATION OF SELFHOOD TO THE EXPLICATION OF BEING

The growing awareness of the problematic nature of an explication focused on a single object of philosophizing was at the root of Karl Jaspers's attempt to expand his framework of philosophizing and to open it to new issues beyond the boundaries of the explication of selfhood. The introduction of the concepts of "world" and "consciousness" into the explication of selfhood already challenged the fundamental trend in the early writings, where the individual's subjective Being was examined on the basis of its personal experiences. However, since these terms were examined mainly from the viewpoint of *Existenz*, while assessing their relevance to its self-understanding, they did not lead to a systematic undermining of the solipsistic premises. These reappeared at different stages of the dialectic, which continued to be part of the philosophizing aimed at the explication of selfhood. Even so, along with the constant expansion of the perception of selfhood and of the boundaries of its discussion, a search for an anchor for the person's Being beyond the realms of the world, consciousness, and even the self-consciousness of *Existenz* started to emerge. The seeking of Being and transcendence, which Jaspers attributed to *Existenz*, served as an infrastructure for the formation of framework of philosophizing that I will term the "explication of Being." When Jaspers dealt with clarifying Being and transcendence, a large degree of continuity existed with the perceptions he had developed regarding selfhood, but the new philosophizing framework that began to form in his writings was designed using new criteria.

This part of the book will examine the philosophical ideas that were part of the explication of selfhood, but that at the same time helped Jaspers formulate a new axis of philosophizing, from which he was able to find a direction to solve the problems that had arisen in his perception of selfhood, and to complete the aspects that it lacked. I will define these ideas as "transition mechanisms": the term "mechanism" denoted their nature as *tools* of philosophizing, while the term "transition" indicates the location of these mechanisms as mediating between the parts of Jaspers's whole philosophical move. In biographical terms, Jaspers discussed these ideas, concentrated in *Elucidation of Existenz*, the second volume of *Philosophy* (1932)¹ in the middle of his long period of creation (1910–1963). While these ideas have also been discussed in other contexts and not only in *Elucidation of Existenz*, their presentation as "transition mechanisms" in this study is not based on the meaning they were granted in those contexts, which will serve

merely for comparison. Regarding the contents, the ideas discussed in this part of the book embody three types of otherness, through which Existenz transcends its involvement with itself and forms a relation toward the Being beyond it: in “communication” Existenz transcends to another Existenz; in “historicity” it transcends toward existence as the time and place that form its concrete reality; and in “boundary situations” it becomes acquainted with the boundaries of existence and reality that are fundamental for its perception as a worldly Being, and tries to transcend them. “Boundary situations” first appeared in *Psychology*.² “Communication” appeared as a central theme throughout *Reason and Existenz*,³ and was later mentioned in many contexts in *Out of Truth*.⁴ “Historicity” was discussed in *Metaphysics*, the third volume of *Philosophy*.⁵ Although in these ideas Existenz forms its relation toward what is beyond it, they continue to be based on Existenz’s viewpoint. The aspects relating to the explication of Being embodied in the ideas included in the transition mechanisms are not sufficiently clarified within the context of the transition mechanisms beyond the viewpoint of selfhood regarding them, so they constitute part of the explication of selfhood. However, once these ideas are placed at the focus of the philosophizing, they can no longer be viewed as part of the transition mechanisms, but instead as part of the explication of Being.

The discussion of the transition mechanisms will be aimed at clarifying the turning point in Jaspers’s thought when he transferred his focus of interest from selfhood to Being. Additionally, the explication of these ideas will serve as an instrument for evaluating the interpretative process up to this point of the research, and its future relevance. The separation of the methodological discussion of these ideas from the book’s Introduction and its location after the discussion of Jaspers’s perception of selfhood has a double significance: the methodological clarification enables us to distance ourselves from the intensive involvement with the contents and to reexamine the interpretative process that has accompanied their discussion. At the same time, the renewed interest in the philosophical moves already discussed, essential in a study dealing with the development of thought, sharpens our awareness of the interpretative moves already made and helps formulate the future interpretative directions. The discussion of the transition mechanisms is based on one of the most important premises informing the interpretation of this philosophy, the premise that research methodology does not precede the research investigation, but develops during its process from the phenomenological study of the text.

With these things in mind, we can present the philosophical ideas defined as transition mechanisms as instruments that helped Jaspers exchange the object of the explication in his discussion and at the same time maintain a dialog with the previous object of explication. In this respect, the transition mechanisms also reflect the continuity typical of this philosophy that created from itself the tools that regulated the relations between its different topics in the different stages of its

development. This understanding is formulated as a criterion determining the nature of the ideas to be included in this part of the discussion: they have to continue in some way the philosophical move of elucidation of Existenz, and in this respect they should be viewed as an integral part of the explication of selfhood. In addition, the ideas discussed here are required to have new aspects regarding selfhood that had not yet matured and that left unsolved problems in the explication of selfhood. This dual requirement is intended so that the ideas included in the transition mechanisms will help achieve a new integration of previous aspects, but at the same time serve as a framework for clarifying Jaspers's self-criticism of his earlier approaches, which in itself constitutes a basis for the further explication of his thought. The discussion of the philosophical ideas included in the transition mechanisms is aimed at clarifying the argument that the peak of the explication of selfhood and the first formation of the explication of Being are located at the same point of philosophizing.

The central argument at the basis of the interpretation offered here is that the transition mechanisms constitute a frame of reference in which Existenz is presented as being pushed to transcend its boundaries, from its maturing awareness that it is not exhausted within its own boundaries alone. This awareness denotes a high stage in the process where Existenz finds itself able to separate itself from its surroundings and so focus its attention on aspects outside its Being. The maturation and establishment of this awareness and also of Existenz's self-distinguishing and separating skills are expressed in expanding its horizons toward wider and more absolute aspects of reality: Being and transcendence. The viewpoint from which these ideas will be discussed is designed in accordance with their function in the suggested interpretation of Jaspers's thought as a whole. We can phrase this in two questions. First, how much did these ideas help rescue Jaspers's mature perception of Existenz from the solipsism that characterized it in its early stage? Second, to what extent did transcendence become a closer and more tangible horizon for Existenz with the help of these ideas? In this respect, the discussion of the ideas defined as transition mechanisms is not intended to offer a complete and extensive discussion of their philosophical aspects, but instead to reveal their overall role in the formation of the metaphysical consciousness formulated through them at the stage of exchanging the object of explication. This discussion will reflect the duality in the particular condition of Existenz at this stage of Jaspers's discussion—after it was discussed as the main object of the philosophizing, and before it was removed from its central position in favor of the explication of Being. These two facets typifying the condition of the Being of Existenz are contained in Jaspers's definition of it as an "origin." As he says:

Existenz is not a target, but an *origin* of the philosophizing within which it perceives itself. The origin is not the beginning through which I [could]

always search for additional beginnings... but *Being as a freedom* I transcend to *when I reach myself in the philosophizing from the unknown*. The helplessness of the philosophizing that is in doubt regarding the origin is the expression of the helplessness of my selfhood, the reality of the philosophizing at the beginning of the impetus of this selfhood. The *perception* of Existenz is thus a premise of the philosophizing that at first is only a desire for significance and for a support, which is turned away empty-handed to the doubt and despair regarding its very possibility and then appears as unperceived certainty that clarifies itself in the philosophizing.⁶

The idea of the origin contains two basic meanings. First, it indicates the self-stamina of Existenz as a real Being that can be understood from within itself without the mediation of external factors. Second, this idea expresses Existenz itself being a starting point for a discussion of something else, still connected to it, but indicating what is beyond it. In the first meaning, the connection to the intuitions typical of Jaspers's early thought is still preserved, but the second meaning is anchored in insights revealed only in the advanced stages of the explication—insights that pointed out the limitation of Existenz to continue creating its self-perception with reference solely to itself. The connection between Existenz's self-perception at this stage of Jaspers's thought and the understanding achieved regarding the nature of the relations between it and the external reality is expressed in the following passage:

The world and Existenz are in *tension*. They cannot turn into one [thing], nor separate themselves from each other. This tension is presumed in the philosophizing from a possible Existenz. The world as what has become *knowable*, and an Existenz that becomes *clarifying*, are distinct from each other in a dialectical way and perceived again as one.⁷

Just as the perception of the maturation of Existenz does not enable the separation between the two facets of the idea of "origin," so also this understanding cannot detach Existenz's self-awareness from its awareness of the real and separate reality of the world. However, the two facets of the idea of origin and the two stances of Existenz toward the world—as separate from it and as part of it—are not identical in content. These stances internalize the presence of the objectivity⁸ of whose formation the transcending of Existenz is an integral part. In contrast, the reality of the Being of Existenz is a datum on which the first facet of the Being of the origin relies, while the second facet already reflects its transcending beyond its own selfhood. It transpires that the perception of Existenz as an origin expresses Jaspers's more cohesive and mature awareness regarding the Being of Existenz

compared with the description of the internal-external dynamic typical of its relations with the world; this approach, indicating the status of the self-awareness of Existenz as more crystallized, was enabled only when its recognition of the objective world reality matured and when it transcended it; only then does Existenz appear as a unity beyond the sum of its two facets expressed in its relations with the world. This unity is what enables it to form a relation toward what exists beyond it. In the following passage, Jaspers described the existential consciousness typical of stage of the explication of selfhood:

Whatever can be objectivized from within me is valid due to my empirical individuality, and since it can be a phenomenon of my selfhood as an Existenz it certainly does not evade a final and defined psychological analysis; this boundary of the knowledge of myself indirectly indicates something else without this observation being able to force itself. Thus the clarification of Existenz is released but not filled with knowledge; it achieves space for me, but does not shape a substance through the expressions of a Being capable of objective perception.⁹

These words show that the placing of Existenz as a target and a goal in his thought helped Jaspers establish his detachment from the scientific-empirical viewpoint of human beings and of the world, and largely freed him from being tied to objective thought patterns in general. However, already at the stage when the achievement of this target appeared close, from the realm of Existenz another target beyond it became visible. His description of this goal using the vague words “substance” and “something else” testifies not only to the vagueness surrounding everything revealed to Existenz, but especially that this vagueness was perceived from Existenz’s viewpoint, which at this stage had yet to achieve an explicit understanding of transcendence and Being.

The perception of Existenz as an origin, entailing the special condition of Existenz at the transitional stage from the explication of selfhood to the explication of Being, enable us to state more clearly the status of the explication of selfhood in the context of Jaspers’s entire philosophy. It shows that selfhood is the first stage in the philosophizing that would not be completed until the transcendent Being viewed beyond it underwent explication itself. At the second stage of the philosophizing, revolving around the explication of Being, Jaspers dealt with new subjects, different in nature. However, since this axis of discussion arises from the dealing with the explication of selfhood, it can be seen as complementing and closing a circle for Existenz itself. Just as the viewpoint that enabled the formation of the explication of Being was on the one hand dependent upon the awareness of the basic limitation of the philosophizing aimed at the explication of selfhood, on the other hand it relied on the insights that were

formed there. The explication of Being is not exhaustable within its own limits, but needs the explication of selfhood as “the other” as a foundation for it.

Five

COMMUNICATION

1. Existenz Facing Another Existenz

Karl Jaspers's aim to form an approach expressing the individual's subjective Being, but not based on general criteria, was at the basis of the explication of selfhood as presented up to this stage of the discussion. He wished to examine the human soul through the physical symptoms of mental disease, to track the founding subjectivity of world views, and to elucidate Existenz, while not being subject to the objective viewpoint of consciousness. The premise behind these attempts, each of which represented a stage in the development of Jaspers's thought, was that the complete exposure of selfhood as a particular Being necessitates placing it at the center of the discussion and turning it into a framework where the other concepts would also be clarified.

However, while in the writings discussed so far Jaspers was mainly interested in protecting selfhood from approaches that examine it from general viewpoints, when he discussed communication he started examining Existenz in light of another reality. The confirmation this gave to the existence of another reality apart from that of Existenz—in this context, the reality of another Existenz—forced upon it a new reality that detracted from the totality attributed to it, and fundamentally changed Jaspers's perception of selfhood. Some references to the existence of another reality had already appeared in Jaspers's thought even before he turned to communication. In *Psychology*¹ it was the subjectivity that formed another world view, and in *World Orientation*² it was the reality of the existence where Existenz finds itself as an existing Being.³ The presence of the otherness in previous contexts, whose status in the discussion was marginal compared with that of selfhood, did not change the attitude toward selfhood as a singular Being, but mainly influenced the understanding of other concepts appearing alongside it. For example, the concepts of "consciousness" and the "world" became an immanent part of his discussion of selfhood, which determined the boundaries of the reference to them. Conversely, the perception of communication discussed in this chapter reflects a real and conscious transcending from the solipsism typical of his perception of selfhood when this was the center of the explication. Consciously or unconsciously, Jaspers himself listed the reasons for the change that occurred in his perception of selfhood, and in his entire thinking, a change that served as an essential infrastructure for dealing with the very possibility of communication:

Against the tendency to self-sufficiency, against the satisfaction with the knowledge of general consciousness, against the individual's self-will, against the drive to self-closure in self-contained life, against wandering aimlessly in an existing tradition as a routine way of life, the philosophizing wishes to enlighten.... through communication the freedom that perceives Being in its origin.⁴

With these words in mind, we can more precisely define the two facets of the starting point from which Jaspers turned to clarify communication: it is aimed against the approach Jaspers himself had developed earlier, against the tendency to "self-sufficiency" or "self-containment" attributed to *Existenz*, and at the same time it is a continuation of the opposition to the viewpoint of consciousness regarding the human being. So this starting point reveals one of the basic qualities of Jaspers's thinking, that no less than aiming at what was beyond it and what it had yet to achieve, it was also aimed at and against itself. The achievement of goals that were transcendent to it involved a repeat elucidation of what was included in it immanently, and sometimes even a dispute with it.

2. Existential Communication

The perception of communication in Jaspers's thought is anchored in the basic distinction between "communication in existence" and "existential communication." Jaspers saw communication in existence, which can become an object for study to clarify its motives and the basic patterns in which it is expressed, as hiding the individual's unique selfhood and identifying it with the selfhood of others.⁵ However, he defined existential communication, in which the explicit selfhood of the person is portrayed, as follows:

... The philosophizing wishes to clarify the freedom before which the threatening solipsism or the universality of existence always [stand] through communication that perceives Being. This philosophizing applies to me from myself to hold me open and then to take without condition the communication connection that was realized. It seeks to *preserve* the *possibility* mercilessly denied in the solipsism and the universality of general consciousness.⁶

The location of existential communication between two poles, solipsism on the one hand and universality on the other, reveals the two greatest threats to selfhood with which Jaspers wished to deal in his discussion of communication. Universality reflects an impersonal attitude toward human beings.⁷ This approach relies on the premise that the scientific and objective viewpoint aimed at elucidating the Being of human beings and the world is capable of enabling an

exhaustive understanding of them. Jaspers' criticism of this approach argues that it detracts from the particular uniqueness of the individual's Being by treating it extremely formally and impersonally. In this respect, we can see it as a continuation of the fundamental insights formed in *World Orientation* and even in his earlier works, where he rejected any attempt to objectify people and developed an approach that saw individuals as unique and particular Beings.

In contrast, the solipsistic world view perceives human beings—either as an abstraction or as a reality—as relying on themselves alone. Jaspers's position regarding this perception of the individual was clear. He stated categorically that the very possibility of seeing individuals as isolated essences existing in their own right is a "boundary image."⁸ This means that the perception of a person as distinct from the surrounding reality is beyond the boundaries of human thought, and also beyond the boundaries of philosophizing. This criticism of the solipsistic world view, formulated here for the first time, is a new position in Jaspers's writings. Even if we assume that he would not himself have defined the perception of selfhood created in his writings up to that point as solipsistic, the definition of communication as existing outside it shows a new awareness of one of the possible implications of his early view, and perhaps even an explicit criticism of it.

However, the *anti-solipsistic position* to which Jaspers committed in his discussion of existential communications will be shown below as a *dialectic* position that sometimes contained explicit contradictions. This anti-solipsistic position involved several aspects that did not accord with each other and sometimes even contradicted each other. At one point, this position placed existential communication at the service of Existenz, understanding that it could not stand alone. At another point, it directed Existenz to exceed its boundaries and to form a relation to what transcends its boundaries. The tendency toward these two directions simultaneously introduced into existential communication the tension expressed in this context, as it is throughout the entire framework of explication of selfhood, in an attempt to deal with two contradictory trends representing two aspects of one subject. In Jaspers's perception of psychiatry, the duality was reflected in the presence of two different facets in the discussion of subjectivity—the expanding and the restricting—(see Chapter One). In *Psychology*, the duality was expressed in the two different tendencies of the explication of world views as part of a phenomenon and as private (see Chapter Two). In *World Orientation*, it was portrayed in the tendency to detach selfhood from the world and in the drive to re-anchor it in the world (see Chapter Three and Chapter Four). Apart from this basic duality, the dialectic typical of the perception of existential communication reflects wider processes occurring in Jaspers's thought, gradually leading to the replacing of the central axis to which the philosophizing was aimed. Alongside the continuing tendency to explicate selfhood, the presence of the "other Existenz" in the discussion precipitated

changes that resulted in the processes of explication crossing the boundaries of selfhood and being directed to horizons beyond it. There are two different trends in Jaspers's perception of existential communication: while the philosophical arguments included in the first trend are an integral part of the explication of selfhood, the second trend shows existential communication to be a *transition mechanism* from the explication of selfhood to the explication of Being. In accordance with the framework of this study delineated in the Introduction, the discussion will focus on the writings appearing in the second period (in this context, especially *Elucidation of Existenz* and *Reason and Existenz*⁹), in which it is presented as a metaphysical problem. We will not discuss the works dealing with communication published in the third period, which have received special attention in research.¹⁰

In the first trend, communication is perceived as another means of forming the selfhood of Existenz. In this framework, Jaspers continued dealing with the implications of the universal viewpoint of selfhood, but in his discussion the awareness of the influence of the solipsistic view of selfhood became increasingly prominent. In a way, the placing of the other Existenz alongside the Existenz undergoing explication reveals a concrete facet of the reality of its surrounding world, filling with real contents the perception of selfhood as a worldly Being. In this respect, we can see communication as a context for dealing with the basic duality typical of Existenz, between the tendency to isolate itself from the world and its need to establish its existence therein. The possibilities entailed in the idea of existential communication in this trend contributed to the development and deepening of the perception of selfhood typical of Jaspers's thought up to this stage. However, the solipsistic substrate, which continued to play a real role in it, diminished the possibility of breaking through the boundaries of the explication of selfhood.

Only in the second trend apparent in the perception of existential communication was its function as a transition mechanism expressed. Compared with the first trend that contained a noticeable influence of the epistemological viewpoint, aiming to obtain increasing knowledge regarding Existenz, this trend emphasized the ontological viewpoint, aiming at elucidating the Being of the Existenz that intends to form a relation toward transcendence. The innovation in this trend lies in its confronting the Existenz under explication with another type of otherness, meaning not only that of the other Existenz, but that of transcendence. What makes existential communication into a transition mechanism is the very awareness forming in Existenz's self-consciousness of the existence of transcendence—an awareness that would become a central feature of Existenz in the explication of Being. There is no doubt that dealing with the possibility of forming communication with another Existenz as a Being that has its own existence was a starting point for the search for a reality existing beyond the

boundaries of Existenz—a reality that gradually became an independent object of philosophizing in Jaspers's thought.

3. Communication as a Means of Constituting the Selfhood of Existenz

The philosophizing aimed at the elucidation of selfhood, as presented up to this stage, referred to selfhood as an individual Being. The loneliness separating Existenzes was assumed implicitly in the processes of individualization aimed at constituting selfhood. The link between loneliness and the processes of individualization was characteristic of many thinkers in Jaspers's period. Erich Fromm criticizes this approach.¹¹ These positions were in the background of the development of the socio-political critique of the Frankfurt School.¹² Since communication appeared in Jaspers's writings after the formation of selfhood as an explicit Being, it was assumed that the perception of communication itself should not be based on the individualization processes, but should transcend them. The explicit condition of Existenz served as a basis for sharpening the distinction between the "Being of I" and the "Being-with-the-other."¹³ In a more detailed passage:

Communication is present whenever two that are connected but must remain separate reach each other from loneliness and still know only loneliness, since it remains in place in communication. I cannot become myself without entering into communication, and I cannot enter into communication without being lonely. In any suppression (*Aufhebung*) of loneliness through communication, a new loneliness grows that cannot disappear without me myself ceasing to exist as a condition for communication. I must want loneliness when I dare to be myself from its origin, and thus enter a deeper communication.¹⁴

Jaspers's perception of communication reveals an undecided dialectic: the contact with the other creates the sensation of loneliness, which leads to communication, and so on. It transpires that the experience of loneliness remains a permanent element in the experience of communication. The experience of loneliness influences two different directions: it deepens people's self-awareness as individuals, and at the same time it pushes them toward the other out of a deeper, more established individuality. This dialectic perception of the relations between loneliness and individuality also appears in Jaspers's early article "*Loneliness*,"¹⁵ which was more psychological than philosophical. The psychological viewpoint is especially demonstrated by his use of the term *Ego* and his reference to the "understanding" (*Verstehen*) method¹⁶ known from the writings preceding *Philosophy*. This article was probably written between 1915 and 1916, but was only published in 1983 by his student Hans Saner, who edited it, and probably

chose to include in it ideas originating in Jaspers's writings from the different periods, especially regarding the concept of truth and the concept of communication, which appeared in his philosophical writings published from the nineteen-thirties onwards. To the best of my knowledge, the article has not appeared in its original, unedited form in any of Jaspers's books or the collections of articles published during his lifetime or following his death, and the discussion of this article will not be incorporated into the body of this chapter. Perhaps the difficulty in determining the degree of the article's authenticity explains why it has not been mentioned by any of the scholars discussing Jaspers's idea of communication, apart from Donatella Di Cesare, whose study dealt mainly with works of the third period.¹⁷ The connection between the sense of loneliness and the processes of individualization, which encompass a person's entire lifetime, appears to be the final element in the Being of the self-aware person.¹⁸ Ignoring the clear link between the necessity of individuality and the solipsistic infrastructure in which Jaspers's perception of selfhood was grounded is difficult. In this respect, we may state that Jaspers located communication between solipsism and universalism, and this did not indicate his escape from solipsism, but only a clearer awareness of its existence and influence on his thinking.

The central status of loneliness in Jaspers's perception of communication appears in Fritz Kaufmann's interpretation, stressing also the solipsistic aspects accompanying Jaspers's perception of existentialist communication.¹⁹ Kaufmann went further and formulated on the basis of the idea of existential communication appearing in *Elucidation of Existenz* an understanding regarding Jaspers's perception of communication with nature²⁰ and with God.²¹ He also linked Jaspers's perception of communication with the issues he dealt with during the third period of his writings. Against this background, Kaufmann presented communication as one of the expressions of Jaspers's social criticism. In his opinion, the anchoring of communication on the basis of individuals, which grants it an aristocratic flavor, showed an individualistic reaction to the age of the masses. Kaufmann links this aspect to Jaspers's attraction to Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche.²² Kaufmann's sweeping interpretation, which did not distinguish between the different senses of this idea in the contexts in which it appeared, turned the idea of communication into the central subject of Jaspers's thinking, and on this basis presented his version of the possible directions in which it could have developed, but not an inherent interpretation of the concept of communication as it appeared in Jaspers's philosophical writings. This criticism of Kaufmann's interpretation is similar to Werner Schneiders's criticism of it.²³

The continued existence of the solipsistic aspects in Jaspers's perception of communication was not expressed only in the central role allocated to loneliness in this framework. The discussion of communication contained more direct arguments linking it to these aspects and more generally to the framework of the explication of selfhood. Jaspers defined communication as "an inner struggle for

the possibility to exist solely in my own right.”²⁴ The “struggle” Jaspers mentioned in this context should not be understood as directed against an external entity, but as expressing a struggle with the human tendency not to become an Existenz and to remain on the level of what Jaspers terms “mere existence.” The word *bloß* in German has two meanings: mere and bare. In this context, I believe both are relevant. See Jaspers’s use of the term *bloß Dasein*,²⁵ referring to the “fall” of Existenz from a state of realization. At this point there is similarity with Martin Heidegger’s approach, seeing *Das Man* as a main mode of Existenz.²⁶ The argument that communication does not serve as a means of overcoming loneliness does not necessarily indicate the failure of communication. The reliance of Jaspers’s concept of communication on a solipsistic basis does not leave room to expect that communication would guarantee the end of loneliness, or even make it a rarer experience. In the absence of real reference to the character of the other Existenz, communication appears as a speculative possibility whose meaning does not depend on realization. Communication constitutes one more of the possibilities through which Existenz can realize itself and deepen its individual identity, and beyond that we know nothing about it. In any case, the loneliness that Jean Marie Paul rightly defined as the “hermeneutics of selfhood” is revealed as a formative element of Existenz, and also of existential communication.²⁷

On the Marxist critique of the dialectic between loneliness and communication in Jaspers’s philosophy, see Günter Junghänel’s criticism that “the pseudodialectic between loneliness and communication [reflects] an attempt to cover the objective social contradictions, and especially the class struggle.” He says that the loneliness Jaspers described does not constitute a party in the dialectic existing in human communication, but is a by-product of the socio-material situation in the capitalist world, which only the social order offered by Marxism could solve.²⁸ This criticism ignores one of the most basic premises of existentialist philosophy in general, perhaps the most fundamental of all, that the different levels of existence do not characterize different social groups, but are different modes of existence of the same person who alternates between authentic and inauthentic modes of existence. Compare also Schneiders’s criticism of Junghänel.²⁹ For further discussion, see Georg Lukàcs’s interpretation, seeing Jaspers’s philosophy as a reflection of the bourgeois elitist ideal lacking any social consciousness.³⁰ Jaspers responded to the Marxist criticism directed at his thought in his article “Reply to my critics.”³¹ Saner discussed the role of Marxism in the socio-cultural context during Jaspers’s early period, and on the image Jaspers had of Lukàcs.³² Manfred Gangl discussed Jaspers’s character as a social critic.³³

While clarifying the link between the perception of communication and the main motifs of the perception of selfhood, we may ask the question: why had communication not been included from the start in the framework of the explication of selfhood, appearing only as a transition mechanism? The answer to

this stems from the basic ambivalence typifying the perception of selfhood that was behind the concept of communication in Jaspers's thought. As he put it:

Regarding the question: why is there communication? Why do I not exist alone? To this an answer is possible that can be understood to the same small degree as [there is an answer] regarding the question about selfhood.

In his opinion, at this point we encounter "... the paradox of the becoming *origin* of selfhood, which was actually *from itself but still does not exist from itself and with itself alone*."³⁴

These questions, which appear rhetorical when they occur in the context of a discussion of communication, demonstrate Jaspers's real difficulty in breaking through the wall of solipsism he had himself constructed around selfhood in the early stages of his work, but at the same time also his awareness of this aspect in his concept of selfhood. The hints of disappointment, or even despair, Jaspers expressed in this context stemmed from the conflict between the discovery that Existenz requires communication to constitute its selfhood and the original intuition, whose influence in Jaspers's thought was still present, that selfhood had the ability to "stand independently" in the world.³⁵ The awareness that communication is essential not only relieved the feeling of loneliness, but also made it more difficult to experience, especially since being aware of it became part of Existenz's self-perception. The paradox to which Jaspers was now exposed in his discussion of communication was not a solution, since individuality was one of the expressions of the maturation of Existenz's self-consciousness, but this maturity was expressed no less by the urge to communication. In this context, Di Cesare suggested that Jaspers did not achieve a balance between loneliness and communication.³⁶

The new self-understanding being formed in Existenz's consciousness in view of the possibility of communication with another Existenz, that it could not exist only in itself and through itself, but required the human Being outside it, was expressed in the following words appearing under the title "the dissatisfaction in myself alone":

If I perceive myself in the face of the refusal to communicate and experience consciousness where I rely on myself alone then the dissatisfaction... is worsened... I cannot find the real because what is real is not *only* what exists as real for me; I cannot love myself if I do not thereby love the other. I must become dreary if I am only I am. However, there is in me a real and original drive *to stand by myself alone*; I would still like to be able to live as retiring to myself...³⁷

The refusal to communicate is no longer presented as an expression of the dominance or power of individuality, but as a lack or fault in selfhood that damages the freedom that is one of the typical features of Existenz, and eventually leads to its identification as a closed objective Being.³⁸ In the absence of communication, Existenz is removed to outside the boundaries of Being and finds itself as “homeless” in existence.³⁹ In this respect, communication is not perceived as a means of escaping from selfhood or as evidence of the flimsiness of selfhood. The maturation of Existenz’s self-consciousness is now presented as “pressing within the external *willingness* toward communication.”⁴⁰ Jaspers, who at no stage of his philosophy renounced his primordial insights, found it difficult in this context also to push aside his original urges to grant philosophical representation to selfhood as an independent and self-sufficient Being, or as he wrote, “I would still like to be able to live as retiring to myself.”⁴¹ However, this urge was overcome by the awareness that such an approach would diminish the ability to achieve a complete understanding of selfhood that was at the center of his philosophical commitment.

The connection between communication and Existenz’s grasp of existence is not expressed only in the negative, but also in the positive. Just as in the absence of communication Existenz is removed from existence, so also the presence of communication strengthens its hold in existence. Jaspers’s argument that communication helps Existenzes that form it to participate actively in ideas, tasks, and goals that arise from real existence in the world⁴² strengthens the observation that the ability to form a relation toward another Existenz is one of the most crucial expressions of Existenz’s hold on existence. Existenz’s grasp of the immanent expressions of the world and its ability to form a relation toward other Existenzes embody the two main implications of Jaspers’s distancing himself from solipsism. While the other Existenz is not necessarily part of the immediate reality of the Existenz examining the possibility of forming a relation of communication with it, its ability to recognize its existence and to confront the possibility of communication becomes an inseparable part of its self-consciousness as a worldly Being.

In a way we can argue that there is a basic similarity between the role allotted to the other Existenz in communication and the role objects occupy for formal knowledge. Just as a person’s mind requires objects as a basis for forming its consciousness, so Existenz requires the existence of the other Existenz in order to form and develop its self-consciousness.⁴³ We would do well to compare the role of the “other Existenz” in communication for the Existenz forming its selfhood with the dialectic of the master and the slave in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s philosophy. To the best of my knowledge, such a comparison has yet to be made, although the connection between Jaspers’s thought and Hegel’s philosophy in other contexts has been examined by Alan M. Olson.⁴⁴ The very discussion of communication takes place from the point of view of the Existenz being

explicated in Jaspers's thought and not from the viewpoint of the other Existenz, which is not presented as a real entity with its own existence beyond the role it may play for the Existenz under discussion. Not only can communication take place only between Existenzen,⁴⁵ but the very meeting between the two is defined as responding to the same possibility of selfhood identified in the other.⁴⁶ Preserving the link to the viewpoint of the Existenz is achieved by reducing the difference between the two Existenzen, intended mainly to moderate the otherness of the other Existenz.

At this point, the instrumental nature of the relation Existenz forms toward the other Existenz is revealed. Existenz does not require the fullness of the Being of the other Existenz, or even its concrete existence, which was not even mentioned in the discussion, dealing mainly with the situation from which the Existenz that is forming its selfhood is pushed to communication. The presence of this aspect in Jaspers's thought probably served as a basis for a variety of interpretations that understood in some ways the philosophy of Existenz as a rephrasing of the traditional approach of *sui causa* regarding human beings. From this point of view, Jaspers's philosophy was understood as an expression of the extreme subjectivism of excessive and dangerous autonomy of the individual, and even of anti-social elitism.⁴⁷ The implications of these interpretations for the understanding of the perception of communication are clear; this interpretation negates the possibility of understanding Jaspers's concept of communication as an option that Existenz can realize in practice in its existence.

Like these interpretations, the interpretation offered here does not see Jaspers's perception of communication as expressing a real possibility. Here we also reject the possibility of seeing the concept of communication as part of a dialogical approach, as other interpreters of Jaspers's thought believed. The scholars who saw Jaspers's perception of communication as a dialog viewed it as evidence of a real experience of Existenz, instead of as an expression of Jaspers's dealing with a speculative option. Hans Urs Von Balthasar lists Jaspers along with Martin Buber as two dialogical thinkers of the period.⁴⁸ Heinz Horst Schrey included Jaspers's thought in what he termed "the philosophy of dialog."⁴⁹ Similarly, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl includes Jaspers in a list of philosophers, such as Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Franz Rosenzweig, and Albert Camus, who dealt with "the issue of communication or dialog"—two concepts she probably considered identical (she argues that Jaspers was unique in this context in linking communication with truth).⁵⁰ Michael Theunissen offers a more moderate interpretation of Jaspers's perception of communication, and shows similarities between Buber and Jaspers that indicate, in his opinion, Jaspers's proximity to dialogical thinking, but do not yet enable his philosophy to be included in it.⁵¹ Harry Wardlaw claims that Jaspers's understanding of truth as communication draws heavily on Immanuel Kant.⁵²

I still have difficulty accepting the interpretation that sees subjectivism as the be all and end all of Jaspers's philosophy, since it lacks a real explanation for the very presence of the idea of communication in his philosophy of Existenz. It conspicuously ignores the open discussion of the implications created by the possibility of communication in Jaspers's perception of Existenz, and misses even the viewpoint focused on Existenz in which these approaches were anchored. Jaspers described the implications of this possibility in the following words:

In communication I become open to myself with the other.
However, this opening is also for the first time the becoming real of the I as self. If I think that opening is the clarification of an innate character, then I abandon with this thought the possibility of Existenz, which is still creating itself in the process of opening where it becomes clarified.⁵³

The "opening," or the ability to self-transcend that is typical of Existenz, which enabled it to become acquainted with the possible existence of another Existenz, revealed to it new horizons so far hidden from it. Even before it was exposed to what was beyond it—Being and transcendence—it reached better self-understanding. Now it transpires that the very possibility that Existenz could form a relation toward what was beyond it reveals the real nature of the infinity that, already early in his writings, Jaspers had attributed to the individual's subjective Being. The infinity does not depend on the absence of boundaries imposed upon it, but on the possibilities of its self-understanding in light of what is beyond it, and naturally restricts it. In this respect, we can argue that the very possibility of forming a relation to a transcendent entity testifies first and foremost to the nature of the Being called Existenz. The perception of communication as the "openness" and "opening,"⁵⁴ of individuals toward the other in order to form their selfhood is rooted in German culture. It refers primarily to two central concepts in Hegel's philosophy: *Entäußerung*, which means rejecting or renouncing the other, and *Vergegenständlichung*, which means making the object to which the person refers more vivid and concrete. These two concepts denote individuals' ability to use what is around them, in the widest sense, to form themselves as spiritual and creative entities.⁵⁵

We can summarize this stage of our discussion of Jaspers's concept of communication by arguing that we can find in it the traces of the solipsistic infrastructure that has generally accompanied the framework of the explication of selfhood. In this context, this infrastructure is expressed in the centrality attributed to loneliness in "communication." However, the introduction of the other Existenz into the realm of possibilities through which Existenz can realize itself deepened the cracks in the solipsistic perception of selfhood beyond the influence of the discussion of the world's reality and of objective knowledge. This change made Jaspers's perception of Existenz more flexible and opened to it new horizons

including the possibility of forming a relation toward transcendence—an option that had not appeared in this thinking while the explication of selfhood had been the main axis guiding it. The possibility of forming a relation toward transcendence, which appeared thanks to the changes in the perception of Existenz, served as a basis for Jaspers's perception of communication being located outside the realm of the explication of selfhood, as part of the transition mechanisms.

The opening of Existenz toward what was beyond it, achieved in the context of what was called earlier the “first trend” in the perception of communication, was not realized in the form of relations with the other Existenz, but only in forming a relation toward transcendence, to be discussed in the framework of what we have termed the “second trend.” The first trend formed the foundation for what would be realized only in the second trend, to be discussed below. Only when communication serves as a transition mechanism can we determine whether, or more precisely, to what extent, Jaspers's perception of selfhood was liberated from its early link to solipsism.

4. Communication as a Transition Mechanism

The entry of the other Existenz into the arena of philosophizing revealed the basic polarity of the Being of Existenz. On the one hand, it tends toward “excited devotion”⁵⁶ to itself, while on the other hand it continues to want to “hold itself from loyalty to loneliness,” and to find ways to “help itself.”⁵⁷ Steffen Graefe discussed the connection between the element of “excitement” in the existentialist view of communication, the “excited approach” appearing in *Psychology*,⁵⁸ and *eros* in Plato's philosophy.⁵⁹ As long as communication is perceived merely as a framework of relations between Existenzes, we cannot decide between these two poles, since to the extent that “*love, the substantial source of selfhood in the communication*, can grow from itself the selfhood as a motion of its opening, it cannot enable the arrival at a perfect conclusion.”⁶⁰ The processes occurring in the self-consciousness of Existenz when it faces the possibility of communication cannot be exhausted within the explication of selfhood, precisely because they direct Existenz toward what is beyond it, to transcendence. Just as in the other transition mechanisms, in the discussion of communication Jaspers used transcendence before explicating it. However, its role in the context of communication is quite clear. As he puts it:

You and I, who are separate in existence, are one in transcendence. There we do not meet and do not even miss each other, but here in the becoming of a struggling communication that is revealed and confirmed in danger. Where this unity exists, there is a leap from what is already incomprehensible to what cannot be thought absolutely.⁶¹

The transition, or more precisely the “leap,” from existence to transcendence skipped the possibility of a meeting between the two Existenzes, which was not realized at all. More accurately, this possibility could not have been realized in principle, and we cannot even say it was missed. However, although the deep individuality that typifies them prevented a real meeting between the two Existenzes, Jaspers believed that they could share the aim to form a relation to transcendence as a Being existing beyond them. Jaspers did not clarify what the phrase “we are one in transcendence” meant, so his words lack an answer to the question whether referring to transcendence could serve as a basis for real communication between them, or whether it was merely a shared characteristic of Existenzes as such. One possible answer to this question is the argument that the unity of the Existenzes in transcendence is transcendental to both of them, and to the framework of their existence in the world, and it could even be existence out of communication. However, such a unity does not leave real traces.

Jaspers himself noted the complexity of his arguments, which directed the discussion in two directions at once, and even understood the potential for a contradiction forming from them. On the one hand, he wished to follow the changes occurring in the self-consciousness of Existenz in light of the possibility of communication with the other Existenz. On the other hand, he wished to establish out of these changes an approach toward what was beyond the Existenz and the other Existenz, toward transcendence. From the viewpoint of the Existenz being explicated we cannot separate these two channels, since the same opening to the other is itself the realization of itself as an Existenz. In his words, “This process of realization as opening does not take place in the isolated Existenz but only with the other. As an individual I do not exist for myself, not as a revelation and not as an actual.”⁶² However, from the objective viewpoint of consciousness we cannot attribute processes of opening and change to a particular Being even before it was an actual Being. As he says:

For objective thought, certainly only what existed *before* can be revealed. However, the becoming open that brings the Being simultaneously with this becoming is like originating from the nothingness, thus it does not [remain] only in the sense of mere existence.⁶³

Jaspers clarified that although the “opening [becoming open] and the reality are in a relationship that appears to be forming in the contrast between its existing from nothingness and its being self-bearing,”⁶⁴ the contradiction that is forming is only an apparent contradiction,⁶⁵ a contradiction resulting mainly from the continued presence of traces from the early perception of selfhood, according to which selfhood is a “self-bearing” Being. This is because transcendence is perceived as “resulting from the nothingness” only from the viewpoint of Existenz, or more precisely as long as the dominance of this viewpoint is preserved in the discussion

and the possible existence of an otherness separate from Existenz itself is pushed aside. However, as the self-consciousness of Existenz matures and opens new horizons to what is beyond it, it transpires that the very acquaintance of Existenz with the existence of transcendence is based on the changes that occurred in Existenz's self-consciousness. Perhaps there is still room to define the transition from the explication of selfhood to the clarification of the relation Existenz forms toward transcendence as a "leap," even if only not to grant this transition a deterministic meaning where the "openness" of Existenz necessarily leads to the formation of a relation toward transcendence. In any case, the perspective of Jaspers's whole philosophy confirms this process, since eventually Jaspers moved away from dealing with Existenz and focused on explicating Being and transcendence.

The openness to the reality of another Existenz transpires as an essential preparation for the perception of communication as a transition mechanism. It deepened the cracks in the solipsistic perception of selfhood and opened new possibilities for Existenz that were an "unknown" for it at this stage of the explication. The vagueness and lack of clarity typical of Jaspers's arguments about transcendence in his discussion of communication demonstrate the condition of Existenz, at this point facing two new options for it: forming a relation toward another Existenz and forming a relation toward transcendence. In the process, it forms a self-consciousness that no longer allows it to maintain its self-perception as a "self-bearing Being," but Jaspers's thought still lacked the tools to bridge the gap between its early self-perception and the possibilities revealed by the discussion of communication.

As in other places, here, too, Jaspers apparently spoke in two voices and left his words undecided. Sometimes he appeared to strive to bring both Existenzes closer to transcendence, and at other times he appeared to see their existence side by side as helping each of them to eventually arrive at transcendence while preserving their individuality and sovereignty. Sometimes he appeared to wish to create a relation of continuity from the level of existence to transcendence, while at other times he appeared to distinguish between the different stages of presenting a Hegelian-natured process where each stage was an escalation compared to its predecessor, but at the same time also its negation. Either way, the shared presence of both "trends" revealed in the discussion of communication illuminates the general direction in which Jaspers's philosophy was moving. This thought was at this stage in a process where the status of Existenz as the sole object of philosophizing was being undermined, against the background and limitations uncovered in the explication of selfhood. True, in this framework, too, Existenz continued in its explicit condition to serve as an essential infrastructure for Jaspers's arguments. However, his main attention was no longer devoted solely to the explication of Existenz, but started to be directed to expanding the sphere of reference of Existenz that served as a basis for forming new axes of philosophy

not dependent on the self-clarification needs of Existenz. To be more precise, the metaphysical consciousness, which was the fruit of deep modification processes occurring in Jaspers's thought, is not the consciousness of Existenz, but this consciousness itself was already based on something existing beyond it.

The interpretation of Jaspers's concept of communication offered here, according to which it is part of the formation process of metaphysical consciousness—or more precisely a stage where this consciousness became a conscious goal of Existenz—stands in contrast with most existing interpretations in the secondary literature. They understood Jaspers's idea of communication as an explication of a real experience of Existenz, or interpreted the possible reality of this experience as equivalent to the possibility of forming the Existenz itself, also often defined by Jaspers as “possible Existenz.” The understanding that Jaspers's perception of communication reflected a real possibility for the Existenz has appeared, for instance, in interpretations that tried to derive humanistic norms and ethical values from it. Salamun, for example, summarizes four norms that arise from Jaspers's perception of communication: the daring for mediating-creating loneliness and self-standing self-consciousness; the requirement to open to the other; the cry for unqualified and non-egoistical willingness toward the other; and finally the willingness to recognize in principle the other as a possibility for self-actualization.⁶⁶ The fundamental difficulty in accepting the ethical interpretation of Jaspers's perception of communication stems from this interpretation almost completely ignoring the fact that the Existenz as another to which communication is directed does not appear at any stage as a real personality with its own world. The criticism is not that we cannot derive from Jaspers's approach any ethical meanings or discuss the implications of his thought in this direction, but instead concerns the understanding of ethics as the central and comprehensive motive in which his approach is grounded. A total interpretation like this not only does not present a reasonable explanation for the changes and developments that occurred in his philosophy, but it also ignores the metaphysical aspect that entered the ethical aspects themselves. Without referring to this metaphysical aspect, the ethical aspects are also only partially explicated. If Jaspers's approach contains an ethical meaning, I believe that it is anchored in the metaphysics that is progressively revealed as a basic infrastructure of his thought in its different periods. Even if we ignore the question of the reality of the other Existenz, we cannot ignore that in his discussion of the possibility of communication Jaspers presented an instrumental attitude toward the other Existenz. It was largely a secondary factor in the change processes experienced by the self-consciousness of the Existenz that continued to be dominant in the discussion. Schneiders, too, noted the problems in principle posed by the ethical interpretations of Jaspers's philosophy of Existenz. In his opinion, Jaspers's negative position in the argument about the very possibility of recognizing moral norms with the usual instruments of our reason could lead to the “crumbling of

moral philosophy.” Jaspers’s position, in Schneiders’s opinion, should not be viewed as the abolishing (*Aufhebung*) of moral philosophy, since this position limits in principle the possibilities of forming it in reality. Schneiders argues that it is no accident that Jaspers’s claim regarding the impossibility of deriving “worthy actions” was a fruitful basis for studies in the field of legal philosophy dealing with the special meaning of objectivity and normativity of actions.⁶⁷ He mentions three works written in this vein.⁶⁸ These works are valuable not only in the field of law, but also in moral philosophy, which is currently considered as part of it.⁶⁹

The role of the other Existenz was mainly symbolic. The other Existenz represented for the Existenz undergoing explication a different form of humanity, but the main meaning of this humanity depends on the possibility that it could help the Existenz become acquainted with hidden facets of its Being. In any case, the question remains unanswered how we can conclude from the perception of relations between people, which is *apriori* presented as a speculative possibility, any norms and values requiring realization in the framework of the concrete reality of human action. Even if the requirement for the realization of the norms that the ethical interpretation deduced from Jaspers’s general arguments, we could still not view his perception of communication as anything other than a vague phrasing of *mental positions* that Existenz develops in the face of the speculative possibility of meeting another. We can be almost certain that Jaspers would not have supported this restricted outcome, if only because of the psychologistic image arising from it—an image that he consciously and actively wished to cast off even before publishing *Philosophy*. Jaspers stated in retrospect that *Psychology* was not a psychological book in essence, and that it became his unconscious path to philosophy.⁷⁰ The conditions for communication that Jaspers listed related only to the Existenz under explication and not to the other Existenz to which the communication relation was supposed to be directed.⁷¹ To use Heidegger’s terminology, communication is an aspect enabling Existenz to reach a more advanced development of its selfhood, which deepens in view of the idea of transcendence, functions as an *Existenzial*, and should not be seen as representing the layer of the *Existenzielle* that portrayed for Heidegger the layer of realization.⁷² Finally, the other Existenz remains in Jaspers’s perception of communication a speculative element whose realization is at least not a consideration in the philosophizing, and perhaps does not exist at all.

As in the ethical interpretation, the interpretative direction characterized by an anthropological-philosophical orientation also contains an understanding of the perception of communication as an expression of a real option for Existenz. William Earle, who in general understood the existential elucidation as a rational framework, saw the perception of communication as an essential means for achieving a rational estimate regarding the reality in which we live. While rationality does not cancel the essential and unbridgeable polarity accompanying the Being of Existenz in its experience of communication, as a result of which it is

condemned to live in a paradox, in his opinion reason and objective consciousness are able to help resolve it.⁷³ Urs Richli did not go as far as Earle in arguing that Existenz could be understood using the instruments of rational thought. However, from the same anthropological orientation, Richli, too, tried to deduce from the perception of communication, and in general from Jaspers's perception of Existenz, principles regarding the "correct humanity" that he believed was embedded in Jaspers's thought.⁷⁴ In a way, we could state that the anthropological position, satisfied with drawing general principles regarding people from the perception of Existenz, including Jaspers's perception of communication, without aiming to phrase from these principles any ethical requirements, does not harm the principle of freedom that was a founding element of the Being of Existenz. However, like the ethical interpretation, this interpretation, too, was characterized by understanding communication as a descriptive condition applying to the ontological reality in which Existenz is contained. The criticism presented to the ethical interpretation can equally be applied to the anthropological interpretation. Taking into account the understanding of the ethical and anthropological interpretations of the idea of communication as an expression of a real experience of Existenz, it is no wonder that they did not grant real importance to the role of transcendence in Jaspers's perception of communication, and were unable to explain the metaphysical depth of Jaspers's perception of communication and his philosophy as a whole.

The interpretative approach based on understanding communication as a concrete and realizable idea did not solve real problems arising from Jaspers's alternating between the other Existenz and transcendence, each of which represents a different Being of the "other." This interpretation was also unable to offer an explanation for the nature of the connection between Existenz and transcendence arising from the perception of communication. In contrast, exposing the two directions of philosophizing within the idea of communication, defined above as the "first trend" and the "second trend," has enabled us to follow Jaspers's attempts to escape from the perception of Existenz as a solipsistic Being and to reveal the transitional function entailed in his perception of communication.

The continuation of the tendency to achieve the explication of selfhood within the discussion of communication and the absence of a real explication of transcendence testify to the greater proximity of communication to the explication of selfhood than to the explication of Being. However, as transcendence and Being become central issues of philosophizing, there will hardly remain any trace of the idea of communication as a possibility of meeting between two Existenzes. This will clarify not only the functional status of the other Existenz, also harnessed to the self-explication of Existenz, but also the functional nature of the entire perception of communication that serves mainly as a means for the replacing of the axis of philosophizing—from the one aimed at selfhood to the one that was to be directed at Being.

HISTORICITY

1. From World Orientation and Communication to Historicity

The perception of Existenz as a worldly Being, which started to form in *World Orientation*,¹ reflected Karl Jaspers's aim to provide his discussion of selfhood with a philosophical nature. The introduction of the concepts of "world" and "consciousness" into his discussion undoubtedly created a real change in his perception of selfhood. It no longer appeared as a Being detached from any context and link with the reality external to it, but became a worldly Being. While selfhood was still the main object of the philosophical explication, the discussion of the implications of this change was restricted to the relevance of the world's reality to the self-perception of Existenz. In a way, only in the perception of communication can we find a more direct handling of the implications of the perception of selfhood as a worldly Being. When Jaspers was discussing communication, he was not conducting an independent discussion about the world as a real context in which the meeting between Existenzes takes place. In the discussion of the concept of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*), on which this chapter focuses, Jaspers was able for the first time to consider the concept of the world as a Being that had independent existence that could be examined beyond the implications it had for the self-consciousness of Existenz. In this context, too, he added insights to the framework of the explication of selfhood, and therefore presented it here as one of the transition mechanisms. However, since historicity expresses a deeper otherness than that of the other Existenz discussed in communication, the clarification of this concept created a further distancing from the solipsistic perception of selfhood and made real progress toward the explication of Being. Unlike the concepts of communication and of boundary situations (to be discussed in Chapter Seven below), the concept of historicity has rarely been studied by scholars.

2. Between Historicity and History

The idea of historicity is based on the classic Hegelian distinction between the two meanings of the German word for history (*Geschichte*): history and story.² The first denotes the objective meaning relating to historical events, on whose basis the science of history was created. The second denotes the subjective meaning of

this area, stressing the decisive role of the human factor in forming the past consciousness of people as a basis for their self-understanding in the present.

Against the background of this distinction, of which Jaspers was aware, he attempted to differentiate between historical consciousness and consciousness of historicity. People's role regarding *historical consciousness* is limited to their ability to observe past events and learn about different historical periods from them. These events do not necessarily have any relation to their personal lives. In any case, in the mental activity involved in historical consciousness, the person's presence is not the individual's presence, with all the subjective factors characterizing that selfhood, but the presence of someone gifted with an abstract reasoning ability, or what Jaspers called "consciousness in general." Not only is the individual's private personality not perceived as a factor influencing the process of understanding through "consciousness in general," but there is a deliberate effort to distance it based on the assumption that it could bias and even damage the understanding. In contrast, in *consciousness of historicity*, which is part of the consciousness of Existenz, it perceives itself as an entity forming in time. This means that Existenz perceives its existence in the present as a continuation of previous forms of existence, and as part of a reality that will continue even after it ceases to exist. At the center of the consciousness of historicity is an awareness of the temporal aspect of existence in its many expressions, an awareness that turns the existence of Existenz into one point on the time axis, and that requires a wider understanding of existence of which Existenz is only one part.³ The consciousness of historicity naturally acts to reduce the importance attributed to the existence belonging to Existenz and to undermine the solipsistic self-understanding.

Jaspers's concept of historicity contains two main components: first it denotes the physical aspect of time as a continuity on which the objective examination of time in science relies. The general meaning of this is that every present point of time was preceded by another point, and will be succeeded by another point. This facet is relevant to the discussion of Existenz as a real Being in concrete time. The term "historicity" also represents the experience of reality through consciousness, in the process of constructing the individual's personal identity, which lasts throughout a person's life. This aspect relates to Existenz as a Being aiming at achieving awareness of the facts of its existence and its patterns of dealing with them. The consciousness of historicity, attributed first and foremost to Existenz, but present in all human beings conscious of their experiences, reflects the constant involvement of Existenz with its origins; its life story; the question of the relation between the life story and its current situation; and the way it perceives it. The combination of these two meanings of "historicity" enables us to understand the idea of historicity as expressing a process whereby people understand themselves as part of a surrounding human Being characterized by the continuity of concrete existence in time. This understanding is based on reflection aimed at

clarifying the data and circumstances of the past on the objective level, but at the same time granting them subjective meaning relating to the concrete personality. The consciousness of historicity serves as a framework for a broad, independent clarification of existence, but also for Existenz's dealing with the meaning this clarification has for its self-perception. The connection between the objective and the subjective aspects, or between the datum discovered and the reflection performed upon it to derive meaning from it is expressed in the following words from Jaspers:

Here [in the consciousness of historicity] are originally connected in an inseparable way Being and knowledge... Without knowledge, meaning a clear perception and being inside it, there is no historic Being, and without a reality of historicity there is no knowledge.⁴

The two components of the consciousness of historicity, "knowledge," and "Being," or the objective and subjective aspects of time, illuminate from a new angle the epistemological and the ontological viewpoints, which have been revealed as establishing elements in Jaspers's philosophy. The epistemological viewpoint, focusing on the question what can be known about selfhood, directs Existenz in this context to examine its past and to ground its self-perception in a wider view of the data of existence, understanding that only some of them can have some expression during its lifetime. In contrast, the ontological viewpoint, aiming at expressing the entity of selfhood as a Being present in the world, is reflected in the discussion of historicity in Existenz's effort to understand itself as part of the wider entity of existence. To be more precise, the anchoring of the ontological viewpoint in a wider awareness of the temporal aspect of existence is not exhausted by the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being that transpired from the discussion in *World Orientation*. There Existenz was still discussed as a Being that forms its existence and examines it according to the possibilities it entails, while the concept of historicity portrays a more mature self-perception of Existenz, seeing itself as part of a wider Being whose boundaries extend far beyond its individual existence.

In a way, only in the discussion of historicity, at least to a greater extent than in the discussion of communication, does the inability of the two viewpoints, the epistemological and the ontological, to fully describe the perception of selfhood start to become apparent. The epistemological viewpoint is required to expand its horizon and examine the whole of existence, the relevance of historical knowledge to the discussion of historicity. In contrast, the anchoring of Existenz in an existence whose boundaries extend beyond the concrete existence of Existenz requires the ontological viewpoint not only to examine the entity of Existenz, but also to present a broader entity. Up to this stage of the interpretation of Jaspers's thought it was possible to discuss the contribution of each of these viewpoints to

the analysis of the subject, but we now require a new understanding that identifies the point where they meet. The knowledge achieved through the ontological viewpoint will no longer be perceived as external to the reality of the ontological Being of Existenz, but as inseparable from its reality, which cannot be exhausted merely by observing the concrete existence to which it is directly linked. The continuing undermining of the solipsistic intuition did not allow Jaspers to continue to see Existenz as a Being whose existence and self-consciousness could rely only on themselves. As we will see below, widening the frame of reference of the two viewpoints to the existence whose boundaries extend beyond those of Existenz softens the distinction between historical consciousness and consciousness of historicity and helps expose the connection between knowledge about Being and Being itself.

3. Consciousness of Historicity as a Means of Elucidating Existenz

A. Existenz and Historical Knowledge

Jaspers's handling of the possible contribution of historical knowledge to the clarification of Existenz raises anew questions that have already been discussed in previous contexts. In his early writings, Jaspers sought to determine the relation between the physiological aspects of mental illnesses studied by the science of psychopathology and the character of the individual mental patient; in *Psychology*⁵ he discussed the question of the possible contribution of general psychology to understanding the mental life of a person as a subject; while in *World Orientation* he discussed the relationship between science and philosophy. Jaspers's argument all along was that even if psychopathology, general psychology, and science could contribute to understanding a person, the uniqueness of selfhood is not revealed except through the viewpoints that also contain awareness of the particular dimensions existing in the individual's Being. This awareness is apparent in the meanings he gave to the founding terms of the explication of selfhood: "mental," "world view," and "elucidation of Existenz." Jaspers not only tried to form a point of view through which the individual's subjective Being could be elucidated; he also devoted considerable effort to distinguishing between it and other viewpoints, which appeared to him to miss the point. Presumably, this principle would also apply to the distinction between historical consciousness and consciousness of historicity. Only consciousness of historicity would be relevant to the elucidation of Existenz. This premise was the basis for Elisabeth Young-Breuhl's interpretation, defining historicity as a concept of the Existenz that as such is outside the object-subject dichotomy, and reflects an inexpressible certainty of Existenz and of the reason that clarifies it. Along with historicity, she also listed the concept of freedom and the concept of communication as concepts of the Existenz. She also argues that there exists a link

between Jaspers's idea of historicity and Immanuel Kant's perception of time.⁶ However, the innovation entailed in the concept of historicity, and more generally in the ideas defined as transition mechanisms, is the change in the pattern that had accompanied Jaspers's thought up to this point. Unlike his previous discussions, in this context Jaspers aimed to make the gap between Existenz and what is beyond it more flexible. In his attempt to harness as many viewpoints as possible to the philosophical discussion, he was able to note the partial, limited nature of a viewpoint as such, and at the same time to move away from the idea that one exclusive point of view could reveal the fullness of the object of philosophizing to which his thought was directed. In the concept of historicity, this change became apparent in the effort to harness the mental skills involved in forming a historical consciousness, which were mainly aimed at establishing the scientific nature of history as a realm of knowledge serving the consciousness of historicity, and in turning it into an integral part of the self-perception of Existenz. As he puts it:

From this historicist (*geschichtlichen*) source the *historical* also becomes for the first time really historicist. Without it, it would only mean a particular event attributed to the existence of the present evaluated positively or negatively. However, my theoretical knowledge from history becomes through the whole science of history a function of the possible Existenz, if its contents and images aim themselves at me, face me, demand from me, or push me away from them, not only as distant patterns existing as closed within themselves, or in other words: if it is *assimilated* to the function of the eternal present of the things that exist within the philosophical-historicist consciousness.⁷

It transpires that the idea of historicity entails the understanding that the historical knowledge itself does not reflect a mere generality, but also contains an existential element, and meeting with it may help the explication of Existenz. Existenz's observation of historical knowledge is not characterized by an unmediated, unbiased view, usually considered as a precondition for knowing things, but instead it perceives it a-priori as facing it, and it sees it as a fertile source for elucidating its selfhood. The viewpoint of Existenz regarding historical knowledge creates a transformation in it that expropriates its general, impersonal aspect, restructures it, and turns it into a tool through which it organizes its story of becoming.

On the face of it, these claims of Jaspers's contain no real innovation. As in previous contexts, here, too, he tried to harness the issues that arose in his discussion, in this case, historical knowledge, to the purposes of the self-elucidation of Existenz. As in his criticism of the science of psychopathology or of general psychology as formal frameworks of knowledge that could not enable access to the fullness and uniqueness of human Being, here, too, was implicit the

assumption that general and formal historical knowledge could not serve as a source for the self-understanding of Existenz. We could even say that historicity granted historical knowledge the same role that the other Existenz had in communication—another means for establishing the selfhood of the Existenz being explicated. Just like in communication, so in historicity the specific features of the “other” were denied and assimilated into the press of the self-elucidation of Existenz, which apparently did not lose its dominance in the philosophizing.

Jaspers discussed the consciousness of historicity after presenting his perception of communication, and this could be crucial in revealing the motivation for this consciousness. Jaspers described in this context the mutual fertilization between Existenz and historical knowledge. On the one hand, the viewpoint of Existenz regarding historical knowledge shows new, unfamiliar facets of it, enriches it, and reveals its dynamic aspects; rescues the historical knowledge from the generality that typifies it as a framework of formal thought and encourages the creative forces it contains, which without Existenz would have remained silent and dormant. In this respect, we should not understand the argument that Existenz removes from historical knowledge its general element as an expression of its distorting influences, but of its ability to produce from it what is sometimes missing in the historian’s view. Jaspers noted that through Existenz, “[historical knowledge] proves its power in the ability of its results, to be replaced by real historic consciousness of the self existing in the present.”⁸ On the other hand, historical knowledge serves Existenz as a source for meaning and a broader self-understanding in existence; thanks to it Existenz does not perceive itself as an autonomic Being existing outside any context, but as a Being existing in a place and time and as part of a Being that existed before it and will continue to exist after it.

Clarifying the mutual relationship between historical knowledge and the existence of which Existenz is part served as a basis for Jaspers’s claim that people’s handling of the element of historicity in their Being requires them to become acquainted with other forms of objectivization through knowledge.⁹ The meeting with these forms opens for Existenz a window on complete entities of realities beyond itself, through which it learns that its concrete existence takes place alongside other forms of existence, not necessarily existential ones, and is subject to the same conditions as the rest of them. This understanding does not make the general, objective viewpoint the main instrument for elucidating Existenz’s experience of historicity. However, since historical knowledge becomes for it a criterion by which it examines everything around it, it is encouraged to identify the existence of general aspects applying to it as a Being existing in time, aspects that can also find expression in other Existenzen, but also in other entities that are not Existenzen at all. Contrary to the tendency to emphasize the otherness of Existenz compared with other objects in the world, in the process of becoming acquainted with its historicity, it learns that general,

objective knowledge also relates to crucial aspects of its existence, which undermines the thought that Existenz is opposed to any form of generality and objectivity.

It is hard to ignore Jaspers's vacillation between the effort to grant expression to the particular element in the story of self-formation and the urge to make a general claim regarding the temporal nature of human existence as such. True, the historicity of a person does not express any more than the story of the birth and establishment of this person's selfhood as an Existenz—a Being that is not considered by Jaspers as identical to the sum of phenomena accompanying its existence in time. However, the dialog Existenz conducts with the possibility that this story could itself become knowledge, with all the implications of this, serves as a basis for the understanding of historicity as a "framework story"—the "story" being the sum of all the private experiences, and the "framework" also containing general aspects whose relevance exceeds the boundaries of the individual story of the concrete Existenz.

Against the background of this interpretation, I argue that the mutual relationship formed between historical knowledge and Existenz in the framework of historicity constitutes an innovation and development in the shape of Jaspers's philosophizing. In the explication of selfhood, the boundaries of the discussion of the different subjects were fixed according to their degree of relevance to the character of Existenz, and even in the perception of communication the element of mutuality in the relations between Existenzes was hardly discussed. In contrast, in the clarification of the influence of Existenz on historical knowledge, we find a clearer recognition of the reality of an otherness separate from the Existenz. Since the otherness of existence in time, which transcends the concrete existence of Existenz itself, is deeper than that of the other Existenz, which has the same structure as the Existenz being explicated, I argue that in the discussion of historicity, Jaspers's thought moved another step further away from the solipsistic perception of selfhood, beyond that enabled by the perception of communication.

B. Existenz and Existence

The pair of terms in the title above may appear tautological, but this title refers to the examination of the attitude of Existenz (*Existenz*) toward existence (*Dasein*). The argument discussed in consciousness of historicity, according to which Existenz is in concrete existence in time, appears to have no innovation compared with the insights Jaspers has reached so far. Already in *World Orientation*, Jaspers dealt with the meaning of determining the reality of the world for Existenz, and in *Elucidation of Existenz* this discussion was deepened. However, when it became apparent to Jaspers that separating Existenz and the world was impossible, the recognition of the reality of the world still posed a threat to the self-perception of Existenz. This demonstrated Jaspers's difficulty in abandoning the solipsistic

image of selfhood that was fundamental to his early thought, leading to his inability to conduct an independent discussion of the world that was not subjugated to the purposes of the self-elucidation of Existenz. In the discussion of historicity, for the first time Existenz was presented as having relations of unity with existence:

Being as *detached* [absolute] Being, whether transcendence or selfhood, is inaccessible to me. When I want to realize it by *distinguishing* it from existence, I lose it...

I become certain of my own selfhood, and thus of transcendence, only *in existence*. The given, the situation and the tasks receive their meaning in *their fixity and particularity* to become for *me myself*... The contents of my essence are real only in a phenomenon and not outside it, in imaginary selfhood separated by abstract transcendence. *This unity* of myself with my existence as a phenomenon is my *historicity*, and awareness of it is *historistic consciousness*.¹⁰

The definition of Existenz as being in *unity* with existence should not be understood as evidence of Jaspers's moving away from understanding Existenz as a particular Being that he worked throughout his writings to establish. The consciousness of historicity as existential consciousness reflects the freedom of Existenz to form a conscious relation toward existence. In any case, its being subject to this existence does not contradict its typical uniqueness and particularity within it. Similarly, the recognition of Existenz being "subject to existence," which is an integral part of the consciousness of historicity,¹¹ does not express the perception of existence as a necessity forced upon it as expressed in the other contexts already discussed in previous chapters. See especially the discussion in Chapter Four, in the section "Detaching Existenz from the World."

The explicitness typical of Existenz's consciousness at this stage is revealed as having two facets. On the one hand, it is reflected in the self-understanding of Existenz as subject to the factuality of existence that places borders and boundaries around it, while on the other hand it knows that it is not exhausted merely by the boundaries of existence, and "... in this understanding Existenz realizes its essence through its fate."¹² In this respect, being part of existence, and even the access to historical knowledge and the uniqueness of the Being of Existenz, do not appear at this stage of Jaspers's philosophy as excluding each other.

Existenz's recognition of its reality in existence and the connection between this perception of existence and its self-perception establishes and deepens the activity and sovereignty Existenz shows toward itself in the ongoing process of self-explication. Compare with Alan M. Olson's interpretation, according to which transcending to transcendence occurring in historicity is based on the

individual's life-practice (*Lebenspraxis*), determining the dialectical nature of freedom and will.¹³ These expressions reflect the understanding that the existence to which Existenz is referring is not laid out before it as an absolute and complete element that it could accept or reject as a whole. Quite the opposite, the freedom typifying it as an Existenz encourages it to see those incomplete aspects of existence as an opening that enables it to perceive existence itself as a space where it might realize itself. As in the other contexts discussed in the explication of selfhood, the discussion of historicity also shows that Existenz is able to design existence to suit its character and needs. However, the innovation in the consciousness of historicity compared with the consciousness of Existenz formed up to the transition mechanisms is that at this stage Existenz recognizes that the elucidation of the basic data of existence is a necessary condition for determining the boundaries in principle in which its selfhood can be formed—a recognition that arises as a positivistic consciousness of Existenz regarding its dependence on factors beyond its control. Historicity as a framework where the attitude of Existenz to existence and the boundaries of the freedom it has within it is revealed as inseparable from the basic processes that were typical of the discussions in *World Orientation* and *Elucidation of Existenz*.

The maturation of Existenz's attitude toward existence that arises from the discussion of historicity reflects not only that it is not required to leave its selfhood in order to create the consciousness of historicity. From the point of view of this study, the importance of the idea of historicity is first and foremost in that it expresses Jaspers's deepening awareness of the problems in the solipsistic understanding of selfhood; in this way the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being is filled with real contents. However, the main importance of this idea is that it represents the stage of Existenz's reconciliation with, and acceptance of, itself and the world. Historicity, which assumes Existenz's awareness of its characteristic particularity against the background of the existence in which it finds itself, and also its ability to establish a consciousness of distinctness from it, does not negate the previous stages. The inclusion of the idea of historicity in the transition mechanisms creates integration between different insights discussed separately in previous contexts; on the one hand it enables maintaining Existenz's central position in the philosophizing, and on the other hand it opens the wide horizons of transcendence.

4. Transcendence in Consciousness of Historicity

The consciousness that started forming already in the explication of selfhood, according to which Existenz is not free of limitations and preconditions created outside it, has been fundamental to Jaspers's discussion of the perception of communication and the idea of historicity. In communication this consciousness was reflected in the confrontation with the possible reality of the other, while in

historicity it was expressed in the attempt to become acquainted with existence from a viewpoint transcending the boundaries of existential existence. Existenz's awareness of its dependence on factors external to it, and as a result to the problems typical of the solipsistic approach, became more penetrating in the context of consciousness of historicity. While the isolated existence of Existenz was revealed in communication only through the other Existenz, whose perception was largely derived from the way Existenz perceived itself, in consciousness of historicity the dependence of Existenz on what is beyond it is clarified as having wide dimensions transcending the boundaries of its personal existence. As the awareness of the Existenz's dependence deepens, and as it achieves a clearer self-understanding, new horizons are opened to it, which Jaspers's early perception of selfhood had blocked due to its total nature. Recognizing the other Existenz that is close by and the boundaries of existence that extend even beyond it becomes a corner stone in the process of the formation of existential consciousness regarding transcendence.

As in the other transition mechanisms, in the discussion of historicity Jaspers's usage of the term transcendence did not rely on a real explication, which demonstrates that the ideas discussed in this framework were an intermediate stage prefiguring aspects that only later would become the focus of his philosophizing. While the consciousness of the dependence of Existenz on external factors reflects Jaspers's continued effort to leave the solipsistic viewpoint, the absence of any real elucidation of the concept of transcendence indicates that the consciousness of transcendence had yet to mature into a central object to which the philosophizing was aimed. Unlike the perception of communication, the discussion of historicity already shows some progress in clarifying the concept of transcendence. For instance, the description of transcendence as the world's Being of nothingness¹⁴ indicated its location outside the world of phenomena and stated as fact the essential gap between it and existential existence, and existence in general. In any case, transcendence was presented as relevant to Existenz. As he said: "Any betrayal of transcendence exists for me in the pattern of betrayal of the *phenomenon of existence*, whose price is the loss of the Existenz."¹⁵ Although as part of the world of phenomena Existenz is distant from transcendence, its uniqueness as a particular Being is expressed in its typical effort not to be limited to the boundaries of this world and to form a relation toward the transcendence beyond it. The argument that "historicity as existence in time is for me the only way in which the absolute Being is accessible to me"¹⁶ grants the concept of consciousness of historicity its accurate meaning: being a consciousness forming in and directed at existence, it aims to understand people as a phenomenon of existence in general, including the existence that preceded it; consciousness of historicity establishes the perception of Existenz as part of existence. Since the consciousness of existence and of itself exposes Existenz to the horizons beyond it, consciousness of historicity becomes a

viewpoint that bridges, first, between Existenz and transcendence as an absolute experience and, second, beyond existential existence and existence in general. Jaspers expressed these two aspects of consciousness of historicity in the following passage:

Thus in historicity the duality of my consciousness of Being becomes clear to me, which first in the agreed unity is true: I exist only as existence in time, and I myself am not temporal. I know myself only as existence in time, but in a way that this existence becomes for me a phenomenon of my non-temporal selfhood.
... I and my phenomenon separate themselves and identify themselves the more I reflect about the ways or immediately exist with myself.¹⁷

Although the references to transcendence in the discussion of historicity did not exceed the granting of preliminary meaning to this concept, they were sufficient to clarify that historicity constituted an integral part of Existenz's self-consciousness. Jaspers went further, arguing that without the existence of a relation of Existenz toward transcendence, it would be risking the loss of its selfhood.¹⁸ The dialog between existence and transcendence and the formation of both through each other in the discussion of historicity became crystallized in the concept of eternity, which Jaspers defined as an endless duration of time. The fixing of Existenz's grasp in eternity that remains connected to the world of phenomena of the present¹⁹ compressed the consciousness of historicity into an eye blink.²⁰ Compare this with Jaspers's historical discussion of the eye blink (*Augenblick*).²¹ Individuals as Existenz became aware that they were no more than a passing phenomenon in existence. Through this phenomenon itself, which has depth in the past and horizons in the future, the eternal was revealed to them. The eternity of human Being is not the sort of religious claim referring to the person's survival in life after death. Nor does eternity appear in this context as an expression of the realization of values. In my opinion, the main point of eternity is that it indicates people's ability not only to direct their future but also to design the past of existence, which has apparently already been decided, in such a way as to allow them to claim from it the story of Existenz's formation. Jaspers described the two temporal directions on which consciousness of historicity acts simultaneously as a paradox:

The paradoxes of Existenz's consciousness of historicity, that the disappearing time contains the Being of eternity, does not mean that eternity is supposed to be somewhere outside the place where it appears temporally. In contrast [it means that] in existence, Being does not simply exist, but it appears as that which is already decided, and indeed what has been decided is eternal.²²

In many ways, the meaning granted to existence in the consciousness of historicity may be compared to the meaning of “situation Being” in *World Orientation*.²³ See the discussion of the term “situation” in Chapter Three. In Chapter Seven below this term will be discussed from an additional angle. In these two contexts, existence was presented as a blend of necessity, meaning of data whose origin is external to Existenz, and of freedom or possibility that reflect Existenz’s ability to act and to form itself. While for Existenz the wide consciousness of the world entails becoming aware of its dependence on factors beyond its control, its ability to achieve orientation within this world is revealed as a lever for self-realization. The perception of Existenz that appears for the first time in the discussion of historicity as being in unity with existence now receives its full meaning. The consciousness of existence and of formation in time does not lead it to view itself as confined to the boundaries of existence forced upon it as a worldly Being. Jaspers’s interpretation of the concept of eternity enabled expanding the meaning of the idea of possibility beyond its appearance in *World Orientation*. While before it had been perceived mainly as having a meaning regarding the future of Existenz, in the discussion of historicity it refers also to its past, and not only the future but also the past appears here as an incomplete element for it. This means that the consciousness of historicity provides Existenz with a new meaning for events in its past, and it is not only subject to them but they appear as data that can be formed and acquired.²⁴

In the absence of a real explication of the concept of transcendence, Jaspers found it difficult to separate this concept and its implications for the perception of Existenz. This difficulty is apparent in the argument that the unification of existence and Existenz in the consciousness of historicity is a *personal perception* Existenz reaches.²⁵ The perception of Existenz still finds it difficult to contain simultaneously both the particular elements and the new awareness of extra-existential, independent dimensions revealed in the discussion of historicity. Also, the insights achieved regarding transcendence in the discussion of historicity had not been independently conceptually formulated, and transcendence could be significant only for the Existenz that had experienced it.²⁶ Even if historicity as existential consciousness contained a degree of awareness of transcendence and exposed Existenz’s ability to refer to what was beyond the boundaries of its concrete existence, the deviations did not breach the boundaries of existentialist consciousness, based first and foremost on its selfhood.

The unity of Existenz and existence, as a phenomenon in its historicity, is as such only by the standing of selfhood in existence before its transcendence, whose absoluteness I cannot know outside the ciphers of its historicity.²⁷

The difficulty in starting the clarification centered on transcendence, typical of Jaspers's perception of communication, remains largely in his discussion of historicity. It transpires that the gradual distancing from the solipsistic perception of selfhood—as expressed in becoming aware of the existence in which Existenz is anchored, its relation to the possible existence of another Existenz, and even in awareness of wider aspects of existence—was still insufficient to direct the path of philosophizing toward transcendence. As the clearer consciousness of the boundaries within which Existenz moves becomes formed, so does a more vivid awareness of their rigidity and the difficulty in breaching them without undermining the importance of Existenz in the philosophical discussion. The tendency to expand the philosophizing typical of Jaspers's thought as explicated up to this stage becomes a real threat to Existenz, which was already on the verge of being deposed from the center of the discussion.

The consciousness of historicity is formed in light of this situation of Existenz and designed by Jaspers as a controlled instrument aimed at providing a solution for this stage of the philosophizing. On the one hand, it demonstrates for Existenz the isolation and detachment imposed upon it by the attempt to form its selfhood only on the basis of introspection, and reveals to it the barren closedness of the solipsistic selfhood. The appearance of new horizons of philosophizing, emerging from this consciousness, opens for Existenz room to refer to the Being beyond the boundaries of the world of phenomena. On the other hand, because it has yet to achieve explication of these horizons, it is required to remain constantly alert for the possibilities at its disposal as an Existenz, so that expanding the boundaries of the existence in which its life is conducted would not lead to its uprooting from existence.

Seven

BOUNDARY SITUATIONS

1. Expanding the Boundaries of Existence from “Situation Being” to “Boundary Situations”

The attempt to expand the framework of the discussion of selfhood, whether by new points of view or by clarifying the connection between it and additional topics accompanying it, was typical of Karl Jaspers's approach to the issues of communication and historicity. The concept “boundary situations” is undoubtedly one of Jaspers's most original and fruitful, and we will see that not for nothing did different scholars and philosophers argue that even this term alone could have established Jaspers's status as a philosopher.¹ On the face of it, we should not expect the discussion of boundary situations to indicate the continuation of the tendency to expand Existenz's boundaries of existence, since in them people are exposed uncompromisingly to their finality and to their inadequacy in the face of the factuality to which they are subject in existence. These are not situations that a person can initiate, plan, or avoid, only “encounter.”² Experiencing boundary situations, which shakes the foundations of a person's existence, is not part of daily life or of what Jaspers termed the “situation Being” shared by all people; even Existenz does not experience boundary situations continuously. However, the interpretation I will present below shows that the attempt to expand the framework of philosophizing is expressed also in the discussion of boundary situations, although in a different way to those we have seen so far. In communication and in historicity, and more generally in the explication of selfhood, the expansion was “horizontal,” meaning that it exposed Existenz to new horizons that enabled it to refer to aspects of existence that had previously been hidden from it. In contrast, in boundary situations, the expansion of the limits of philosophizing is “vertical,” meaning that it deepens people's ability to experience their familiar existence, which they have already identified as belonging to them, and enables them to become acquainted with some aspects that, Jaspers believed, contained the meaning of human existence.

As in the discussion of the concepts of communication and historicity, the interpretation presented here will also aim to express the *role* of the boundary situations in assisting the transition from the explication of selfhood to the explication of Being, and therefore the discussion will not detail the concrete contents of each of the individual boundary situations. In *Psychology*, Jaspers listed four boundary situations: struggle, death, chance, and guilt. In *Elucidation*

of *Existenz*, he proposed a different division and added a boundary situation of suffering. “Struggle” and “guilt” were presented in greater detail, and for the first time two more general boundary situations that exist in the background of all human experience appeared: “chance” and “particularity” (*Bestimmtheit*). For a detailed discussion of the specific boundary conditions, see Edwin Latzel.³ However, while communication and historicity were discussed mainly in *Elucidation of Existenz*, the boundary situations also appeared earlier, in *Psychology*. This not only provides us with a special opportunity to examine the development of Jaspers’s philosophical insights in the period between the two appearances of this concept in two different periods of his writing—the medical-psychological and the philosophical—but also enables a wider examination of the general conception of transition mechanisms that located them in *Elucidation of Existenz*.

2. Boundary Situations in *Psychology*

The starting point for the explication of selfhood, on which Jaspers’s discussion in *Psychology* was based, was anchored in observing world views as a phenomenon and especially as a framework for processing the subjective experiences of the individual. The world view the individual constituted served as a framework for the processing of these experiences, but at the same time also as a major tool through which the subjective Being is revealed in its uniqueness and fullness.⁴ In this context, Jaspers presented boundary situations as follows:

These situations, where we feel, experience, and think at the boundaries of our existences in general, we thus term “boundary situations.” What they have in common is that in the tangible world, always divided into subject-object, there is nothing stable and absolute that cannot be doubted, and there is no grasp point that could withstand every thought and every experience... These boundary situations, as such, are unbearable for life, and thus they almost never appear in complete clarity in our experiences of life, but indeed we almost always have a grasp point when facing boundary situations. Without it life would cease.⁵

As the experience of boundary situations sharpens people’s awareness of being, as a finite entity, bound to the split between objectivity and subjectivity, so the boundaries of the world view as a framework for elucidating their experiences and constituting themselves become more tangible to them. Indicating the permanent presence of the infinite aspect of human experience exposes the person to contradictions, or more precisely antonyms, which world views cannot solve. This discovery was capable of undermining the evidence of the wholeness of world

views in general, and could even have created a crisis in the perception of subjectivity relying on it. As he put it:

As long as man is motivated by the forces of world views, he can never remain [only] in the concrete, since every concrete thing has simultaneously both a finite nature and an infinite nature. To deal with what is essential for him, he always encounters paths to the infinite or the whole. He can find, in his escape from the infinite to the mystical experience, a temporal limited satisfaction and peace. However, if he stays alert, if he remains in the split of object and subject, then all the infinity leads him to abysses of the contradictions called antonyms.⁶

The antonymous and contradictory nature of the experience of boundary conditions on the one hand, and people's difficulty in containing them and dealing with them using the tools at their disposal from normal existence situations on the other hand, make it difficult to see it as a source for explicating the individual's subjective Being as a whole. The meaning of "boundary" in these situations is expressed in the argument that the contradictions in world views are real and constitute "something absolute."⁷ This means that there can never be any solution to the contradiction between the experience of these situations and the other experiences in a person's life. The antonymous nature typical of the experience of boundary situations and the accompanying dead-end experience are presented as evidence of the basic limitations of human beings in providing a more encompassing meaning and significance to their experiences in reality. The antonyms arising from the boundary situations indicate not only the edge of the boundary of the world view, but also of human experience at all.

Latzel argued that the explanation for the antonyms created by the boundary situations originated in Jaspers's decision to adopt the method of "descriptive psychology," for which the antonymous structure of existence serves as a convenient starting point for discussion.⁸ It is difficult to accept this explanation not only because the descriptive method is marginal in *Psychology*, serving at that time as only one of the viewpoints through which Jaspers examined the individual's subjective experiences. In light of the experiences occurring in boundary situations this interpretation is difficult to accept, since these demonstrate not only the limitations of this method, but also the limitations of any possible explanation of a person's experiences at all. The boundary situations reveal the undecipherable element of human experiences as such. In his words:

This doubt appears with the awareness that there may still be other life forms. The conscious experience of boundary situations, which were previously covered by solid patterns of taken-for-granted objective life forms, in world pictures and images of faith... led to the *disintegration of*

these patterns. These patterns were previously unconscious, and now it transpires more or less what is a pattern and this has been experienced as a binding, as a restriction and as a doubtful thing that does not have the power to give a grasp point.⁹

These words show that in addition to the experiencing of boundary situations facing people with the real possibility of their annihilation, it also exposes them to the helplessness of world views to give them meaning within the range of their other experiences. Experiencing boundary situations apparently throws individuals outside the protected boundaries of the private world view, which they achieved through hard work, and demonstrates for them the partial and unconscious nature of a world view forming within the imaginary reality they created for themselves. Experiencing boundary situations may remove the cover that the private world view spread over the actual reality that is full of opposites and contradictions, and over people's expected demise. In the absence of the security that their world view was supposed to provide them, those who experience a boundary situation stand exposed and freezing at the edge of the abyss, filled with the keen awareness that no world view exists that could fill the abyss that has opened between their self-perception in existence and the possibilities implied by these situations. The increasing doubt regarding the reality of the self Being that the world view aimed to represent threatens to turn the world view itself into an empty vessel.

The connection between boundary situations and the processes of self-constitution and rational criticism that Jaspers presents in *Psychology* is central to Kurt Salamun's interpretation of boundary situations in their early appearance. In his opinion, these situations lead to the loss of the sovereignty and confidence people have in their life routine, and to the denial of the value of all the rational solutions and knowledge they possess about the reality in which they live. As a result of experiencing them, these situations throw the person into what Kurt Salamun terms "the unobjectivizable core of his internality." However, in his opinion, the boundary situations are also granted a positive meaning in *Psychology*, since they are perceived as directing people to become acquainted with the depth aspect of their Being—an aspect where their decisions are not determined by an objective perception of a systematic world view claiming general validity. Against this background, he notes that boundary situations reflect the freedom and independence of selfhood in its decisions, and also the individual's very possibility of finding the strength for life's actions without turning them into an objective and compulsory thing.¹⁰

The centrality of antonyms in the presentation of boundary situations in *Psychology* receives an interesting illumination in the interpretation of J. Rudolf Gerber, who argued that the contradiction between reason and intelligence, appearing in Immanuel Kant, contains a sort of depth aspect on which Jaspers's terms in general, and also the boundary situations, rely. He claims that these

situations bring the antonymous elements in life to a climax, and in order to produce the desired insights from them, people must “renounce the effort to escape the tension between the limiting *Verstand* and the aspiring *Vernunft*.”¹¹ I find that these words of Gerber’s explicate mainly the early version of the boundary situations, apart from his argument that through these situations the individual becomes aware not only of the boundaries of existence itself, but also through elimination, of transcendence that is perceived as “an existing ‘Unknowable’.”¹² Since consciousness of transcendence forms from *Philosophy* onwards and is not mentioned at all in *Psychology*, I believe that Gerber’s interpretation does not enable us to understand the later version of boundary situations. My interpretation of this version appears later in the discussion. Erich P. Grünert presented another comparison between Kant’s basic principles and those of Jaspers.¹³

In my interpretation, I will argue that the connection between the concept of boundary situations and Kant’s concept of antonyms is prominent in their early form, while in their later appearance in *Philosophy* there is a noticeable influence of Kant’s term of border (*Grenze*). As we recall, Kant’s concept of antonyms indicated a logical contradiction between two premises, each of which was capable of being proved by disproving its opposite, and the law of contradiction could not decide regarding the validity or invalidity of either of them.¹⁴ Kant understood this contradiction as expressing a stage where although a person’s reason has achieved sophistication and maturity, it is not capable of formulating a consciousness regarding its selfhood. Similarly, in the idea of boundary situations Jaspers also expressed people’s difficulty in containing the gap between the infinite aspect of existence to which these situations hint and the finite reality as a source for constituting their world view. Under Kant’s influence, Jaspers described antonyms as contradictions that cannot pass the boundary of consciousness,¹⁵ and the antonyms are also revealed as a boundary situation portraying the problematic nature of the objective aspects of the world views that do not accord with the reality to which they refer. We can also indicate a general similarity between the role of reason for Kant and the role of the world view in Jaspers’s thought. Both are intended to help people obtain a more complete self-understanding aimed at overcoming the division between objectivity and subjectivity: for Kant it is reason that achieves a critical awareness of itself, while for Jaspers it is the world view that has to express what people perceive as the boundaries of their experience of the world.

The link between Kant’s concepts of antonym and reason, and the contradiction in world views, revealed in the discussion of boundary situations, testifies that their main meaning in *Psychology* did not depend on criticism of rationality as Salamun believed.¹⁶ This criticism accompanied Jaspers’s thinking from its inception, and is not especially stressed in the discussion of boundary situations. The epistemological viewpoint, expressed mainly in Jaspers’s

discussion of the phenomenon of multiplicity of world views and its general aspects, guided Jaspers in formulating the concept of boundary situations in *Psychology*. This viewpoint emphasized the conscious aspect of boundary situations, and in a way its very presence in the discussion can be seen as an attempt to use rational tools to deal with situations in which the absence of rationality is central.

Assuming that the experience of boundary situations reveals sides of the human experience that nobody can avoid, Jaspers used them to classify people on the basis of the different behavior patterns they show when encountering them.¹⁷ He presented three types: people who when becoming acquainted with antonyms experience an extreme destabilizing and lack of confidence that could end in paralysis of the ability to act and of their consciousness;¹⁸ others try in any way to avoid such experiences using different forms of compromise and denial of the contradictions appearing in existence;¹⁹ while in contrast to these two types there are those who harness the antonyms to their search for the infinite in life and apply the different contradictions as means of affirming life.²⁰ The parallel between the three patterns of reaction and the move whereby Jaspers's thought developed from his study of psychiatry up to becoming a philosopher in his own right is quite clear: Jaspers presents first the pathological reaction pattern, which cannot integrate the different experiences. Then he turns to the reaction pattern of denial and avoidance, a pattern we may assume to be most common. Even if this pattern is undesirable, it appears not to disrupt the normal life routine of people who choose it. The psychological viewpoint that sees world views as a framework anchoring the contrasts and contradictions in "something whole"²¹ may be effective for understanding the people who have chosen this reaction pattern. Finally, the third pattern reflects the viewpoint of spirit types, to be clarified below, where the contrasts arising from the boundary situations serve as a positive element of experience itself, which regains the support for its existence. This classification also shows that boundary situations, just like world views, provide an opportunity for meeting the basis of the human Being.

We cannot conclude from the statement that the very constitution of the concept of boundary situations reflects an attempt to deal with these situations using rational tools, that different people show a uniform coping pattern with these situations or that the particular component in their handling of it is marginal. The presence of the ontological viewpoint in *Psychology*, aimed at elucidating the processes of the individual's self-constitution within the context of the private world view, also stresses Jaspers's attempts to express the particular aspects typical of the process of forming a world view. Even if some components implied by Salamon's criticism are expressed in the concept of boundary situations as appearing in *Psychology*, they do not reveal their main meaning, which is people's difficulty in constituting a coherent world view that can help them deal with the range of their experiences in existence and especially with those that contain an

irreconcilable antonym. So, in the boundary situations in *Psychology* we encounter the boundaries of the world view as a tool for constituting selfhood. Perhaps we can see the early appearance of this concept as the first inklings of the limitations of the perception of selfhood or even of the self-perception that relies only on elucidating the individual's subjective experiences. In this respect, the boundary situations in their early appearance in *Psychology* prefigure the development that was about to occur in Jaspers's thinking, when its center of gravity was shifted from selfhood to the explication of the metaphysical infrastructure on which this selfhood relies.

I believe that when he wrote *Psychology*, Jaspers, who was endeavoring to write a book that would describe the human soul from the viewpoint of normality, was unable, or perhaps could not allow himself, to face the destructive potential of experiencing boundary situations in relation to the philosophical process that took place in *Psychology*.²² The attempt to find mental patterns and frameworks that could contain his perception of selfhood, apparent already in the adoption of the world view as a framework for explicating the individual's subjective Being, continued to guide him, as we will see below, even when he wished to resolve the crisis that boundary situations created in his thinking at that time.²³

We ask what the condition is for them [boundary situations]... not being expressed at all. Thus we encounter the center of the spirit types. What grasp point (*Halt*) does man have, how does he have it, how does he search for it and find it, and how does he maintain it—this is the typical expression of the forces living inside him. When we ask about the spirit types we are [actually] asking where a person has his grasp point.²⁴

The assimilation of the boundary situations as a positive element in the “spirit types” (*Geistestypen*) transpires as a substitute for the support granted by the world view, which was destabilized following the experience of the boundary situations. The definition of spirit types as “forces” in which the infinite perfections granted to human beings intuitively are represented²⁵ accords with the need to anchor the individual's experiences in a wider infrastructure—one where each single component will find its place in a more encompassing perfection than that granted by the individual's particular world view.²⁶ Jaspers presented several spirit types: nihilism, skepticism, rationalism, liberalism, authoritarianism, and others. The intuitive element in the spirit types makes it difficult to elucidate them using language, which in this context was described as “freezing” and “fixating,”²⁷ but at this point the world view can complement them as a more structured and conscious setting. The anchor world views have in the spirit types enables them to continue to serve as a framework that provides meaning to most of people's experiences. The advantage of the spirit types in comparison with the world views is that they contain the boundary situations within them, as a horizon viewed from

the range of human experiences as such, although these situations reflect the coming annihilation of the person. The complexity and flexibility typical of the spirit types enables dealing with a wider range of experiences and prevents a single experience or an experience of a boundary situation from turning into a total experience on which a person's self-perception will exclusively rely. Unlike the world view where the antonyms in boundary situations became an absolute experience, entailing the possibility of denying the existence of the selfhood that had experienced them, in the spirit types the antonym is surrounded by what Jaspers called "life forces" that moderate it and harness it to the purpose of constituting a more conscious and stable self-perception.

In a way, the influence of the spirit types over the boundary situations expresses the success of the world view to expand the capability of human experience, so that people manage to observe beyond the boundaries of their world views the boundaries of existence itself. The maturity of the processes of self-constitution, reflected in the experiencing of boundary situations, does not enable the person to be satisfied with the world view without clarifying the general and perhaps hidden elements on which it is based, which Jaspers called "spirit types." The understanding of the boundary situations from the perspective of the explication of selfhood contrasts with other interpretations of this concept in secondary literature. William D. Blattner's interpretation, according to which the boundary situations in *Psychology*, reflects an ontological interest.²⁸ The boundary situations are portrayed against this background as a sign of the metaphysical aspect present in the processes of self-constitution, which is hidden from whoever is still undergoing this process. Experiencing boundary situations spurs people on to investigate the intuitive and metaphysical aspects on which their world view is based, a process whereby they become aware of the boundaries of the world view itself or of the type of experience with which it can help them deal. The spirit types aim at the same original purpose that was the basis for the constitution of the world view, elucidating the subjective Being of the individual. However, the advantage of the spirit types in relation to this purpose is that through them the person is able to deal with the boundary situations without completely abandoning the world view or undermining the basic insights achieved in *Psychology*. In this respect, the perspective of spirit types allows a more efficient coping with the crisis instigated by the boundary situations in people's confidence in their world view. Just before the entire conception on which the perception of selfhood formed in *Psychology* collapsed into the abyss created by the boundary situations, the spirit types helped reaffirm this conception. However, from the perspective of Jaspers's entire philosophy we can state that the spirit types only postponed the crisis the boundary situations created in the perception of selfhood to a later stage in his work; until it could contain the tools to face the disruptive element in them and from this formulate a wider understanding of the individual and of the reality that could contain them as a positive element.

3. Boundary Situations in *Philosophy*

The new discussion of boundary situations in the philosophical period of Jaspers's writings raises the need to examine the differences between the meanings bestowed upon them in the two contexts and to present an explanation for his reexamination of this issue. The central argument in which my interpretation of the boundary situations in *Psychology* was anchored also applies in the interpretation presented for their appearance in *Elucidation of Existenz*, namely, that there is a clear link between the meaning of boundary situations and the more general context in which they appear. In this respect, the two versions of boundary situations serve as a mirror to the wider perception of selfhood in the context in which each of them appeared: while the appearance of boundary situations in *Psychology* showed the main motifs of the perception of selfhood that was anchored in observing the world views, the concept of boundary situations as appearing in *Elucidation of Existenz* portrayed the dialectic typical of the relationship of Existenz toward consciousness and the reality of the world. As Jaspers said:

These situations, like those I always exist within, that I cannot live without struggle and sorrow, that I accept upon myself inevitable guilt, that I must die, I call boundary situations. *They do not change*, but only their appearance; in their reference to our existence they are totally valid. *We cannot see* beyond them; in our existence, we do not see [anything] behind them. They are like a wall that we push and walk into. They cannot be changed through us, but we can only bring them into clarity without being able to deduce them or explain them from something else. They exist with existence itself.²⁹

The understanding that sees boundary situations as referring to existence and as given along with it affirms the argument in principle at the basis of my interpretation of the boundary situations in *Elucidation of Existenz*. According to this interpretation, the concept is anchored in the general insights Jaspers held during that period, centering on the perception of Existenz as a worldly Being. Like the discussion of boundary situations that appeared in *Psychology*, Jaspers's handling of this issue in *Elucidation of Existenz* also brought about a crisis in the perception of selfhood. However, in this context it led to significant changes in the basic concepts on which the philosophy of Existenz relied. The most significant change is apparent in the status of Existenz within the experience, or more precisely, the weight it was granted in the formulation of its existence. This change was an outcome of the basic difference between the ordinary situations Existenz deals with and the boundary situations. The first, as presented in *World Orientation*, have two characteristics that define Existenz's framework of

experience in the world: the necessity enforced upon it by circumstances beyond its control, and the freedom it still has in this context, thanks to which it can choose from among the possibilities it identifies in existence the one that appears as a source for fuller self-realization. See the discussion of "situation Being" in Chapter Three. The freedom component, so central in Existenz's "situation Being," is completely absent from the boundary situations, which appear to it as absolutely valid, with it having no influence on them whatsoever. Jaspers stressed the absence of existential freedom in the boundary situations when he described the feeling of Existenz in them as a "game ball."³⁰ This term demonstrates the arbitrariness accompanying the experience of these situations, and to some extent also the replacing of the activity typical of Existenz in existence with impotence.

Neither Existenz nor human consciousness as such has access to these situations or influence over them. In Jaspers's words: "A boundary situation is not another situation for general consciousness, since consciousness as knowing and as purposeful deals with them only objectively, or else avoids them, ignores them, and forgets them."³¹ This description is aimed, in my opinion, not only at emphasizing the limitations of formal knowledge or of human reason in general, which was not Jaspers's concern in this context; it expressed the way that Existenz experiences its existence in the boundary situations. In the following passage, Jaspers clarified the main implication the experience of boundary situations has on Existenz's perception of existence in general:

Boundary situations bring in their wake... a perspective in existence where it is doubted as a whole thing and is considered a possible, impossible, or differently possible [thing]. Existence in general is perceived as a boundary, and this Being experiences within the boundary situation that reveal that the world Being and my own Being within it are doubtful.³²

In Existenz's experience of boundary situations, it is drawn into the particular form of experience portrayed, for example, in suffering, guilt, chance, and recognition of the necessity of death. Unlike people's general experience of different situations, usually occurring alongside other experiences, the boundary situation is unique in the extreme intensity typifying it, turning it into a total representation of existence for Existenz. The particularity of each boundary situation and the way it is experienced by Existenz destabilize the possibility of seeing the everyday existence experienced by Existenz through ordinary situations as a complete thing. Paradoxically, the routine situations that serve as a basis for a person's orientation in the world are perceived as partial, as hiding the total and infinite aspects of existence, and everything they show about the worldly Being becomes doubtful. In contrast, it is the boundary situations, in their extreme particularity, and in the absence of the person's ability to maneuver in them,³³ that

are perceived as expressions of infinity. The inability to understand the boundary situations and the resulting helplessness Existenz experiences in the face of the abyss before it become fundamental data of its self-perception. The totality typical of the experience of these situations is responsible for the irrelevance of existential freedom when facing boundary situations not being attributed only to the experience of the boundary situations, but also percolating into Existenz's self-perception and perception of existence in general.

The vague definition given to the concept of boundary situations earlier on, whereby these situations "have [something] else but at the same time: this... does not [exist] for the consciousness in existence,"³⁴ now receives its precise meaning. The boundary situations illuminate the limitations of human beings in existence and at the same time they hint, from the boundary point where Existenz stands when experiencing them, to another Being beyond them. The experience of boundary situations projects in two opposite directions: on people's existence in general situations, now perceived as limited, and on the Being beyond them, regarding which they mark the boundary from which it spreads out. See the distinction between Kant's two concepts of boundary in the Introduction. Jaspers expressed the two facets of this experience by stating that "the boundaries appear in their real function, to be immanent and already to indicate transcendence."³⁵

The argument that boundary situations influence another understanding of people's existence in situations in general does not, according to the interpretation offered here, make boundary situations into the sole test of Existenz, since just like existence, so boundary situations, too, have many facets. Interpretations viewing boundary situations as Existenz's constituting situations, such as that of Gabriel Marcel, were probably based on a misunderstanding of Jaspers's statement that "experiencing boundary situations and existing are the same thing,"³⁶ as if only in them can the leap from Existenz to existence take place.³⁷ This is because the ability to re-examine itself and its place in existence is one of Existenz's qualities *par excellence*. Most people may experience during their lifetime some aspect of some boundary situation, but they will usually return to the forgetfulness-inducing routine of existence, without this experience leaving any real traces in their self-consciousness. So, Existenz is unique not because it experiences these situations with greater force, but because this experience creates a fundamental transformation in the way it perceives itself and its surrounding. This means that the consciousness of self-constitution, its uniqueness, and particularity is pushed aside in favor of a new consciousness where it appears to itself as one of the phenomena of existence and everything that applies to them applies to it; this consciousness, percolating into the self-consciousness of Existenz in the different boundary situations, does not lead it to doubt its existence, or even its existence as an Existenz, although this does not appear to it to protect it from the abyss these situations has opened before it. Against this background, common to all boundary situations, we can characterize the

consciousness Existenz has as a result, and present it as follows: Existenz becomes aware of the unavoidable factuality of the struggle and suffering in human existence; it knows that every day it approaches its inevitable death, which may be the result of an arbitrary accident, although this is insufficient to excuse it from the inevitable sense of guilt in these situations.

It is difficult to overestimate the power Jaspers attributed to the experiencing of boundary situations as appearing in *Elucidation of Existenz*. This is not the discovery of experiences that reveal to Existenz particular aspects that could have been assimilated into his philosophy of Existenz without undermining its basic insights. While in *Psychology* he was able to overcome the difficulties that the boundary situations raised regarding his perception of subjectivity and to leave it standing, in *Elucidation of Existenz* they undermined the most fundamental infrastructure on which the philosophy of Existenz relied. The question was not whether the contradictions between the way Existenz perceives itself and what it becomes acquainted with when facing the suffering, death, guilt, and chance in human experience could be reconciled, but whether Existenz could exist at all in these situations. The doubt naturally arises regarding the value of the self-constitution processes, in face of the cessation and end heralded by the boundary situations. As with the other ideas included in the transition mechanisms, so also in the discussion of boundary situations the emphasis was on the implications of Existenz's self-consciousness instead of on explicating the metaphysical horizons reflected by these experiences or those of transcendence, which were discussed only in the explication of Being. However, the uniqueness of the boundary situations as a transition mechanism was in their discussion bringing closer the end of the dialectic between the solipsism typical of Jaspers's early thought and the perception of selfhood as a worldly Being. This dialectic appeared as useless casuistry that changed nothing regarding the absolute and uncompromising finality emerging from the boundary situations. This is perhaps the greatest antonym people can experience as conscious Beings: they want to continue living forever, but when they become aware of this, they realize that they are approaching death with every passing moment.

Compared with *Psychology*, the awareness that the boundary situations constitute an inseparable part of the experiences occurring to a person as a conscious Being penetrated Jaspers's perception of selfhood more deeply in *Elucidation of Existenz*. However, it is probably the awareness of the deep undermining of the basic insights on which this consciousness relied that motivated Jaspers to try to moderate as much as possible the threat and negation of the very relevance of the philosophy of Existenz entailed in them. Such an attempt is also apparent in Jaspers's handling of the boundary situations in *Psychology*, where he wished to assimilate them into a more complex, flexible framework that enabled him to maintain the perception of selfhood anchored in world views. The difference is that in *Elucidation of Existenz* this attempt was

imbued with the awareness that the changes brought about by the exposure of the boundary situations as a given element of the Being of Existenz were irreversible. Jaspers's effort at this stage was not aimed at overcoming the challenge to the basic insights of the philosophy of Existenz arising from them, but at searching for ways to help him handle them. His aim was to show that although the experience of boundary situations instigates essential changes in Existenz, it does not turn its characteristics into an empty vessel. He indicated the particular nature of the existentialist experience of boundary situations. He also stressed that the freedom of Existenz was responsible for the experience of the necessity in boundary situations not being perceived as absolute, but as opening a window to the horizons beyond the boundaries of existence in which it was contained.³⁸ The boundary situations deepen for Existenz the awareness of the limitations typical of its existence in the context of different situations, and so it is pushed to search for a more encompassing metaphysical Being, beyond the boundaries of existence. Existenz harnesses the very drives that motivated it in the process of its self-constitution to the search for a metaphysical Being, which the experience of boundary situations has made tangible, and whose elucidation had become essential for Existenz's self-understanding.

In my opinion, this approach of Jaspers's shows that the changes regarding the status of Existenz within the boundary situations do not lead to relocating it outside the boundaries of the philosophical discussion—not at this stage, and as we will see later, not in the framework of the explication of Being. What Existenz is denied is the very possibility of changing or avoiding meeting the boundary situations, but what remains open to it is the possibility of expanding the boundaries of its awareness in such a way as to allow it *in its existence* to give meaning to what is revealed to it following the boundary situations, or more precisely the Being perceived as spreading onwards from the boundary situations.

The question “*Why is there existence at all?*,”³⁹ demonstrating the agitation the acquaintance with boundary situations in *Elucidation of Existenz* caused, was not fully answered at this stage of Jaspers's philosophy. However, in his statement, “The Being exists only when there is existence, but existence as such is not the Being itself,”⁴⁰ he gave a partial reply, or perhaps just a direction for the answer to this question that would be the focus of his philosophical interest later on. Already now Jaspers could testify that the existence in which Existenz found itself was not the be all and end all, although it was clear to him that it was pointless to search for meaning in isolation from the individual's experiences in existence.

The discussion of boundary situations in *Elucidation of Existenz* created deep changes in Jaspers's perception of Existenz. However, this discussion continued to rely largely upon it, and perhaps was even meaningless without it. Not only the ability to withstand these situations, but the very acquaintance with them, depends on the existence of an explicit self-consciousness from Existenz's point of view.

Perhaps this observation was in the background of different interpretations that saw the “boundary situations” in *Elucidation of Existenz* as a framework where Existenz could realize itself. Salamun, for instance, argues that the descriptions of the types of human existence in the face of boundary situations, ranging from “nihilistic despair” to “internal appropriation” to “composure with the knowledge of death,” are aimed at creating an autonomous picture of human beings whereby individuals can develop life patterns that will accompany their existence and turn them into the people they are.⁴¹

Another interpretation with an ethical orientation is that of Latzel, who argues that the boundary situations are a sign indicating an inconceivable depth, but containing the possibility of the self-realization of Existenz in transcendence. In this respect, Existenz, as a Being aiming at realizing itself, should be interested, in his opinion, in experiencing boundary situations.⁴² Latzel argues that the boundary situations bring Existenz into an unresolved paradox. It has to want the impossible—self-realization in transcendence—and only by this can it achieve the possible—self-realization in existence—which it cannot want and cannot find satisfactory. In his opinion, only if Existenz does not try to escape the boundary situations and does all it can to avoid failure to realize itself, which is in any case an inseparable part of its existence as such, can this failure serve as an authentic Being for its self-realization.⁴³ Jaspers’s concept of “foundering” will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Beyond the difficulties that are raised more generally by the ethical interpretation of Jaspers’s perception of Existenz, there is a particular difficulty in accepting it regarding boundary situations, as presented in both *Psychology* and *Elucidation of Existenz*. First, the question of self-realization is relevant mainly to the perception of the boundary situations in *Psychology*, when Jaspers’s thought was focused on the processes of constituting selfhood; but the ethical interpretation is based mainly on the discussion in *Elucidation of Existenz*. As we have seen, in *Elucidation of Existenz* Jaspers’s effort to constitute a philosophical approach is apparent especially regarding what was beyond the boundaries of Existenz’s self-realization—an attempt that involved dealing with new aspects of his thinking that significantly threatened the basic insights on which his philosophy of Existenz was based. Against this background, it is clear why it is difficult to accept the central argument in the ethical interpretation, whereby it is in the boundary situations that Existenz can realize itself. The long journey the perception of selfhood had undergone in the period between the publication of *Psychology* and that of *Elucidation of Existenz*, expressed in the profound changes that occurred in Jaspers’s perception of selfhood, could not apparently be expressed in the majority of the existing interpretations of boundary situations. These did not attribute any real significance to the very discussion of boundary situations in two different contexts, or to the contribution of the context to the meaning given them each time. Latzel argues that the meaning granted to

boundary situations in *Philosophy* is a continuation without any real addition of the young Jaspers's original philosophical intuition from the period of *Psychology*.⁴⁴ However, the interpretation offered here regarding the boundary situations is anchored in the understanding that the Existenz, having been formed as a Being that constitutes a more complex relation to what exists beyond itself (existence, the other Existenz, historical time, and so on), is significantly different from the character of the subjective Being as portrayed in *Psychology*. This development, apparent also in the gradual release from the need to anchor the discussion of selfhood in the defined mental patterns that had served as its anchor (such as world views), enabled the introduction of new concepts and aspects to the arena of philosophizing, including the integration of new aspects, such as existence and transcendence, which had a decisive influence on the formulation of the concept of boundary situations in *Elucidation of Existenz*.

Against the background of the fundamental differences between the meaning granted to the boundary situations in *Psychology* and the meaning they received in *Elucidation of Existenz*, I wish to argue that Jaspers's writings contain two different versions of this concept, and that each one reflected the more general insights characteristic of Jaspers's thinking at that period. The first version shows the solipsistic version of selfhood, while the second version expresses the effort to escape from this approach due to the limitations it imposes upon the wider understanding of selfhood and the attempt to constitute a metaphysical relation to what was beyond the boundaries of Existenz's self-consciousness. In this respect, this interpretation reflects the division of Jaspers's work into periods presented in the Introduction. The metaphysical aspect revealed in the discussion of selfhood does not appear exclusively in the later version of the boundary situations. As we have seen, it was apparent already in his early writings dealing with psychiatry. However, in *Philosophy*, when transcendence already appeared as a significant component in Jaspers's discussion, the metaphysical aspect was not limited to the relevance to the process of constituting Existenz. Jaspers's repeated reference to the issue of boundary situations in the same context where he makes his first steps in forming a philosophical relation toward transcendence serves as the very basis for understanding the later version of the boundary situations as part of the transition mechanisms.

Just as the early perception of the boundary situations was an outcome of the perception of subjectivity typical of Jaspers's thinking at that time, so also their later version in *Philosophy* reflected the perception of Existenz, which at that time was imbued with awareness of the boundaries of its existence and focused on the effort to grant them a more comprehensive metaphysical meaning. The gap that is so noticeable between the perception of Existenz as an autonomous Being that constitutes itself and determines its relation toward existence and its helplessness in the face of the boundary situations led to a reshuffle in Jaspers's perception of selfhood. One of the clearest expressions of this development in his philosophy is

demonstrated in the later version of the boundary situations where Jaspers tried to reverse the perception of existential freedom, arguing that these situations that reveal the boundaries of Existenz's experience and existence are the very ones that open a window for it to continue experiencing, and also a future space for self-realization in freedom. While it is possible in principle that the relation toward transcendence could later be translated into accepting an ethical or even religious value system, this would reflect a positive position existing beyond the boundaries of Existenz's consciousness in the boundary situations. The boundary situations in their later version place Existenz on the zero line: between becoming aware of the individual's expected demise and becoming aware of the existence of transcendence. The first erodes the difference between Existenzes and non-Existenzes, while the second distances Existenz from the center of the philosophizing arena.

4. Boundary Situations as a Transition Mechanism in Comparison with Communication and Historicity

The location of boundary situations as the final link in the transition mechanisms raises the need to compare them with the other two ideas in Jaspers's thought that helped transfer the center of gravity of the philosophizing to the explication of Being: communications and historicity.

A. Boundary Situations and Communication

On the face of it, we could assume that in light of the difficult experience of boundary situations—the struggle, suffering, sorrow, guilt, and death—communication might be a sort of relief to the person experiencing them. Jaspers's discussion of boundary situations includes no mention of communication at all. But this is not surprising considering the proposed interpretation. As we have seen, this interpretation did not view communication as a real possibility for Existenz, and stressed the influence of the solipsistic viewpoint on the relation Existenz forms toward the other Existenz, which was just one of the means Jaspers's thought placed at its disposal in order to deepen its consciousness as an individual Being. So, the disadvantage of communication in the boundary situations where a person especially needs it supports the offered interpretation of Jaspers's perception of communication, which was not dependent on the constitution of real relations with the other, but largely on its contribution to the broader self-understanding of Existenz and its preparation for forming its relation toward transcendence. Existenz stands alone in face of the boundary situations, and this is not only an expression of the essence of these situations where a person has no support or escape, but it indirectly implies that the perception of

communication in Jaspers's thought did not deal mainly with relationships between people, but was a metaphysical category.

Understanding communication as an idea that could be realized by Existenzes also projected upon the interpretation of boundary situations. Salamun believed that communication and boundary situations represented different forms of self-realization that are interlinked in some complex way. Against this background he suggested a few alternatives for understanding the relations between them: first, that boundary situations and communication portray two basic situations in which people can realize themselves; second, that loneliness in the boundary situation implies the possibility of being in communication with people; and third, that it is the very lack of satisfaction Existenz experiences in communication that shows the possibility of self-realization from the loneliness in the boundary situation.⁴⁵ However, considering that Jaspers himself did not refer to the issue of communication during the discussion of boundary situations, it is difficult to accept Salamun's interpretation, which appears as structured into his ethical viewpoint. The experience of dissatisfaction by the Existenz—the experience that served as the starting point for the discussion of the ideas included in the transition mechanisms—leaves no doubt regarding the centrality of *loneliness* in the experience of communication, in the constitution of consciousness of historicity, and in boundary situations. Each of these experiences helped significantly expand the philosophizing framework beyond the one typical of the explication of selfhood, where Existenz was presented as a Being closed within its boundaries. However, the person standing as an individual in face of the different experiences remained unchanged. Even so, the advantage of the boundary situations compared with communications and historicity is that it sharpens Existenz's awareness that the loneliness it experiences is way beyond the absence of another human being to complement it. This is the harshest loneliness a person can experience: loneliness from transcendence. At this stage it is not possible to establish this statement, since transcendence has not yet been elucidated within the transition mechanisms, but has been experienced mainly as a Being other than that of Existenz, which proved false as an enduring source of meaning and significance for existence in the world. The transition mechanisms are presented in the interpretation offered here as an integral part of the elucidation of transcendence included only in the explication of Being, based on the functionality typical of them as a means of rescuing the philosophizing from the explication of selfhood. Finally, we can state that the boundary situations are unique in comparison with the other transition mechanisms in that they indicate more clearly that the self-realization horizons of Existenz are anchored in a metaphysical Being whose boundaries cross immanence.

The question of the relation between communication and boundary situations has also been discussed in the interpretation of Latzel, who stressed, unlike Salamun, the role of transcendence as a factor in the experience of boundary

situations. In his opinion, the boundary situations constitute a sign indicating an inconceivable depth that contains the possibility for Existenz's self-realization in transcendence, and this raises the problem of the "announcing" or communication and turns the boundary situations into a medium in which it is clarified.⁴⁶ Latzel does not clarify whether in this context this is the problem of communication between transcendence and Existenz, or whether it means the inability of Existenz to report to another Existenz the nature of that "inconceivable depth" revealed to it by the boundary situations. The first problem relates to the nature of transcendence as such, while the second to the relations between Existenzes. However, the clarification of these two problems implicit in Latzel's interpretation does not contribute to the understanding of the boundary situations in their later version. First, Existenz's handling of the transcendence in boundary situations is not primarily related to its difficulty in establishing an explicit consciousness of it, and the awareness of its control cannot accompany the experience of these situations, which involve an extreme experience of helplessness. Second, the burning difficulty Existenz experiences in the boundary situations relates mainly to the inability *to contain in itself* what it becomes acquainted with, meaning the reality of its expected annihilation, an end that it as an Existenz cannot ignore. The power of the experience of the annihilation transpiring as a real horizon from the boundary situations relies largely on the Existenz knowing that the death is its personal death, while any discussion of death with another person could turn it into an event that is objective and external to the Existenz—removing it from being a boundary situation at all.⁴⁷ The necessarily subjective nature of the experience of boundary situations makes clear that communication is not a means of handling them. It is highly likely that the development of an interpersonal discourse about these experiences would distance Existenz from their real meaning that is accessible to the individual in loneliness. Even if dealing with communication in the context of boundary situations contributes to their explication, this contribution is not achieved thanks to the function of knowledge transfer constituting part of the experience of communication. But beyond the contribution of the criticism of Salamun's and Latzel's interpretations to further sharpening the interpretation of communication and boundary situations presented above, it also helped understand that these two original ideas of Jaspers's are part of one philosophical process: the perception of communication does not rescue Existenz from its loneliness, but reflects the seeing of the other Existenz as a means of transcending existence. The boundary situations, experienced by that Existenz that already knows that the possibility of communication would not rescue it from its loneliness, help it transcend existence once more and distance it another step from the rigidity of the solipsistic perception of selfhood.

B. Boundary Situations and Historicity

A connection exists between historicity, meaning the process whereby Existenz becomes acquainted with the roots and the wider boundaries of the existence to which it is subject, and the awareness forming in boundary situations whereby beyond its existence, which is expected to end, another, different Being exists. As Jaspers put it:

Existence is historicist because it cannot be complemented in time; it causes itself restlessly since there is no agreement in any situation. The antonymous view is the one that in time-reality (*Zeitdasein*) [raises the requirement] to become (*Anderswerden*) another.⁴⁸

Against this background we can state that although the explication of Existenz deepened in the boundary situations and was exposed to more significant threats than those it encountered during the discussion of historicity, Jaspers perceived these two ideas as part of one philosophical move. However, this statement does not accord with other expressions of Jaspers's, such as the argument that a person is destined to live with an irreconcilable split between the existence in different situations and existence in boundary situations,⁴⁹ and that "the power of this contradiction, if it does not weaken any side, is the truth of Existenz."⁵⁰ These sentences may indicate that boundary situations bring Existenz closer to constituting a metaphysical consciousness transcending existence more significantly than that enabled by consciousness of historicity, which is anchored in a deeper connection to concrete existence. In this respect, the contradiction reflects the great distance separating historicity from the philosophizing typical of the explication of Being to be presented later, compared with the boundary situations that are closer to this framework. But in another respect we can understand Jaspers's dealing with the link between the idea of historicity and the boundary situations as evidence that the connection of these ideas to the explication of selfhood was still significant, also showing the boundaries of the experience that still did not enable Existenz to constitute a relation toward Being. The limitations that required Jaspers to withdraw to the familiar thought patterns of the explication of selfhood were present also in his discussion of boundary situations in *Philosophy*. Either way, we cannot see the proposed options for understanding as an expression of Jaspers's contradiction or inconsistency, but as a demonstration of the special condition of the philosophizing during the transition mechanisms stage—a framework where on the one hand there is an expression of the distancing from and maturation of the early perceptions, while on the other hand there is an attempt to set the path where the new insights will be clarified. Jaspers's definition of boundary situations as amounting to their "immanent function"⁵¹ clarifies the complex condition of his thought at this stage:

communication and historicity, and especially boundary situations, implied the inability to continue discussing *Existenz* within the boundaries dictated by the explication of selfhood. The discussion of these issues brought the philosophizing closer to the explication of Being. However, the distancing from the explication of selfhood, characteristic of the ideas in the transition mechanisms, transpired as insufficient to constitute a real link to Being and to transcendence.

TRANSITION MECHANISMS: A CONCLUDING OVERVIEW

1. Three Forms of Otherness

The maturation of the awareness of the limitations of the self-perception constituted only out of the elucidation of its personal experiences led Existenz to recognize its need for the “other,” not only as a means of constituting a broader self-perception, but also as a Being without which its continued existence as an Existenz was threatened.¹ This is reminiscent of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s statements of principle regarding the spirit’s self-awareness.² Hegel connects the spirit’s ability to achieve self-consciousness with its becoming aware of another self-consciousness and placing itself opposite it. The discussion of the three transition mechanisms shows that the aim to expand the boundaries of Existenz’s Being through the other was accompanied by the fear of its annihilation and the fear of the collapse of the explication of selfhood. The discussion of the ideas included in the transition mechanisms was based on the fundamental insights achieved during the explication of selfhood, and it largely revealed the same points that had accompanied the study from its inception. However, the uniqueness of the discussion of these ideas lies in the integration between the different aspects that had appeared in earlier contexts and the criticism of these earlier ideas that it contained. The difficulty in detaching the expressions of the epistemological viewpoint from those of the ontological viewpoint was reflected at different levels in the discussion of these ideas. The distinction between the new facets revealed in Existenz and its reality as an existing Being now became almost impossible. The more we learned about Existenz and especially about its limitations, the more real a Being it became.

A comparative look at communication, historicity, and boundary situations from the perspective of transition mechanisms—in light of the question of the extent to which they helped transfer the focus of the philosophizing from selfhood to Being—shows that they represent three stages of distancing from the solipsistic selfhood typical of Karl Jaspers’s early thought. This process was apparent in the dependence of Existenz on factors external to it and perhaps more powerful than it, and in its exposure as a Being in a process of constant formation anchored in its drive to transcend itself. The deeper the degree of otherness of the other with which Existenz had to deal, the more Jaspers was able to expand the framework of philosophizing and base it on concepts whose meaning was not limited to their relevance to the explication of selfhood. The interpretation behind the viewing of

the three philosophical ideas as linked to the same developmental stage in Jaspers's thought did not rely only on exposing the functional facet they shared as a means of helping Existenz transcend itself, but was also anchored in clarifying the links of contents between them. My proposed interpretation of the philosophical ideas I included in the transition mechanisms did not grant them an independent status, and they were examined from the perspective of the two opposite horizons seen from either side: the explication of selfhood on the one hand, and the explication of Being on the other.

In *communication*, Existenz's perception of otherness was largely sculpted in accordance with the boundaries of Existenz's self-understanding, which was already in advanced stages of philosophical explication. In a way, the other Existenz can be seen as a sort of mirror Existenz placed before itself, to enable it to examine its character from another angle. But it was predictable that the explication of the idea of communication would reveal that what the Existenz saw was merely its reflection as elucidated in the clarification of Existenz. The idea of communication presents a minimal model of the other, a character largely reflecting the role Existenz had intended it for. In the end, the transcending to the other Existenz remained purely formal, and as such it preserved the obligation to the original Existenz at which the framework of the explication of selfhood was aimed.

In *historicity*, the otherness with which the Existenz was required to deal was deepened. This was no longer the formation of a relation toward a similar Being, but an attempt of Existenz to form a relation toward existence in the widest sense, and not just to adapt it to the needs of its self-understanding as we saw in *World Orientation*. In existence, as a whole reality spreading over the past and the future, there are constraints and forces that have their own dynamics that do not influence Existences differently from not-Existences. The consciousness of historicity expanded Existenz's viewpoint only regarding the boundaries of the time and space where it existed anyway, while Existenz itself remained the focus to which the wide boundaries of existence as historicity referred. The confrontation with existences as other was an encounter with a real and different thing, but in the negotiation that developed around the awareness of this existence, Existenz's familiar effort to understand itself was still expressed in many ways.

In *boundary situations*, as in the discussion of communication and historicity, Existenz confronted the reality of the other, but the contents of the otherness arising from these situations related tangibly to the possibility of Existenz's own annihilation. No doubt exists that through the boundary situations Jaspers marked the upper limits of Existenz's ability to experience, limits that also denoted the borders of its explications. Jaspers did not cease searching for the existential meaning of these situations, and sought to translate the experiences Existenz had in its encounter with the boundary situations in a way that would moderate or at least distance the annihilating possibility arising from them. The philosophical

effort aimed at harnessing the boundary situations to the life forces for Existenz greatly softened their absoluteness and made their boundary into one with which Existenz could live. In this way, Jaspers continued the trend of existential elucidation typical of his discussion of the other two mechanisms, which enabled, from the methodological viewpoint of this study, the inclusion of the boundary situations within the explication of Existenz. However, it was precisely the total nature accompanying the meeting with the other in the boundary situations that brought Jaspers's discussion at this point closer to the philosophizing whose boundaries were no longer limited to the elucidation of selfhood. True, both in communication and in historicity we can identify elements that prefigured the explication of Being, but only in boundary situations did their more significant presence not enable them to be assimilated relatively easily into the Being of Existenz, and in any case the need arose to grant them a status separate from it. Finally, the boundary situations faced Existenz with two choices: to annihilate itself as an existing Being at all, or to move aside from the focus of the philosophizing and to turn to explicate the horizons revealed to it by the boundary situations. Either way, in light of the boundary situations the perception of Existenz as the focus of the philosophizing became impossible.

2. Absolute Consciousness

The maturation of Jaspers's perception of selfhood typical of this stage of his thought—after the explication of selfhood was completed and the transition mechanisms had been discussed—well demonstrated the insights achieved, but no less also stressed its limitations. Paradoxically, precisely at the peak of the explication of selfhood, Existenz was revealed as an incomplete Being facing targets it could not achieve using the instruments of consciousness at its disposal. From the perspective of Jaspers's entire philosophy we can state that the condition of Existenz, as formulated in the transition mechanisms, did not remove Jaspers's drive to make contact with totality—a drive accompanying his thought from its inception. He realized that the desired totality would not be found within the boundaries of the explication of selfhood, but rather in the horizons viewed from it but unable to be clarified within the boundaries of the philosophizing typical of it. It is no coincidence that at this stage the term “existential consciousness” was replaced with the concept “absolute consciousness,” which Jaspers defined as follows:

Absolute consciousness, this certainty in Being existing from the tension it has toward the uncertain source of all philosophizing, becomes an *object* for philosophizing. Instead of philosophizing only from within it, it seems as a leap beyond yourself following which there is no longer anything... The absolute consciousness cannot be thought objectively, it cannot be

investigated like existence, it cannot be described like an experience, it is like nothing.... Absolute consciousness... can exist only from *self arrival*... [it] realizes itself knowing the danger: achieve yourself or lose [yourself], become yourself or fall apart.³

These words, demonstrating the complexity of Existenz's self-consciousness after the modifications achieved in the transition mechanisms had been assimilated into it, serve to describe the state of Jaspers's thought at this stage of its development, when it was on the verge of changing the central object of explication.⁴ The disputing of the insights behind the constitution of Existenz made "knowing the danger" they entailed relevant to Jaspers's thought, so that the danger could be overcome and the Existenz could continue existing. The explication of selfhood, considered at this stage as a philosophical move that had achieved its objective, is repositioned by the exhortations aimed at it: "achieve yourself" and "become yourself." It seems that the desired selfhood, to which Jaspers had aimed already at the beginning, now transpired as a target that had yet to be achieved.

The concept of absolute consciousness enfolds the two facets of the situation of Existenz at this stage: first it experiences a sense of security and is even saturated by the continuing effort to constitute its selfhood. *On the level of consciousness*, the sense of security is reflected in Existenz's self-perception as not wanting to know more; *on the existentialist level* the security is reflected in its self-certainty that is no longer searching for reasons and that knows that it can continue existing even in the boundary situations, despite having no solution for the difficulties or the threat they entail;⁵ *on the psychological-mental level* the security is expressed in what Jaspers called "composure" indicating a situation where people feel they can control the fear of annihilation arising from the boundary situations and achieve certainty in Being.⁶ The second facet of the condition of Existenz in absolute consciousness is reflected in its ability to face the possibility of its annihilation. In this context, Jaspers described Existenz as trembling and dizzy without any grasp or support, in the destruction of all forms of objectivity,⁷ feeling that the finality is sinking and that the person is becoming a "vacuum of Being."⁸

These two facets in the condition of Existenz reflected in the concept of absolute consciousness, the relative certainty and complacency on the one hand, and the feeling of standing on the edge of an abyss on the other, are merely two sides of the same coin. They do not constitute another of the contrasts with which Existenz had to deal throughout its journey of self-clarification, nor one of the antonyms revealed at different stages of the explication of selfhood and in the transition mechanisms. The presence of these two sides together creates a split in the Being of Existenz, which now seems as aiming itself to a new path of existence. In following this path, Existenz has experienced in different ways that not everything is judged by its relation toward itself. Paradoxically, at this stage

Existenz appears as standing securely and stably on both feet, enabling it to move away from its selfhood and cease seeing itself as the source and criterion for everything. Unlike the existential consciousness, which was a constituting factor for some other subjects discussed in the explication of selfhood (such as “existence,” “the world,” and “consciousness”), absolute consciousness itself constituted a subject for philosophizing.⁹ The Existenz bearing this consciousness appears at this stage to have become capable of placing itself for discussion as if it were standing aside, distant from itself in processes it was undergoing. Even the absolute consciousness serves as a mirror for the state of the Existenz when it becomes aware of the possible existence of a Being more encompassing than the existence it is in.¹⁰ However, the innovation is that what is reflected in this mirror is no longer the image of Existenz alone.

Let us examine three of the expressions of absolute consciousness that demonstrate the state of Existenz at this point in Jaspers’s philosophy: conscience, faith, and fantasy.

A. Conscience

Jaspers described conscience as a voice not identified with Existenz’s self-perception, as reflected in the discussion and its different experiences, such as the drive for communication, suffering, and guilt. Against the background of our discussion of the modifications occurring in the self-perception of Existenz, especially those reflected in the transition mechanisms, we can place conscience in the gap opened in Existenz’s perception following the undermining of the solipsistic understanding of selfhood. This is how Jaspers described conscience:

In conscience I have a *distance* from myself... between my existence and my real selfhood that has yet to be revealed to me, conscience enters as a reality, and from it what has to become a Being for me must be accepted or rejected.¹¹

However, the distance of Existenz from its selfhood, enabling the phenomenon of conscience, is not an empty vacuum. The citation above shows that Existenz has some hold on it, or more precisely, it understands that this is the very place of discovering Being, though still without knowing what the nature of this Being is. Jaspers demonstrated the condition of Existenz at this stage in another context when he argued that in conscience a person stands “facing transcendence... without hearing it [but is capable of] obeying it nevertheless like a voice from another world.”¹² Transcendence is perceived as being in another world to which Existenz has as yet no access, but it faces it already in the existential state of conscience. The ability of Existenz to move away from itself without requiring the other existing outside it or consciously transcending toward it, as we saw in the

transition mechanisms testifies to the maturation of the internal processes that allow it to become acquainted with things beyond it but not detached from it. In conscience, Existenz discovers Being and transcendence as an other existing within itself and grants them meaning even before they become explicit elements in its consciousness. A similar approach viewing the “conscience” as an internal voice calling upon people to be themselves appears also in Martin Heidegger.¹³ For a comparison, see also the concept of conscience in Jean Paul Sartre’s philosophy.¹⁴

B. Faith

As with conscience, so in the presentation of faith within the absolute consciousness Jaspers indicated the existence of a certainty that cannot be expressed in forms of knowledge. However, more prominently than was described in conscience, in faith the ability of Existenz to surrender the security granted by the phenomena in existence is especially stressed. It seems that despite the sense of risk accompanying such a surrender, the possibility of becoming acquainted with Being and transcendence is presented at this stage as preferable to Existenz.¹⁵ Jaspers described faith as follows:

From a subjective point of view, faith is the way the spirit is certain of its Being, its source, and its target, without having sufficiently certain terms for this. From an objective point of view, faith is expressed in the contents that as such remain incomprehensible and in fact only get lost repeatedly.¹⁶

Faith is unique in that although at this stage there has not yet been any real explication of Being and transcendence, “...possible Existenz has consciousness from transcendence. Before any thought about a specific transcendence it is certain of it or prepared for it.”¹⁷ The emphasis on surrendering certainty in the phenomena accords with what Jaspers defined in conscience as the distance Existenz has from itself. Eventually, in faith as in conscience, Existenz’s ability to turn away from itself in order to discover something that at this stage it has only a vague idea about is expressed. Faith is a central issue in Jaspers’s writings of the third period, which is outside the boundaries of this study. See especially his works *Philosophical Faith in Light of Revelation* and *Philosophical Faith*.¹⁸

C. Fantasy

In fantasy, the idea of surrendering confidence in the phenomena, also typical of Jaspers’s concept of faith, reaches a climax after which, it seems, Existenz is freed from the previous inhibitions that blocked it from contact with Being and with transcendence. As Jaspers put it:

Through fantasy the eye becomes free to see Being... The contents of fantasy stand with *original certainty* before eyes whose criterion is within it. There are no tests there from reasons or purposes, [since] the moment the fantasy becomes a means its essence is denied it. In [fantasy] there is the Being from which existence is justified for me rather than the opposite.¹⁹

In contrast with faith, fantasy is unique in that Existenz lacks in it even the consciousness of the surrender accompanying faith. In fantasy a new type of objects of reference is created, in which “I ensure for myself the super-sensory origin of my existence,”²⁰ and released from the bonds of empirical reality. Jaspers did not require fantasy to be based on anything from within reality, but merely stated vaguely that “its contents become real for me.”²¹ The reality of these contents is determined by Existenz, and they serve for it as a source of meaning, without requiring this meaning to be accessible to consciousness or to serve as a basis for communication between Existences.

The penetration of absolute consciousness as a fantasy into the foundation of Being expresses another stage in the development of Jaspers’s thought. After Jaspers was able to establish the perception of selfhood through wide philosophical moves, especially those aimed at achieving world orientation, he could allow himself to turn to fantasy, which in many ways embodies the opposite of world orientation.

Fantasy allows me to experience the perfect and peace from itself. In the boundary situations everything seemed to me to be torn, impossible, or impure. In fantasy I experience the perfection of Being as beauty... While [the perfection] is not real in the sense of existence, it does not appear as a deception from the love of the absolute consciousness.²²

From these words, Jaspers seems to be seeking to gather the shreds of the picture of reality arising from the explication of selfhood, and especially from the presentation of the boundary situations, and “stitching” them into a new picture of reality. However, considering the later development of his thinking, and especially the philosophical moves expressed in *Metaphysics*, the third volume of *Philosophy*, it is obvious that the experience of the perfect or the absolute, to which Jaspers refers in this context, was not yet an explicit experience for him, but more of an image for that basic intuition that accompanied his thought from its inception and illuminated his path. In this context, compare Jaspers’s words in the introduction to *Psychology*: “The truth of the first experience was not replaced or rejected through later clarity. Substantially, the beginning is already the whole.”²³

The concluding overview of absolute consciousness from observing three of the forms whereby it finds tangible expression—conscience, faith, and fantasy—

shows that just before transcendence and Being became the main and explicit issue in his philosophizing, Jaspers returned to stressing the particular aspect of Existenz's experiences. These forms of existence do not negate the perseverance Jaspers showed in his attempts to break out of the solipsistic position, his starting point, in the later stages of the explication of selfhood, but they do demonstrate once more his basic difficulty as a philosopher in parting with one of his primal insights that had become a home to him.

It seems that what prevented the solipsistic view of selfhood from becoming the final position in Jaspers's philosophy was the introduction of the concepts of Being and transcendence into his discussion of Existenz, an introduction that was sufficient to cause a fundamental change in his perception of selfhood. These terms' becoming part of Existenz's self-perception, as will be seen later in our discussion, led to Jaspers's effort to reveal another Being, different from Existenz, a Being whose existence became apparent at the later stages of the explication of selfhood and even before the tools for its elucidation were found. Some aspects of this Being were revealed already during the process of its self-constitution and were part of it, and this has a decisive importance for the explication of Being, which will be the center of our discussion below; it can be seen as a promise that from Existenz's viewpoint the turning of the philosophizing toward the explication of Being will not occur in a vacuum.

Ten

THE CIPHERS OF TRANSCENDENCE

1. From the Foundering and the Encompassing to the Concept of Cipher

The experience of the foundering, which deepened the awareness of the boundaries of Existenz, refined Karl Jaspers's awareness that Existenz cannot exist without constituting a real relation toward a Being external to it and more encompassing than it. While this experience undermined the basic insights achieved in the explication of selfhood, it did not make Existenz irrelevant, nor did it lead to its becoming closed within its boundaries, but instead opened to it new horizons that served as a target for clarification and experience. The two insights achieved through the elucidation of the foundering—placing Being as the central target of the philosophization, and making finitude, instead of Existenz, the starting point for elucidating the Being beyond Existenz—altered the basic understanding of immanence compared with the one typical of the discussion within the elucidation of selfhood. Immanence was no longer perceived as the opposite pole to Existenz, or as hiding the real and the original from philosophy. Quite the opposite, at this stage the understanding formed in Jaspers's thought that it is immanence that holds the key to elucidating Being itself—an understanding following which immanence became the symbol or cipher (*Chiffre*) of transcendence.¹ Jaspers usually used the terms symbol and cipher synonymously. Immanence, as the concrete reality of the world and as the real consciousness of human beings regarding this world and themselves, is now perceived as a possible source for elucidating transcendence due to the metaphysical depth it contains.

The connection between the experience of the foundering and the new perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence, and the more general distancing from the existential viewpoint, arises from the following passage:

... The foundering is the covering ground of the entire cipher-Being. Seeing the cipher as the reality of Being originates first and foremost in the experience of foundering. From it, all the ciphers that are not rejected receive their final approval. What I allow to sink into annihilation, I can receive back as a cipher.²

As we have seen, the experience of the foundering indicated two possible ways: the negative one, which Jaspers defined as “despair,” returned the discussion to Existenz, apparently recognizing that Being and transcendence were blocked to it.

Alongside it appeared an option that against the background of the discussion of the encompassing can be seen as preferable to the previous one. This possibility, bearing a more positive nature, makes the foundering the starting point for clarifying transcendence, and indicates that what “must be doubted before the uninterpretable foundering” is perceived from the viewpoint of the cipher as capable of elucidation and as a basis for “the source of the life that experiences... Being.”³ What in the foundering was blocked from understanding becomes in the perception of ciphers a source for the understanding of Being. In this respect we can state that the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence realizes the constructive possibility that arose from the foundering. It turns Being, which had been a source of dissatisfaction for Existenz in the experiences included in the transition mechanisms and blocked for interpretation in the foundering, into a target that the philosophical elucidation approaches with faith that it can succeed.

However, the perception of the encompassing, explained in the previous chapter, also reflected an attempt to propose an elucidation of Being and transcendence, and this raises the question regarding the necessity of the concept of the cipher for the framework of the explication of Being. This question is even more important since the framework of the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence contained no direct explication of this immanence, but it relied on the premise that it is an existing entity—a premise appearing from *World Orientation* onwards. Different scholars of Jaspers’s thought have already dealt with this question. Johannes Thyssen asks whether Existenz’s experience of transcendence as self-insufficiency, through the absolute consciousness, is not enough. His answer is that beyond and because of the existential experience of finitude, the need arises for transcendence to be represented in the finite reality that is split into object and subject. The concept of the cipher, which Thyssen defined as a “semi-objective” form portraying the existential attitude toward empirical reality, enables, in his opinion, the representation of transcendence in finality without turning it into an object.⁴

Xavier Tilliette discussed the question of the necessity of ciphers in Jaspers’s philosophy from another direction by asking whether ciphers were destined to lose their importance in light of periechontology and philosophical logic as rational elements on which the discussion of Being was based.⁵ In his opinion, the ciphers enable the inception of the method of transcending, and they exist precisely for those who were unable to divert themselves from the path of objective consciousness, but especially for Existenz, which is the only one that hears the “voices” of the ciphers and determines the criterion according to which their truth is determined.⁶ He believes that Existenz experiences these “voices” as “shining lights” showing the way to transcendence, and only thanks to them does it not move blindly in circles around itself.⁷ On the basis of the premise that “the scheme of Existenz in its structures and situations is the formal skeleton of the experience of cipher,” Tilliette concluded that this experience “must be revealed as an image

and a backwards look of the clarification of Existenz.”⁸ Even though Tilliette located the question of the necessity of the ciphers within the explication of Being, his interpretation anchored their meaning within the boundaries of the elucidation of Existenz.

However, unlike Thyssen, who asked about the necessity of the ciphers from the viewpoint of Existenz, and Tilliette, who returned them to the boundaries of the explication of Existenz, I believe that the ciphers are both the question and the answer to the framework of the explication of Being. The concepts cipher and encompassing were responses to the need for extra-existential elucidation of Being, since Existenz itself has certainty regarding the existence of a transcendent experience. More precisely, the need for extra-existential elucidation also belongs to Existenz, but this does not link the attempt to realize it with the explication of selfhood, but instead with that aimed at Being. It is within the framework of the explication of Being that the necessity of symbols is clear: they enable the accessibility of transcendence itself.

Everything must be capable of becoming a cipher. Were there no cipher [there would be] no transcendence....

The very fact that there is a cipher is identical for us to there being transcendence ... Instead of asking why there is existence, the question appears before us why there is a cipher. The answer to this: for existential consciousness it is the only form where transcendence rises, a sign that for Existenz transcendence is hidden, but had not disappeared.⁹

The concept of the cipher appeared in Jaspers's writings even before he presented the perception of the encompassing, but both of them relied on the same premises and served as means of dealing with the same philosophical problems: the basic tension between the ontological element and the epistemological element, and the attempt to elucidate immanence as part of the process of explicating Being. The cipher first appeared in *Philosophy*, while the encompassing first appeared in *Reason and Existenz*. The concept of the cipher appeared alongside the concept of the encompassing almost throughout the book *Out of Truth*.¹⁰ Using the concepts of encompassing and cipher, Jaspers wished to lay down a path that would enable the transition from the discussion of Existenz to the elucidation of Being and transcendence and to guarantee that immanence would be essential in the explication of Being.

Despite these two terms being located genealogically at the same stage of Jaspers's development, they do not overlap each other, but each of them includes different contents that were suited in a different way to dealing with the fundamental philosophical problems characteristic of the explication of Being. The argument at the center of the discussion in this chapter is that through the concept of the cipher, Jaspers was able to establish the status of immanence and

Existenz within the explication of Being, beyond what he was able to do within the encompassing. While in the perception of the encompassing immanence served as a framework gathering within it aspects that appeared separately within the explication of selfhood and representing an opposite facet to Existenz, the concept of the cipher clarified the place of immanence as an integral part of the explication of Being. In the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence, Jaspers largely overcame the duality typical of the encompassing that was split into “the encompassing that is us” and “the encompassing that is Being itself.” While the split made it possible to see immanence as merely a preparation for the explication of Being and not as an actual part of it, the cipher, which always originates in immanence,¹¹ leaves no such doubt. The cipher is just a path of the viewpoint toward immanence—an attempt to see immanence as an expression of Being—and should not be viewed as part of another reality existing beyond the one we witness in the tangible world. In this respect the cipher, the mental creation of Existenz, which constitutes a metaphysical relation toward immanence, does not leave room for an interpretation attributing to Existenz a merely marginal role in the explication of Being. While Existenz itself is one of the modes of the encompassing, its location in the “encompassing that is us” could apparently have the understanding that it had no place in the “encompassing that is Being itself.” The perception of ciphers presented below can also be seen as a framework for examining the relation between the two basic encompassings from a new angle.

2. Foreshadowing Aspects of the Cipher in *Psychology*

As we have seen, the framework of object-subject relations served as a starting point in the mental-conscious experience of constituting a world view.¹² Beyond the philosophical aspects relating to selfhood as having this experience that were discussed in Chapter Two, Jaspers’s ideas, as appearing in *Psychology*, can also be seen as the start of a philosophical move that only matured within the perception of ciphers. The basis of the comparison between the process of constituting a world view and the perception of ciphers results from selfhood constituting a new perception of reality in the experience of both points of views they entail. As the experience of constituting a world view perceives the “experience flow” of subjectivity as fully anchored in immanence, Jaspers defined it as creating new contents through which it changes itself.¹³ The world view does not serve only as a tool for handling the different experiences of reality, since in the process of such handling the person forms another understanding of the experiences and of the reality in which they occur. Similarly, the experience leading to the perception of reality as a cipher of transcendence—a perception at the center of our discussion in this chapter—changes the person’s perception of reality, which is no longer perceived as merely immanent. Knowingly or

unknowingly, Jaspers already drew the line leading from *Psychology* to the concept of cipher when he wrote:

From these boundaries, enclosing all the complete spheres of the split between object and subject as a mystical thing in which the spirit cannot escape... an inexpressible and insubstantial light is shed that always urges for the achievement of a form within this split. This becomes a symbol, a parable that has infinite desire for clarity. This desire, which is spiritual in essence, immediately ceases to be merely such a desire.¹⁴

In this passage, Jaspers explicitly indicated the clarifying potential of the object-subject relations entailed in the experience from which the world view results. Perhaps these words can also be seen as a hint of the possibility that beyond this clarity metaphysical horizons will be reflected that transcend the boundaries of the perception of reality in which the world view is anchored. The argument that *Psychology* contains aspects that foreshadow the concept of cipher is not based only on the passage cited above, but also on wide philosophical moves characteristic of Jaspers's thought in *Psychology*. This refers especially to Jaspers's prominent effort to present thought frameworks where the character of the subjective Being that constituted them and the perception of reality that guides it could be clarified. Jaspers discussed in detail "approaches," "world pictures," and "spirit types."¹⁵ As we may recall, the understanding that the subject-object relations framework is expressed in different forms reflected in the different world views guided Jaspers in *Psychology* in his search for systematic thought¹⁶ that would enable proposing an explication of the human soul. While the soul was already perceived from the beginning as incapable of being exhaustively elucidated, Jaspers argued that "the devotion existing in all finite matter enables us to somehow find an organizing viewpoint."¹⁷ The phenomenological observation of the phenomenon of multiplicity of world views can provide us with some grasp points to serve as a basis for elucidating the human soul as a Being that cannot be exhausted by observing the different world views. The advantages of the phenomenological viewpoint regarding the multiplicity of world views, by their very nature distant from the observer's individual viewpoint, are clear: it enables the critical observation of selfhood, it may help uncover the infrastructure shared by the world views as such, and even creates *openness* toward the experiences of other people. Also, the process of exposing the structural characteristics accompanying the experiences involved in world views may help it see these experiences as reality and to use them as grasp points in reality.

The contribution of these advantages, typical of people's experience of constituting a world view, to Jaspers's developmental stage when he was writing *Psychology* becomes more tangible in light of this being Jaspers's first work after leaving the practice and science of psychiatry. Unlike pathology, whose

expressions from Jaspers's point of view could always surprise without maintaining a degree of regularity, he perceived the "normality" indicated by the word "psychology" as capable of prediction and methodical elucidation. He expected to be able to expose systematic aspects of the constitution of world views, especially the experience of the range of normality. The specific patterns discussed in *Psychology*—the "approaches," "world pictures," and "spirit types"—served him at this period as framework for the formulation of the perception of selfhood that he called at that time "subjectivity."

Just as the discussion of the systematic aspects typical of world views revealed the objective foundations on which the explication of selfhood relied at the time, so the discussion of immanence that became the cipher of transcendence clarified the objective foundations on which Jaspers based the philosophizing aimed at elucidating Being. Like the advantages of systematic thought for the elucidation of selfhood in *Psychology*, the perception of ciphers made the metaphysical consciousness that was formulated in this context open and critical, and gave it a grasp point in the concrete reality where Existenz finds its existence. As a result, people's metaphysical consciousness is portrayed as relying on reality itself and not as a fantasy whose boundaries spread into the non-obligatory realm of human imagination.¹⁸

In a way, the need of metaphysical consciousness for defined thought patterns was filled already in the perception of the encompassing, where Jaspers indicated seven modes whose elucidation, and the clarification of the relations between which, could serve as a means for constituting consciousness regarding Being itself. The seven modes of the encompassing and their division by Jaspers are represented in a table in Chapter Nine, in the section The Two Facets of Being as the Encompassing. The seven ways are: "existence," "consciousness in general," "spirit," "Existenz," "world," "transcendence," and "reason." But the concept of the cipher provides a better answer to the need for the philosophizing of thought patterns that would serve as a receptacle for the insights being formulated regarding Being and transcendence. While the encompassing contains a defined number of patterns that to a great extent determined the boundaries of metaphysical consciousness, cipher, as we will see later, turns any object in reality into a potential pattern in which metaphysical consciousness can be formulated. In this respect, immanence, which has become a cipher of transcendence, contains an infinity of thought patterns in which the perception of Being itself can be formulated.

The perception of world views and the cipher as thought patterns organizing the philosophical insights in relation to the context in which they were clarified stresses the functional facet of these two key concepts. This argument, which does not diminish the importance of the contents aspects that Jaspers developed while clarifying the concepts of world view and cipher, demonstrates his effort to anchor his discussion in concepts that would grant clarity to his complex philosophical

ideas and make them accessible to a wider critical discussion. However, it is against the background of this argument that the question inevitably arises, why the works appearing between *Psychology* and the appearance of the concept of the cipher abandoned the trend to present thought patterns or even to define terms that would help organize the philosophical discussion more systematically. This question could similarly be asked regarding the appearance of the concept of the encompassing, but it still arises more sharply here, in light of my interpretation whereby the cipher provides a better answer to the need for more defined thought frameworks. The answer to this question is linked to the most fundamental infrastructure on which the two frameworks of the philosophizing where the concepts of the world views and the cipher were developed, namely the explication of selfhood and the explication of Being.

I believe that the prominent absence of an organized system of concepts results from the solipsistic image of selfhood, which influenced the framework of the philosophizing aimed at its elucidation; even when this image became a conscious element, and the limitations it imposed upon the possibility of achieving a complete understanding of Existenz were gradually exposed, its presence was felt in Jaspers's thought. This image, which served the need to stress the unique character of Existenz, could not accord with the constitution of stable thought patterns that could grant the framework of the explication of selfhood a more consistent and systematic nature. Jaspers did not completely abandon this value, and as we have seen he had to deal with what he called "repeating analogical patterns" in the different world views¹⁹ in order to be able to present a "catalog" or "relative scheme" of world views.²⁰ However, the power of the solipsistic image of selfhood was more dominant, especially in his early writings, including *Psychology*, which found expression in Jaspers's effort to propose an explication of world views from a private viewpoint and as an individual experience.²¹

In some respects, the tension created by the joint presence of these two viewpoints in *Psychology*—the viewpoint regarding the multiplicity of world views and the one aimed at elucidating the individual world view—was resolved with the constitution of the philosophy of Existenz, where the tendency that made selfhood unique in its surroundings and isolated it even from other people, themselves Existenzes, dominated. Even when the idea of communication appeared, the impressions of this tension, which was not completely resolved at any stage in the development of this philosophy, remained. Even the placing of Being at the center of the philosophical discussion did not propose a more general and systematic viewpoint regarding human beings, but made selfhood into the background for the explication of Being. Jaspers's philosophy included no perception of selfhood that overcame the difficulties raised by its solipsistic image; these difficulties contributed to the constitution of a new framework of philosophizing in Jaspers's thought, where they no longer had the same weight as in the framework of the explication of selfhood. In any case, the weakening of

solipsism, which also involved overcoming the need to grant selfhood an absolute status in the philosophical discussion, enabled the constitution of the concepts of the encompassing and the cipher within the framework of the explication of Being. These concepts, which were not mainly intended to help the explication of selfhood, and that dealt with the metaphysical aspects of existence that were not exhausted by the meaning they had for Existenz, reflected distancing not only from the solipsistic selfhood, but also from the drive to elucidate Existenz. These processes, enabling the very constitution of more structured thought frameworks, explain why at this stage of the development of his philosophy Jaspers was able to realize things whose importance he had probably already recognized already at the start of his journey.

3. Immanence as a Cipher of Transcendence

The interpretation of the perception of the encompassing presented in the previous chapter apparently left Existenz in an impossible situation. On the one hand, its awareness was heightened of the gap between Being itself or transcendence and the way it was perceived in its thought; an awareness that also indicated the limitations of the method of transcending in serving as a sole tool for the explication of Being.²² On the other hand, the understanding that the very existence of Being for individuals depends on their ability to experience it is a datum that encourages Existenz not to accept the abyss between it and the direct understanding of Being itself, and the possibility that such an abyss could become the last datum of human existence. The possibility that awareness of the boundaries of the method of transcending could develop into acceptance of the gap between human consciousness and Being itself constitutes a real threat both to Existenz's self-understanding and to the framework of the philosophizing as laid out so far. This is because the transcending on which the most basic infrastructure of Jaspers's thought was established is no mere method or viewpoint; it has become a mechanism through which the framework of the philosophizing was determined and the aims of the philosophizing itself were set. Surrendering the method of transcending at this stage due to the exposure of its limitations could have raised serious doubts regarding the value of the philosophical insights achieved using this method. There would have been no less far-reaching implications for the acceptance of the existence of the abyss between the person and Being itself. Such acceptance is first and foremost contrary to the basic intuition regarding the real existence of the transcendent Being, an intuition that fed Jaspers's metaphysical drive, and thanks to which the philosophizing was able to continue its constant development. This acceptance could have immediately turned the boundary situations into the final datum in Jaspers's philosophy and undermined the foundation on which the metaphysical consciousness was based, aimed primarily at constituting a positive consciousness regarding Being itself.

These insights and the awareness of their far-reaching implications for Jaspers's thought were at the basis of the constitution of the term "immanent transcendence,"²³ a term that was probably intended to satisfy two requirements that apparently do not accord with each other: the attempt to experience Being and at the same time to preserve the transcendent aspect in its perception. These two facets reveal two philosophical commitments of Jaspers's, which only the maturation of his philosophy enabled him to present explicitly: the commitment to immanence as a reality with its existence and as a source that could enable Existenz to experience it. As he put it: "only immanent transcendence grants Existenz weight in the world."²⁴ Also, the unconditional commitment to the process of searching for the transcendent Being, with clear knowledge that it is not fully accessible to an individual.

This dual commitment was expressed in denying the pantheist position, locating itself only in immanence, and in denying the ascetic position, which, in its approach to transcendence, abandons the world as a reality with its value. Jaspers viewed these two approaches, to which he believed rational thought led, as a "decline."²⁵ He clarified that what immanent transcendence indicates is that immanence has a role in powers that cannot be perceived using the tools of immanent consciousness, but at the same time, these powers can be expressed, or as he put it, "speak," in the immanent reality itself.²⁶

The need for the way of Being embodied in immanent transcendence originates in the recognition that the entity as "Being in itself" is not present in the world in full as real reality or as a Being external to this world, but in what Jaspers defined as "unity without identity."²⁷ This means that people cannot give full expression to the way transcendence is present in immanence, because Being's reality is not identical to the way in which it is reflected in human consciousness. However, consciousness is responsible for us not accepting the abyss between us and transcendence, which could have turned it into "other in itself" for us and into its sinking for us.²⁸ The relation that people constitute toward the transcendent Being is what makes it significant for them, without negating their egos as Existenzes or the unbridgeable gap between it and human consciousness as such. This relation is precisely the experience of Being.

From the viewpoint of Existenz we can state that the meaning of the expression "immanent transcendence" is that immanence and transcendence are not alien to Existenz or to each other. The ongoing effort to determine the boundaries of the Being of Existenz and of the world and the constantly continuing acquaintance with the reality of transcendence are revealed as fruitful. Henceforth, Existenz is revealed not only as capable of constituting a relation toward realities different from it without this undermining its self-consciousness, but also as ripe for recognizing the separateness of what is different from it without facing it with a sense of alienation. It understands itself as connected to immanence and transcendence, although it knows it is not identical to them.

From the viewpoint of immanence, the term “immanent transcendence” indicates the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence. The change in the way immanence is understood deeply undermines the foundations of the approach that identifies Being with the empirical and the finite.²⁹ The understanding that the defined and fixed logical categories of reality cannot be implemented in the elucidation of transcendence³⁰ leads to the disappearance of the perception of immanence that was anchored in them.³¹ Jaspers’s need to return and express in this context, too, his familiar criticism of the positivistic world view³² does not indicate that his perception of Being was founded on the principle of denying the reality of the world, but instead shows his awareness of the need to redefine the boundaries of the philosophizing aimed at Being. Just as in the framework of the explication of selfhood, the distancing of the objective viewpoint did not lead to the denial of the reality of the world, so here the denial of the understanding of reality as empirical did not serve as a basis for the perception of Being as existing outside the boundaries of the world as a self-existing reality. In this respect, the extreme phrasing that presented immanence as opposed to empiricism serves only as a first stage in the discussion, which will not be aimed at detaching the experience of Being from the empirical aspects of immanence, but will harness them to its explication.

The perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence was anchored in the new understanding of objectivity, whereby it “contains the transcendence revealed in it.”³³ The definition of ciphers as ciphers of transcendence appears throughout *Philosophy* in different forms.³⁴ The booklet *Ciphers of Transcendence* collects Jaspers’s lectures on this issue at Basel University in 1961.³⁵ Jaspers’s discussion in this booklet contains no innovation regarding his approach as it appeared in *Metaphysics* and in *Out of Truth*. The publication of this booklet, like other publications on specific issues from his whole philosophy, was characteristic of the third period of Jaspers’s work, when he sought to present his philosophical thinking more simply or even in a popular form (see the division of Jaspers’s work into periods in the Introduction). In this respect, metaphysical consciousness based on the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence does not create a new reality, but reveals a hidden facet of objectivity itself. The concept of the cipher does not deny the reality of the world, but shows immanence to be essential for the constitution of a philosophical consciousness of Being. The perception of ciphers preserves the original meaning granted to the perception of immanence as empiricism, and exists alongside it as such. In Jaspers’s words, the perception of ciphers “is simultaneously *across the width of any objectivity*,”³⁶ or “taking place simultaneously across the width of reality in a depth dimension where man must sink himself but from which he cannot emerge without immediately losing it [this reality] completely.”³⁷ The deep affirmation of the world embodied in the perception of immanence as a cipher does not allow the ciphers to be viewed as a Being isolated from the real reality in which an

individual participates, or alternatively, as an internality without any external expression in reality.³⁸ The argument that the ciphers “exist in historic sense of fulfillment [which is] like an unignorable depth”,³⁹ connects their hidden internal facet with their exposure in the existential reality of human beings.⁴⁰ Understanding immanence as a cipher makes transcendence into something that a person can experience, and the reality of the present from which the perception of Being is constituted can also be seen as an element in the reality of transcendence itself.

Immanence, which no longer required proof of its very reality, became in the perception of ciphers more than mere immanence. Jaspers’s original metaphysical intuition, which served as a substrate for the understanding that did not identify the existence of *Existenz* with empirical reality, was, in this context, too, at the basis of the perception that did not identify what was considered to be immanent reality with what existed in it but was concealed.⁴¹ This perception did not enable the attribution of a total status to such immanence, but constantly directed toward what appeared close and accessible to human beings. Thinking about transcendence, which does not release people seeking the meaning of their existence, makes the objects represent what could never become an object: Being itself.⁴² Compare also Jaspers’s description of the process of converting objective and tangible reality into ciphers as part of the elucidation of *Existenz*.⁴³

Eventually, the viewpoint of the cipher, expanding the boundaries of the meaning immanence could be granted, does not apply only to what appears as an object. It redefines life in general, perceived as a result as a totality expressing Being in different ways.⁴⁴ Under its inspiration, people reveal the metaphysical depth hidden in ordinary things and routine events,⁴⁵ in nature,⁴⁶ in history,⁴⁷ in art,⁴⁸ and in all the forms of human beings’ grasp of existence where their search for meaning and significance is expressed.⁴⁹ This process is so deep that alongside the immanence that world orientation sees as empirical, the viewpoint of the cipher places “another mythical reality.”⁵⁰ This mythical reality is not separate from immanence, since existence, which the viewpoint of consciousness sees as empirical, and the cipher are two aspects of one world.⁵¹ The perception of the cipher is anchored in the understanding that in the reality in which we live there is a remnant that cannot be assimilated into anything else of the real,⁵² a remnant concealed in the same factuality that world orientation wishes to report. Compare also the argument that Being is not a second reality.⁵³ This clarification, which moderates the potential for error that exists in the definition of this reality as a “mythical reality,” enables us to state that the ontological picture behind world orientation does not contradict the one on which the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence is based. Support for this clarification can also be found in Jaspers’s discussion of the differences between the conscious relation toward objective reality and the one expressed in reading the cipher. In this discussion,

Jaspers withdraws more explicitly from the definition of the cipher reality as a “mythical reality.”

Jaspers described a sort of interrelationship between the viewpoint of world orientation and the viewpoint of the cipher: on the one hand, any knowledge that world orientation obtains makes the certainty of the cipher’s viewpoint more decisive.⁵⁴ World orientation, defined as a “ladder rung,” grants the person, thanks to its rational element, protection from the false perception of ciphers,⁵⁵ without which metaphysics would become fantasy. On the other hand, metaphysical consciousness, originating in the cipher’s viewpoint, may serve as an incentive and a drive for deepening the scientific investigation, though the concept of cipher should not be seen as a justification or proof of any reality. In this spirit, Jaspers described “the search for transcendence... simultaneously as a relentless wish for knowledge of the real, conducted as an unsatisfied study of the world.”⁵⁶ He went even further, arguing that the categories of thought are shaped only by the metaphysical drives,⁵⁷ and that the realization of the world orientation was tested by its ability to enable those involved in it to detach themselves from total views of the world and to direct themselves to transcendence.⁵⁸

Against the background of this description of the relationship between the perception of the ciphers and the nature of the experience of world orientation, we can understand more accurately the argument whereby the viewpoint of the cipher exists “across the width of objectivity.” World orientation constitutes a significant layer of the Being of the cipher since already there the person discovers that reality is not exhausted by what can be studied empirically. The experience that leads to the turning of “the facts of world orientation into possible ciphers”⁵⁹ expresses the peak of Jaspers’s attempt to establish the role of immanence in the metaphysical consciousness revealed as deeply connected to the world reality that it seeks to transcend. Not only does the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence not negate the essentiality of the framework of world orientation for establishing metaphysical consciousness, it even enables a person to achieve consciousness about Being without detaching him from immanence as such. It shows that the same immanence that from one viewpoint serves as a source for the achievement of world orientation can also grant its owner, through another viewpoint, orientation in Being.

At the same time, Jaspers’s commitment to elucidating transcendence as Being in itself did not enable him to be satisfied with clarifying “immanent transcendence,” clarifying Being only from the viewpoint of immanence. The definition of the cipher as “Being which *transcendence* brings to presence without [it] having to turn Being into object-Being” and as “a gift from the source of Being”⁶⁰ indicates the existence of a force driving transcendence to discover itself in immanence. This philosophical drive constitutes a sort of continuation of Jaspers’s effort to guarantee the presence of the metaphysical Being from different directions. Like the explication of the foundering, where Jaspers wished to show

that not only Existenz but also existence itself was driven from itself to founder,⁶¹ so also in the context of elucidating the cipher he aimed to show that there were different forces working for the presence of the metaphysical entity in human reality: immanence due to the metaphysical depth it contains, and transcendence that is driven by itself to be revealed in immanence.

Transcendence embodied in reality in the form of the ciphers⁶² appears as an element a-priori to immanence, thanks to which the second was able to become the medium where transcendence was revealed. The argument that “in penetrating the world we fall into transcendence,”⁶³ as a “prototype,”⁶⁴ reflects the perception of transcendence as prior in presence to immanence. In this respect, the very presence of transcendence does not depend on being revealed through the viewpoint of the cipher. According to Jaspers, this viewpoint reflects the “response” to the already existing reality of transcendence.⁶⁵ The cipher’s viewpoint is a-posteriori, and is enabled only thanks to the a-priori presence of transcendence, characterized by the power that motivates it to realize its immanence.

Compared with the detailed explication proposed for the immanent part of the expression “immanent transcendence,” the elucidation Jaspers offered the transcendent part was partial and vague. This situation is not surprising, and is even similar to the difficulty in establishing the interpretation presented regarding the perception of the encompassing, whereby in the third transcending the philosophizing achieves a presentation of Being in itself. In these two contexts, it transpired that immanence by its very nature is capable of being more fully elucidated compared with transcendence, the main arguments about which rely mainly on the intuition that the boundaries of its explication constitute an essential part of it. However, precisely due to this difficulty, Jaspers’s efforts to make some positive determinations regarding transcendence are especially noticeable. Although these statements are not easily defended, this does not call into doubt Jaspers’s conviction regarding the existence of a power in transcendence itself. This power leads it to be revealed in immanence, with the ciphers serving as a medium where this power expresses itself.

The concept “immanent transcendence,” linking transcendence and immanence—with transcendence making itself present while the metaphysical depth of immanence turning into a medium through which transcendence is revealed—transpires as a framework for the clarification of the objective part of the explication of Being, or more precisely of the extra-existential part of it. Unlike scientific objectivity, which scientists define in accordance with the research framework they set themselves, objectivity that was defined at the beginning of the discussion as “extra-existential” is revealed as a reality independent of people’s relation toward it. Jaspers distinguished in the following passage between these two types of objectivity:

Reality-Being for empirical knowledge exists as a Being only in contexts and dependence types through which it is understood. Genesis and causality show if and how something indeed exists there. They are not the existence [of this thing] in itself, but everything [in them] exists in relations. In contrast, the *symbol-Being* as a cipher of transcendence is not in a relation, but exists directly only for those people for whom it is transparent.⁶⁶

From these words we can understand that beyond the permanence and the stability typical of objectivity as such, including objectivity in science, the extra-existential objectivity expresses the idea that the very reality of Being and transcendence is not a speculative matter, or as Jaspers put it: "is not in a relation." The dependence existing here applies to individuals, since without constituting a relation toward Being and transcendence they would not have a metaphysical consciousness granting meaning to Being and transcendence, while the reality of Being and transcendence themselves exists without any connection to any consciousness that could affirm them.

The need to establish the perception of Being outside the boundaries of Existenz, in order to grant it an objective aspect, also arose in the explication of selfhood, which also required world orientation—a framework that granted the perception of Existenz a sort of objective anchor, or more precisely an extra-existential one. Jaspers, who himself dealt with the importance of objectivity in the discussion of Being and Existenz,⁶⁷ was probably concerned that this philosophical move could accidentally lead to Existenz and the world becoming objects, and clarified that this was not the case.⁶⁸ However, what is noticeable in this context is the difference in the way Jaspers presented the role of objectivity in the two contexts. In the discussion of selfhood, the anchoring of Existenz in objectivity was the conclusion of a tortuous philosophical move that, among other things, examined the possibility of detaching Existenz from the world.⁶⁹ In contrast, in the discussion of ciphers objectivity was perceived as a datum on which the explication of Being was based, instead of as a problem that should be overcome. The new attitude toward objectivity in this context is a continuation of the earlier philosophical move, which appeared already in *World Orientation* and even benefited from it.

Against this background, we can state that the objectivity in which the discussion of Being was anchored was not perceived as an opposite pole to subjectivity, whose duty was to decipher the symbols and reveal the metaphysical element contained therein as ciphers of transcendence. Separating the discussion of objectivity from the subjectivity that sustains it, intended for methodological purposes, stresses at this stage of the discussion that the area of ciphers applies to whatever represents itself tangibly or could appear as such.⁷⁰ Jaspers's words about symbols in the fourth edition of *General Psychopathology* do not appear

even in abbreviated form or in hints in the first edition of this work, but in my opinion they constitute part of his philosophical approach that is reflected in the expanded edition of this book. See the discussion on the relation between the two editions in Chapter One. The obvious conclusion from the discussion of the term “immanent transcendence” is that the cipher does not represent a new type of objectivity. The entirety of the concept of the cipher is in the new meaning granted to objectivity that Jaspers sometimes called “metaphysical objectivity,”⁷¹ a meaning following which immanence was revealed as a source for a wider meaning. As he put it: “ciphers are not new objects, but newly filled objects.”⁷²

4. The Concept of Cipher and Consciousness

The anchoring of the explication of Being in immanence as a tangible reality, known for its accessibility to the tools of formal consciousness, required Jaspers to discuss the role of consciousness regarding the cipher Being, too. Jaspers’s argument in principle in this context was that “consciousness in general, in all its valid forms... [is] the *skeleton* of existence, without which there is no understanding and no continuity of certainty.”⁷³ This means that consciousness defines, at least in a preliminary way, the general framework in whose boundary the cipher’s viewpoint functions. In his words:

Sinking into symbols is not a mythical sinking, which in the lack of objectivity of transcendence enters a union lacking any objects and thus is also uncommunicative. In fact, *in hearing the language of the symbol, the phenomenon of transcendence is articulated for Existenz in the split existing between object and subject* in the medium of clear consciousness.⁷⁴

Immanence, which appears in consciousness as a split between object and subject, and that when acted upon by consciousness acquires clarity and a degree of communicativity, has some weight in Existenz’s becoming acquainted with transcendence. This expresses the presence of the epistemological viewpoint in the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence, a viewpoint that gives the certainty of the Being of transcendence a general aspect and that releases it from dependence on the necessarily particular relation Existenz shows it. Alan M. Olson proposed a different interpretation of the perception of ciphers when he stated that the source of the split between objectivity and subjectivity does not necessarily depend on objective consciousness, but on the ontological element, meaning the uniform Being of transcendence.⁷⁵ At the same time, consciousness bases the role of immanence in metaphysical consciousness; more precisely, the necessity of consciousness for the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence affirms metaphysical consciousness as being anchored in the same

immanence accessible to the tools of consciousness. Unlike what Jaspers termed “mythical sinking,” the action of consciousness occurs according to clear rules that are not derived from the needs or personality of the conscious person. The importance of the discussion of consciousness within the framework of the perception of ciphers stems from its contribution to delineating the boundaries in principle within which the metaphysical consciousness relying on the concept of cipher may move.

The discussion about the meaning of formal consciousness in the context of the perception of ciphers complements the philosophical move aimed at establishing the status of immanence in constituting metaphysical consciousness. While the concept “immanent transcendence” exposed the existential facet of immanence, the connection between objective consciousness and the cipher’s viewpoint clarifies the conscious facet of this immanence. The viewpoint seeing immanence as a cipher of transcendence exceeds the boundaries of objectivity and grants it, as we have seen, a much wider significance than that granted it by formal consciousness. As Jaspers said: “The clarification through the symbol walks a path that is above objectivity.”⁷⁶ Jaspers stressed that the same consciousness in which the individual “participates impersonally,” enabling “unambiguous understanding,” is the basis of our trust in order, and “dread takes us if its collapse appears real.”⁷⁷ Consciousness, as an extra-existential anchor of Being, may guarantee the stability of metaphysical consciousness and its linking to the immanent reality where people live and act. The meeting that takes place at this point between the existential motives in the metaphysical search and the character of immanence at the basis of this search reveals the nature of the metaphysical consciousness Jaspers wished to constitute: it does not rely on the occurrence of a “total conversion” of the existence and consciousness in which people live, but instead all its depth depends on its ability to expose hidden aspects embodied in the two facets—existential and conscious—of immanence. For further discussion, see Jacques Waardenburg’s argument that the creation of symbols always passes through some existential discomfort, and that thanks to the symbolic expression internal and external reality become bearable.⁷⁸

This insight can correctly illuminate the essence of the reorientation that Jaspers’s philosophy underwent. This reorientation not only placed the explication of Being as the desired object of the philosophizing and opened new horizons for it, but also reflected a release from the commitment to one exclusive viewpoint, like the one accompanying the elucidation of selfhood. This release not only enabled a relieving of the tension between different components of the discussion—such as “consciousness,” “existence,” and “Existenz”—typical of his earlier thought, but also enriched Jaspers’s philosophical discourse, which became increasingly complex. In contrast with the tension typical of the framework of the explication of selfhood, between the wish to establish the superiority of Existenz and the aim of expanding the boundaries of the philosophizing, the framework of

the explication of Being expressed Jaspers's tendency to use as many viewpoints as possible in order to constitute metaphysical consciousness, revealed as multifaceted.

However, although the "essentiality of the universal legality [of consciousness] is a support and a comfort,"⁷⁹ in the complex process of constituting metaphysical consciousness, the correct dimensions of consciousness within the framework of the explication of Being transpire from the following passage:

If everything threatens to erode into coincidence then in the law I have a place where I can take hold of solid ground. If Being sinks for me, I perceive all of existence in this law. But then this law is a cipher, and like any cipher it is ambiguous... I can grasp it, but not final[ly] and absolute[ly]. As with any cipher, I must go deep in this one, without ever finding a ground. I no longer see it when I perceive validity as merely objective.⁸⁰

Only after the clarification of objectivity by consciousness has been exhausted does objectivity itself become a cipher of transcendence. Objectivity transpires as the first and overt layer of understanding, but its perception as a cipher reflects the hidden meaning it contains, that the awareness of the insufficiency of objectivity constitutes a condition for its exposure. It is clear that in order for something—an object, a word, a way of speaking, or a way of behaving—to symbolize something else, other than itself, it must first have its meaning, and only then can it serve as an indicator of another meaning. Similarly, the cipher also requires the background existence of the objective understanding of immanence as the first layer of meaning, which in itself would constitute a transcending or addition thereof. The philosophical move in which Jaspers sought to combine on the one hand the epistemological viewpoint of consciousness in its perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence, and on the other hand to try to limit this viewpoint so that it would not exhaust the perception of ciphers—or more precisely so that the second would not be subjugated to the viewpoint of consciousness—receives its concise expression in the following passage, which also summarizes this interpretative move:

Order, rules, and laws of everything, precisely those that appear to cancel any symbolism and to enforce the uncompromising separation between reality and illusion, themselves become a cipher: *the fact that existence is like this, that it contains order, and that this order exists, is the cipher of its transcendence.*⁸¹

It transpires that only after the place of world orientation and of consciousness was guaranteed within the framework of the philosophical discussion around Being did Jaspers wish to stress that not all the viewpoints have an equal status in the process of constituting metaphysical consciousness; that their coming together in order to achieve a shared goal does not remove the differences between them. The concept of cipher shows that “the object does not become through change a construct by a methodic view of a single science, but it becomes transparent through philosophy.”⁸² This statement, distinguishing the way consciousness handles immanence and the viewpoint of the cipher, can indicate some crucial aspects of the concept of cipher: first, consciousness cannot deal with all the facets of immanence, but only with those accessible to the tools of objective thinking, from which knowledge can be produced. In a way, this activity of consciousness can be seen as distancing from immanent reality, because it cannot represent the aspects existing in it that are not accessible to the rules of objectivity. In contrast, the cipher making this immanent reality transparent expresses an attempt to cling to it enabled by the very ability of consciousness to “breaking away from sensuality as such.”⁸³ This ability is what enables immanence itself, and not another reality, to be seen as an expression of Being. While for consciousness the objects constitute the only object of reference, with everything remaining outside the objective patterns considered as non-existent, the perception of ciphers, which does not neglect those aspects to which consciousness refers, transpires as exhausting the fullness of immanence. However, the exhaustion of immanence is not revealed only by clinging to it, but as the ability to experience also what is reflected in it but whose reality does not match its own, meaning transcendence.

The release from the bonds of consciousness enables a different way of experiencing immanence, anchored in the distinction between two types of symbolism: “*interpretable symbolism*” and “*observable symbolism*.”⁸⁴ The first disintegrates immanence in order to rebuild it according to the rules of objectivity, and places a barrier between indicator and indicated, meaning between immanence and transcendence. The second, in contrast, maintains the integrity of immanence and of the human being as an organic part of it without contradicting the basic effort to which the perception of ciphers is aimed, meaning the creation of continuity from immanence to transcendence. Even if the observation behind the cipher’s viewpoint does not reflect complete passivity, its relation toward immanence lacks the same emphasis on activity and sovereignty on the individual’s behalf that is typical of consciousness’ relationship toward immanent reality. Similarly, Jaspers differentiated elsewhere between “*penetration*” of the cipher, which is a tool for its clarification, and “*interpretation*,” which stresses the control a person has over his object of reference.⁸⁵

Sebastian Samay’s interpretation emphasized another facet of this distinction between these two types of symbolism, but accords with the interpretation offered here. In his opinion, the first symbolism sees its objects as an absolute thing, and

treats them the way “consciousness in general” treats its objects. The object of this symbolism ceases to be perceived as a symbol and is perceived, following this treatment, as reality itself.⁸⁶ In contrast, the other symbolism does not achieve an unambiguous understanding of its objects.⁸⁷ He defines this symbolism as poetic, since it penetrates the metaphysical depth contained in objects.⁸⁸ Samay’s interpretation also shows, although in a different way, that immanence that becomes a symbol of transcendence does not lose its connection to immanence as such.

At this point we can indicate the traces of the method of transcending, on which Jaspers’s entire philosophical thought was constituted. Beyond the general contribution to expanding the scope of the philosophizing familiar from previous contexts we have discussed, in this context this method aided the escape from the rigid categories of consciousness,⁸⁹ and undermined the logical and rational structure of arguments about reality⁹⁰—an undermining following which Jaspers defined the objects in reality as “floating.”⁹¹ However, unlike in previous contexts, where this method led to the expansion of the scope of discussion by means of transferring its focus elsewhere, in this context of the cipher, the expansion was achieved by “penetrating the world”⁹² and “deep study” of the symbol it created.⁹³ The implementation of the method of transcending within the framework of the perception of ciphers expresses the main philosophical message Jaspers wished to express through it, whereby individuals do not have to go far from their position in the world and seek the meaning of their life elsewhere, since it is right within their reach.

The change in the way the method of transcending is expressed reflects the status of Existenz at this stage of the explication. Following his discussion of consciousness within the framework of the perception of the cipher, Jaspers stated that “real Being should be perceived only in the loosening of the possible Existenz,”⁹⁴ meaning that Existenz is liberated from the drive that had controlled it in the framework of the explication of selfhood. After discussing philosophy’s need for objects, he stated that the cipher’s viewpoint grants objectivity symbolic validity, when “their content becomes feelable.”⁹⁵ Compared with the consciousness of conquest and achievement that fills the conscious person, Jaspers noted that “in the cipher *I delay*,”⁹⁶ and chose to emphasize the sense of magic,⁹⁷ the experience of wonder and of facing a reality filled with secrets.⁹⁸ These descriptions of the Existenz becoming aware of the symbolic aspects of immanence enable the characterizing of the cipher’s viewpoint as what Peter Wust termed “second naïveté,” meaning a renewed turn toward absolute Being, with awareness of the scientific and philosophical criticism of the world and of the intention to repair the rift caused by this awareness. This concept was developed in Wust’s book *Naivität und Pietät (Naiveté and Piety)* (1925),⁹⁹ although its early elements can be found in his first book, *Die Auferstehung der Metaphysik (The Rebirth of Metaphysics)* (1921),¹⁰⁰ and in articles published between these

two books.¹⁰¹ Alternatively, Existenz can be defined in this context as existing in what Olson called, following Paul Ricoeur, as “post-critical naïveté,” meaning openness to the wonder from a view to what the symbol and the myth can imply.¹⁰² In this context, Olson mentions Jaspers as expressing the need for openness to the wonderful through symbols, and he also refers to the argument Jaspers had with Bultman, as published in Jaspers’s work *Demythologization*. Like the “second naïveté,” and the “post-critical naïveté,” the cipher’s viewpoint, too, does not detach itself from people’s basic aim of understanding the world around them using the tools at their disposal, and it cannot be defined as a skeptical position. Quite the opposite, the cipher’s viewpoint on the one hand reflects Jaspers’s attempt to find a way to preserve the spirit of intuitive certainty regarding the existence of a transcendent Being, while on the other hand expresses his certainty that the philosophical medium where its explication is carried out can help in this task.

However, while the cipher’s viewpoint, which was defined above as “the loosening of the possible Existenz” aiming at the “observable objects” and preserving the wholeness of immanence, Jaspers clarified that it by no means constitutes an aesthetic viewpoint. Several scholars have discussed the influence of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and Immanuel Kant’s “Nature’s cipher” on Jaspers’s perception of ciphers.¹⁰³ In my opinion, Kant’s emphasis on the aesthetic aspects is not equivalent to Jaspers’s explicitly anti-aesthetic position.¹⁰⁴ Unlike the cipher, indicating the presence of transcendence in the world, in his opinion the symbols become non-binding aesthetic contents in which no reality is present.¹⁰⁵ Compared with the aesthetic observation, which from Jaspers’s point of view was perceived as meaningless for self-Being, the thought that perceives the world as filled with the presence of transcendence was defined as creative thought.¹⁰⁶ Defining the relation of the cipher’s viewpoint to immanence as “a possibility of *appropriation*”¹⁰⁷ reveals unambiguously the observers’ commitment to what is revealed to them from the ciphers. The appropriating position that adopts something from what already exists establishes the connection of the perception of ciphers to immanence, and at the same time stresses the difference between the method of observation depicted in this perception and both the aesthetic viewpoint and the viewpoint of formal consciousness. Eventually the release from the specificity of the categories of objective consciousness and from people’s conscious relation toward reality¹⁰⁸ leads to the diminishing of the area of tangency between the cipher’s viewpoint and that of consciousness to the point of the cipher being defined as “a vague fantasy of consciousness.”¹⁰⁹ Although the all-inclusive horizons of transcendence to which the symbolic observation was aimed enabled the different viewpoints to coexist, they also demanded the “surplus meaning” over what the consciousness of immanence could grant and the concept of cipher could indicate.

5. Metaphysical Consciousness as a Language

The connection between the perception of ciphers and the framework of the explication of Being was achieved through the anchoring of this perception in two elements independent of Existenz: the metaphysical potential embodied in immanence and transcendence's drive to immanentize itself. However, these elements are insufficient to exhaust the philosophical depth contained in the viewpoint seeing immanence as a cipher of transcendence. Although it is clear that before the appearance of the concept of cipher Jaspers's words referred to clear processes that reflected the diversion of Existenz from the focus of the philosophical discussion, he stated:

If we go in metaphysics *directly* from absolute objectivity up to transcendence as a cipher, then there is no possibility of grasping it. [This means] that we should search for contact with *its existential roots*.¹¹⁰

Existenz transpires from this passage as a necessary condition for the constitution of a relation toward transcendence through the cipher's viewpoint.¹¹¹ In order to establish this argument, Jaspers sought to indicate a significant connection between the cipher's viewpoint and the most explicit characteristics of Existenz. He wrote that "the ciphers in the historic sense of fulfillment are as an unignorable depth."¹¹² The cipher's viewpoint, which reveals new facets of the reality in which Existenz exists, reflects Existenz's ability to detach itself from its form of existence and to examine other possibilities. In this respect, the ciphers can be considered a metaphoric expression of the undeciphered existence possibilities that were available to Existenz but hidden in the absence of a more profound examination of immanence. This interpretation accords with Jaspers's statement that the connection between ciphers and the historicity of Existenz does not allow Existenz to observe the order of the cipher world "from above,"¹¹³ but instead to see them as a space where its possibilities for realization lie.¹¹⁴

The dual relation of the ciphers—both to the immanence where they are anchored with Existenz, and to the transcendence they indicate—is reflected in the two different ways Existenz faces them. As we have seen, Existenz was described as delaying and as loosening in the face of the Being of transcendence arising from the ciphers. This description, aimed at preventing the identification of transcendence with immanence in a way that could have turned it into a sort of knowledge, differs from the description of Existenz's stance toward the immanence in which it identifies the ciphers of transcendence:

As a *tangible thing* objectivity is an existential *possibility*: the possibility of *appropriation* is what turns in the world into an object—as empirical

reality, as rational validity, as nature and history, and as handed down cipher text.¹¹⁵

The direct contact the cipher's viewpoint has with Existenz's mode of existence served as a basis for granting legitimacy to the activity Existenz shows regarding them. Precisely because Existenz does not experience the immanence in which the ciphers are anchored as a reality external to it, but as "its own world," it sees itself as free to appropriate from among the ciphers taken from immanence the possibilities they contain for it, and not to face them with the distance typical of its stance toward transcendence. Against this background, the definition of the concept of cipher as the possibility of "appropriation" receives its full meaning. On the one hand, it indicates the rooting of metaphysical consciousness in immanence, and on the other hand, since this consciousness revolves around the transcendence beyond the boundaries of immanence as such, it also indicates the distance between metaphysics and immanence—a distance that requires Existenz to show activity that could bring it closer to transcendence, although transcendence remains distant from Existenz.

The implications stemming from anchoring the concept of cipher in the existential infrastructure are clear: this infrastructure does not allow immanence to lead to the constitution of a uniform metaphysical consciousness in different people, since beyond the differences between people, immanence reveals itself in different and varied facets.¹¹⁶ As he put it: "empirical existence, which through the expression [of Being] is supposed to be perceived and ascertained, does not therefore exist *per se*,"¹¹⁷ and the ciphers "enable a variety of viewpoints."¹¹⁸ The given gap between transcendence as Being in itself and immanent reality is joined, through the existential infrastructure, by another gap stemming from the differences between human viewpoints about immanent reality.

The barrier against constituting a uniform consciousness regarding transcendence through the ciphers does not stem only from the individual differences between people. Even for the same person it does not always happen on the same level, since it depends on the "person's elation ability" that changes over time. In this respect, the ciphers indicate, in their undeciphered form, the person's development potential, and so Jaspers saw the ciphers as reflecting the real human Being,¹¹⁹ and argued that they "open themselves for me in accordance with my essence."¹²⁰ The conclusion resulting from the existential infrastructure of the ciphers—both the multiplicity of viewpoints of different people regarding the same reality and as a function of the frequently changing state of the individual—is unambiguous. The metaphysical grasp in the cipher text is not finally valid, but is subject to people's state when they turn to transcendence, which in turn grants itself to those seeking it in a different way each time.¹²¹

Olson's interpretation, seeking to distinguish between Jaspers's perception of ciphers and that of the church's dogmatic theology, illuminates from a different

angle the essentiality of Existenz in becoming acquainted with the symbolic aspects of immanence. According to Olson, Jaspers's perception of ciphers stresses the centrality of the individual experiencing the constitution of the symbol and activity involved in interpreting it, compared with Christian theology, which grants a different weight to the individual and to the symbolic aspects of religion. In his opinion, the fear that pandeism or the tendency to reduce faith into the external means by which it is obtained would eventually lead to the viewing of these means as having purely subjective, and also mutable, validity, was behind the Catholic church's emphasis on the objective truth of the symbols themselves in relation to the individual religious experience.¹²² Olson bases his words on Bernard Joseph Francis Lonergan's work.¹²³ Stephen A. Erickson discussed the difference between Jaspers's religious approach and that of Søren Kierkegaard as the difference between a non-voluntarist position and a voluntarist position.¹²⁴ Olson's interpretation, revealing the religious aspects of the experience of constituting the Being of the cipher, accords with his discussion of the role of subjectivity in revealing the metaphysical depth contained in immanent reality, although it is clear that Jaspers's perception of the ciphers cannot be seen as a basis for his identification with the dogmatic theology of the church, which was in any case not discussed in his writings of this period. Jaspers's book *Der philosophische Glaube (Philosophical Faith in Light of Revelation)* (1963) contains a more direct dialog with Christian faith.¹²⁵

The centrality of Existenz in the constitution of the approach seeing immanence as a cipher of transcendence and the individualistic facet accompanying this experience remind us of the rhetoric typical of the framework of the elucidation of Existenz. Jaspers's reference to these aspects at this stage of his philosophy has a different meaning than the one familiar from the explication of selfhood. As we recall, in the second, controlled by the drive to solipsism, the uniqueness of Existenz was perceived as an essential tool for its elucidation, and the isolation of Existenz from the world and from other Existenzen was an essential condition for its constitution as an explicit Being. In contrast, in light of the cipher's viewpoint, the unique character of Existenz helps elucidate the eternity of the ciphers themselves. In this context, Jaspers differentiated between the multiplicity of meanings that is a result of the "interpretable symbolism" and the multiplicity of meanings that is a product of the "observable symbolism." The first one relies on a fixed starting point aimed at achieving the interpretation as a final target. In contrast, the existentialist viewpoint behind the other symbolism observes its objects as possibilities for appropriation. No less than the reference revealing the presence of transcendence in immanence expresses the quality of Existenz, it also testifies to the anchor ciphers have in infinity itself.¹²⁶ Even the fact that "*infinite multiplicity of meanings of all the ciphers* shows itself in the reality of time as its essence"¹²⁷ does not enable the isolation of the ciphers, since each symbol gives rise to a new symbol.¹²⁸ In the framework of the elucidation of

selfhood, the singularity of *Existenz* served as a tool for emphasizing its particular uniqueness, which largely isolated it from its surroundings, but in the framework of the perception of ciphers, this singularity functions as a tool for elucidating Being as an extra-existential and infinite entity existing beyond *Existenz*.

In addition to the multiplicity of meanings granted to the ciphers not enabling them to be isolated from the historicist universe of *Existenz*¹²⁹—Jaspers puts it as thinking “out of the ciphers” and not “about them”¹³⁰—it does not allow a valid and complete understanding of them.¹³¹ This situation requires the definition of ciphers as a relativized Being-consciousness,¹³² and so they are perceived as an absolute barrier against the constitution of a dogmatic metaphysical system¹³³ characterized by the institutionalization and canonization of the symbols. Waardenburg distinguished between “free symbols,” which have not been canonized, and “established symbols,” characteristic of organized religions and institutions.¹³⁴ Jaspers, who was aware of the “price” that must be paid by a metaphysical approach rooted in the world of a person as an individual, indicated the danger of instability¹³⁵ and the constantly threatening doubt.¹³⁶ It is no wonder that he stated that “it would not be possible for there to be any research of a symbol, but only the perception of symbols and creation of symbols.”¹³⁷ The poor formality and the weak generality characterizing the symbols not only do not enable the world to be known through them,¹³⁸ and do not provide any knowledge about it,¹³⁹ but even make the undeciphered possibilities for existence in the world into the last datum of human Being. Therefore, Jaspers argued that seeing immanence as a cipher of transcendence charges individuals with finding for themselves the justification of the metaphysical consciousness they form. This point makes more prominent the difference between metaphysical consciousness based on symbolic observation, which tries to deal with the gap between itself and transcendence as an absolute Being, and the myths that are usually understood as having a relative meaning that leaves the gap between transcendence itself and its description intact without seeing the overcoming of this gap as a worthy challenge.¹⁴⁰

In some respects, the discussion about the role of subjectivity in the constitution of the cipher-Being demonstrates the difficulties entailed in elucidating Being itself and also those entailed in the constitution of metaphysical consciousness regarding this Being. Hermann-Josef Seideneck, who stressed these aspects of Jaspers’s thought, stated that what apparently appeared to be blunt concepts reflects the doubt of the philosophical thought. This general argument about Jaspers’s thought is especially stressed in relation to the ciphers, which in Seideneck’s opinion mainly reflect the experience of Being through the doubt that moves between the possibilities at *Existenz*’s disposal and the reality of Being in itself.¹⁴¹ While the ciphers reflect, in his words, “daring to doubt,” they also exist on the same impassable boundary that only faith and communication between

different religions through theological thought, instead of philosophy, can overcome.¹⁴²

The interpretation emphasizing the element of doubt entailed in the symbolic viewpoint of reality has some support in the text, but doubt in this context has only a role similar in principle to that of “restraint” (*epoché*) in Edmund Husserl’s thought. This means that the presence of doubt is required as an inevitable component in Jaspers’s perception of Being, which sought to rid itself of absolute aspects that could grant the metaphysical consciousness that was formulated in his thought a dogmatic nature or present it as a religious commitment. But despite the importance of Existenz in determining the character of the developing metaphysical consciousness and in creating the connection with the philosophy of Existenz in the background, the existential infrastructure remained, in which doubt is anchored as a background understanding, and did not take over the elucidation of the concept of cipher. According to the basic principles that most generally typify the framework of the explication of Being, we can find in Jaspers’s words a real expression of his attempt to qualify the existential aspects that arose in his discussion of the concept of cipher. After presenting the ciphers as an existential possibility, Jaspers wrote:

Only on the basis of Existenz’s ground does objectivity become a present reality, if it cancels the mere possibility of identifying with the existential selfhood.¹⁴³

These words affirm the premise of the perception of ciphers, that immanence contains a metaphysical depth or what was called here a “present reality,” and establishes the meaning of appropriation in the framework of this perception. Unlike the appropriation ability in the elucidation of selfhood, expressed in the translation of different contents and experiences into the language of existential selfhood, the meaning of appropriation expressed in the symbolic observation of immanent reality is almost the opposite. The Existenz that constitutes the cipher’s viewpoint and appropriates the possibilities it recognizes in immanence does not subject the objective contents it encounters to its needs, nor does it aim to identify itself with the possibilities it has chosen to appropriate. Existenz’s ability to appropriate to itself possibilities from the symbolic observation of reality depends on negating the very possibility of identifying its selfhood with what it chooses to appropriate.

The different meaning granted in this context to the concept of appropriation, containing one of the explicit meanings of Existenz, is part of a wide philosophical move characterizing the explication of Being, where there is a deep transformation of the basic insights achieved in the elucidation of selfhood. In this spirit, Jaspers argued that denying the factuality of transcendence can be considered a human freedom, but that the possible Existenz that knows its

boundaries cannot deny the reality of transcendence.¹⁴⁴ While the framework of the elucidation of selfhood expressed the freedom of Existenz in its ability to constitute itself, in the explication of Being, Existenz is presented as not observing transcendence as a possibility at its disposal, meaning a Being that teaches it something about itself, but as becoming “identical to the certainty of the Being of transcendence.”¹⁴⁵ The maturation of Existenz’s self-consciousness is reflected in the certainty it has of the Being of transcendence. Eventually, to the extent that Existenz can have any certainty about its Being, this certainty is related to its ability to experience the presence of transcendence.¹⁴⁶

Although the presence of Existenz makes the difference between seeing immanence as merely empirical and perceiving immanence as a cipher of transcendence, the existential viewpoint does not exhaust the full meaning of the concept of cipher. This is because the metaphysical interpretation granted to immanence does not function as a mechanism for confirming the real existence of the Being of transcendence, but is intended to grant an explicit expression to the intuition regarding the existence of an extra-immanent Being. The cipher’s viewpoint is intended to answer the requirement in principle that transcendence should be accessible to the tools of human consciousness. Jaspers wrote:

... to the extent that Existenz appears to itself in existence, so what exists for it only as patterns of consciousness; therefore even what is transcendence receives for the Existenz connected to existence the form of objectivity.¹⁴⁷

Following the philosophical move that clarified the connection between the viewpoint of consciousness regarding reality and the perception of that reality as a cipher of transcendence, these words also express the need to make metaphysical consciousness more communicative. What rescues the experience of ciphers from being the individual’s private experience and turns it into part of philosophical metaphysics stems from the existence of a process of “systematic analysis of absolute objectivity” and of turning the objectivity perceived as a cipher into a “meant concept.”¹⁴⁸ Even if this process does not completely remove the doubt inevitably accompanying the symbolic observation portrayed in the perception of ciphers, it reflects handling it using the tools of philosophical explication. Objective consciousness is part of the process of forming the metaphysical relation toward immanent reality, which guarantees that the metaphysical consciousness formed does not rise up against its maker, detach it from itself, and become a dogmatic religious commitment or a mystical experience. However, especially in the face of the doubt, which is an essential component of metaphysical consciousness, the product of a person’s self-constitution—doubt that the objective part of the perception of Being is supposed to answer—the reliability of Jaspers’s commitment to preserving the centrality of Existenz within

the perception of immanence as a cipher of transcendence is noticeable. The innovation in this commitment Jaspers showed toward Existenz stems from it not being intended only for purposes of its self-understanding, but also preserved when the philosophizing directs itself toward the transcendent Being.

Jaspers's effort to grant the idea of the cipher an aspect of generality by elucidating it separately from the framework of the explication of selfhood, but without alienating it from the Being of Existenz, reaches its peak with its definition as a language of transcendence.¹⁴⁹ Just as every language is based on some rules, and familiarity with them and internalization of them enable communication, so the language of the cipher, too, relies on accessibility to the general aspects of immanence as empirical reality. Like all languages, the language of the cipher has no existence as such, but only by being understood by particular people. The definition of immanence itself as a cipher text¹⁵⁰ emphasizes the dependence of the cipher language on people who can decipher it. While the general facet on which the understanding of ciphers is based is responsible for their perception as a language of transcendence instead of as a language of Existenz, the need for the cipher language to be comprehensible ensures the essentiality of Existenz as the one that indicates in practice that immanence is a cipher of transcendence.

In order to define the nature and uniqueness of the cipher language compared with other expressions of human Being, which themselves constitute a language, Jaspers differentiated between three languages. Olson argued that these three levels of the cipher language are close, if not entirely identical, to the three movements of absolute spirit in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.¹⁵¹

The first language represents the experience of the unmediated presence of transcendence in the absolute consciousness of Existenz. Although Jaspers perceives the experience in the widest sense as a source for certainty regarding transcendence and as an answer to the need for its presence in historic reality, he stressed in this context, "*The metaphysical experience lacks any verifiability that could have turned it into a valid thing for every person.*" Whether the individual sees it as knowledge or it remains merely a subjective feeling, the experience of transcendence through the first language is destined to turn into a deception.¹⁵² Compared with Jaspers's presentation of absolute consciousness in *Elucidation of Existenz*, which still emphasized the dealing with the question of selfhood,¹⁵³ here Jaspers stressed its role as mediating between Existenz and transcendence—although this facet was already present in its earlier appearance. See the discussion in the chapter summing up the transition mechanisms following Chapter Seven. In this respect, the role of absolute consciousness in the context of the discussion of ciphers can be seen as an expression of its development and as affirmation of the interpretation offered here whereby selfhood is moved aside from the center of the philosophical discussion with the transition to the explication of Being.

The inability to conduct communication on the basis of the first language and its insufficiency even for the person trying to use it serve, apparently, as a basis for the constitution of the second language, where the metaphysical consciousness is embodied. Unlike the first language, anchored in the historicity of the individual's present, the second language is based on the premise that transcendence takes place in contrast to the real present as empirical reality.¹⁵⁴ The constituting experience of this language is not "the fault in reality, but the lack of transcendence"¹⁵⁵ that should be accessible to a person's world of metaphors and thoughts. So it is not surprising that the form in which this language is expressed is that of myths. The commitment of the second language to making transcendence accessible to the objective forms of expression, as portrayed in the formation of myths, constitutes an opposite pole to the first language, free of these needs and mainly committed to the individual existential experiencing of the metaphysical experience.

Between these two languages, Jaspers placed the third language, the cipher language. He defined it as a mediating language,¹⁵⁶ and the transcendental thoughts arising in it as speculations:

They are not knowledge of an object, nor appealing to freedom through reflection that elucidates Existenz, nor a categorical transcending that does not perceive anything but liberates, nor even an interpretation of existential relations to the transcendent, but [they are] contemplative self-sinking for purposes of contact with transcendence through a formulated, deep, and self-understanding cipher text that brings transcendence before the spirit as metaphysical objectivity.¹⁵⁷

The cipher language transpires from this passage as connecting what appeared separately in the two previous languages. On the one hand, it recognizes that it is the product of the individual's self-search, and so it does not blur its being an expression of human creativity, as happens in the second language. On the other hand, awareness of its being based on speculation, meaning "a thought that in thinking pushes beyond the thinkable,"¹⁵⁸ sets the boundary between it and the first language. Unlike the first language, transcendence is not perceived in the cipher language as an expression of mere existential relations or as exhaustible as reflection about sensory understanding revolving around objects in reality.¹⁵⁹ Existenz understands itself as aimed at the Being existing beyond the familiar boundaries of immanence, though it knows that only through the symbolic function of language can this Being become accessible to it. As Jaspers said: "the symbol does not only clarify, it makes *real* what would otherwise be as nothing."¹⁶⁰

The definition of the cipher as a "language" that summarizes all the features of the cipher-Being also meets the real needs of Jaspers's philosophy at this stage

of its development. First, language serves as a clear framework of rules and semantic boundaries, and this accords with Jaspers's need to provide the metaphysical experience with a more general and communicative facet, and even explains the extensive dealing with the "objective" aspects entailed in the concept of cipher. Second, like language, the concept of cipher is also a human creation and so is dependent for its very existence on a human Being to create it. Therefore, even if Jaspers assumed that the very reality of immanent reality contained metaphysical depth not exhausted in the existential relation toward it, he made the possibility of revealing it dependent on people interested in transcendence as a source of the meaning of their existence. In this respect, the parallel between the symbol as a way of people's relating to what is beyond them and language, which also refers to a reality not identical to it, stresses the human creativity expressed in the very constitution of the relation and in the contents formed thereby. Third, just as language reports a reality in accordance with the rules and meanings typifying it, so also the cipher reports the existence of a transcendent Being within the boundaries of symbolic observation, though from awareness that "there is no simple parallel between the sensory fullness and the fullness of the contents of the Being."¹⁶¹ The definition of the cipher as a language leaves intact the awareness of the unbridgeable gap between the human Being constituting the metaphysical relation and the object to which it is intended. This affirms that analogous nature of the cipher's viewpoint, expressed in this context in recognition that the "meeting" with Being in a "real and whole" way is impossible.¹⁶²

Jaspers's commitment to proposing a positive elucidation to the "Being in itself" led him to argue that precisely because it is the language of a fable, the cipher language does not lead to the loss of transcendence. As he phrased it: "truth is lost if it changes when it becomes an identical and general Being for everyone, and becomes lacking the indirectness of language."¹⁶³ The special emphasis granted to the element of indirectness in the cipher language, becoming a criterion of the truth of the metaphysical experience, reveals that the comparison between the cipher and language was not primarily intended to stress the semantic aspects, constituting an inseparable part of the symbolic view of reality. The quality of indirectness defines the relation between the cipher as a concept and transcendence as a Being: the cipher expresses the human creativity revealed in the process of searching for the meaning of existence. Transcendence, however, is a reality that one can become acquainted with indirectly—though its differentiation from human reality turns it into a source for meaning in life. The indirectness typical of the cipher language as a way in which we can become acquainted with transcendence ensures a meeting point between the metaphysical search and transcendence itself. It also explains and even justifies the variety of forms of the metaphysical consciousness based on the cipher's viewpoint that can always "*communicate itself in a different way*."¹⁶⁴ The definition of the cipher's

viewpoint as a language, the exposure of the metaphysical elements in immanence, and the image of subjectivity being driven to search for the meaning of existence in the worlds existing beyond it can serve as a basis and inspiration for dealing with Jaspers's ideas also from the hermeneutic perspective, an approach that is currently in its early stages in research. The infrastructure for this direction to interpreting Jaspers's philosophy exists already in Olson and Ricoeur.¹⁶⁵ The scope of the current study does not permit such a discussion of Jaspers's thought, but we can state that unlike other philosophers such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Ernst Cassirer, who offered a "theory of interpretation" or a basis for one, such a basis does not exist in Jaspers's philosophy, and even the cipher language described above has a mainly intuitive nature.

In the context of the ciphers, as in other subjects, Jaspers expressed his tendency to deal with the conditions enabling the development of real philosophy, or more precisely, to clarify the conditions that do not prevent it, while avoiding a general description of the correct practice of philosophizing. Jaspers conveyed the unique nature of the knowledge to which his philosophy was directed in his definition of the term "fundamental knowledge."

We call fundamental knowledge the knowledge where the person *discovers himself by* all his defined knowledge being dependent upon him, or [the knowledge] that is *a premise* for any other knowledge. [This knowledge] is also called a-priori. As such it is the general a-priori of consciousness in general in the categories of the mind, the a-priori of the spirit in the ideas, the a-priori of existence in practical motives and response patterns; this is the *historistic* a-priori of the tradition of human Being that experiences its world as a one-time pattern, as a realization of the general that has meaning and weight not as general but as infinite.¹⁶⁶

Although these words of Jaspers's were not written in the context of the discussion of ciphers, they can be seen as an explicit disclosure of the usually hidden intentions and motives of his ideas, and perhaps even as a general phrasing of the wider ethos guiding his philosophical work. In this context, the a-priori and one-time nature of "fundamental knowledge" can explain the intuitive aspect characterizing the language of ciphers, which cannot serve as a basis for the constitution of metaphysics in the full sense, even if it illuminates an aspect of the experience of constituting a metaphysical relation toward reality. Olson argues that Jaspers did not exhaust the hermeneutic potential contained in his ideas, and even states that Jaspers was wrong not to call his philosophy of transcendence hermeneutical.¹⁶⁷ In his opinion, Jaspers's objection to dealing with formal questions of logic and epistemology was an inseparable part of his interpretative approach as such.¹⁶⁸ Thyssen argued that meeting transcendence through the

ciphers is meeting contents.¹⁶⁹ Unlike the arguments of Olson and Thyssen, I believe that Jaspers's familiar objection to system or any formalization of philosophy that would present itself as a wholeness that exhausts itself could serve as part of the explanation for him not using these elements and developing an interpretative theory on their basis. It is possible that the decisive influence of Heidegger's philosophy in *Being and Time*, which was already a real fact in the philosophical discourse in which Jaspers operated, largely determined the basic understanding of hermeneutics as ontology. Jaspers's objection to ontology, which was part of his objection to positivism as a whole, probably did not enable him to define his thought as hermeneutics or even to indicate the possible implications of his ideas for this realm of thought. Finally, the primary importance of the comparison between the cipher's viewpoint and language rests in it clarifying the basic idea on which the explication of Being relied, that the human need to express metaphysical experiences using the tools of consciousness does not serve as a final test for the reality of the Being of transcendence to which this experience is aimed.

6. The Concept of Cipher as Mediating between the Elucidation of Selfhood and the Explication of Being

The distinction between the three languages of metaphysical tangibility, which served as a basis for the definition of the uniqueness of the cipher language, helped sharpen crucial aspects contained within the concept of the cipher. However, an additional examination of these three languages as one complex reveals that they reflect milestones in the process of the development of Jaspers's thought. From this genealogical viewpoint, the cipher language reflects a new integration of early insights related to the framework of the elucidation of selfhood and represented by the first two languages. Samay offers another interpretation to these three languages. In his opinion, the first language reflects "the immediate language of Being," the second reflects the person's answer to the language of transcendence, and the third reflects the translation of the experience of Being appearing in the first two languages into a speculative language. In Samay's opinion, these three languages reflect a hierarchy aimed at making the ciphers into a more communicative Being.¹⁷⁰

Perhaps this statement about the cipher language reveals some awareness on Jaspers's part of the developing nature of his philosophy, and perhaps the distinction between the three languages was merely a methodical tool aimed mainly at clarifying the concept of cipher. In any case, unique nature of the cipher language as revealed from its comparison with the two other languages may serve as a basis for a reexamination of the connection between the processes of the explication of Being and the early philosophical insights that were formulated in the framework of the elucidation of selfhood.

As we recall, the first language represented the experience with the unmediated presence of transcendence of absolute consciousness of Existenz. Jaspers's statement in this context that "the experience of the first language immediately requires *the self giving its utmost of possible Existenz*," and more generally the definition of Existenz as "the place where the cipher text is read,"¹⁷¹ indicate the centrality of Existenz in it. However, although Jaspers himself discussed the existential infrastructure contained in the cipher's viewpoint that is located in the third language, the character of the Existenz related to the cipher is not equivalent to the one constituting the first language. Unlike the existential aspects in which the concept of cipher is anchored, representing the selfhood that has matured and as a result found in itself the power to turn to elucidating the Being existing beyond it, the Existenz that constitutes the first language is connected to some aspects of Jaspers's early perception of selfhood.

This argument is based, first and foremost, on the definition of the first cipher language as "*unverifiable*," a definition that indicates the uncommunicative nature of the experience of transcendence in this language.¹⁷² Additional support for this is found in that statement that "I affirm [the reading of the cipher text] through my selfhood, without having another measure from this selfhood for knowing the transcendence of ciphers."¹⁷³ Finally, the reference repeated in the following citation to the idea of possibility and the element of struggle, which filled a central role in the elucidation of selfhood, also supports the impression about the presence of the early perception of selfhood in the first language. As Jaspers put it:

I do indeed have consciousness of the real Being only in the Being of transcendence; only here there is peace for me. However, I always find myself again on the unquiet island of struggle, I remain alone, and appear to get lost; I lose myself if I no longer feel Being ... in my philosophizing I remain suspended between adjusting and my possibility for my reality to be given.¹⁷⁴

Jaspers's repeated confrontation with the thought patterns typical of his early perception of selfhood is apparently no coincidence. The statement that "the reality of transcendence is still decided only in the first language"¹⁷⁵ indicates that the elements of the explication of Being are anchored already in the early perception of selfhood. In this respect, "something" from the first language is present in the cipher language. So the selfhood that constitutes the cipher language must be capable, as part of its self-understanding, of comprehending the language of the early selfhood as a sort of "ancient writing" of its own.

Like the first language, we can also identify in the second language of metaphysical tangibility the presence of early philosophical ideas Jaspers had handled in the explication of selfhood. The general element typical of Christian

myths within the second language may serve as a basis for the communication, or “mediation” in Jaspers’s word, of the metaphysical experiences it contains.¹⁷⁶ A basic similarity exists between the process of creating myths as Jaspers described it in this context and his perception of the process of the objectivization of the scientific viewpoint. Even the role Jaspers attributed to the scientific viewpoint in the elucidation of selfhood is not different from the one he granted myths when discussing the concept of the cipher. Just as the act of scientific objectivization defines the boundaries of the reality that it created and sets the general criteria for its reality, so the observation seeing immanence as a cipher of transcendence determines the boundaries of the reality on which metaphysical consciousness is based. Just as the act of scientific objectivization grants the scientist a sense of connection to the objective reality, and a real grasp of it, so the myths grant the metaphysical experience a sense of a grasp of something real. Recognizing the advantages of the positivistic viewpoint and the contribution of formal consciousness to the clarification of the concept of cipher does not enable the simple rejection of the way of dealing proposed in the second language. In the following passage Jaspers sketched the philosophical move originating in the elucidation of Existenz, continuing in the second language and ending in a detailed justification for its rejection:

The objectivity of the metaphysical tradition attracts at first the forming Existenz, even before it disassembles itself again in the formed Existenz. As a historical thing, objectivity has stable sides; it can be significant only in raising the question whether Existenz reaches its selfhood alone. ... The pretension to become familiar is realized even before it could be sought. Against [this pretension], the experience of Existenz turns with the world orientation that expands itself and can bring itself not to believe in anything as empirical and finite. If this positivism collapses, within the boundaries that it perceived, [then] for the first time only the stable and authoritative objectivity can be perceived anew. Fused into the movement of the existential ascertaining of transcendence, this [objectivity perceived anew] serves as a function where the substantial ground becomes present. This is because the objectivity of transcendence in the ciphers of the second language cannot be exhaustive at any moment either from principle or ad hoc, but it is only acquired historically.¹⁷⁷

The connection arising from these words between the rejection of the second language that crystallized the metaphysical consciousness in the framework of myths, and the objection Jaspers raised during the elucidation of selfhood toward the positivistic world view is clear. The eternity of the Being embodied in selfhood and in the cipher is perceived as contradicting the very possibility that it could be exhausted using the tools of finitude. Just as positivism cannot propose a

complete elucidation of the experience of constituting selfhood and of the reality viewed from it, so the myths do not embody the metaphysical reality that the concept of cipher is intended to indicate.

Jaspers's choice represented in the second language, to establish his objection to metaphysical objectivization precisely on the basis of existential considerations related to the processes of its historic formation, constitutes a continuation of the philosophical move that appeared already in the first language. In these two languages we can notice the attempt to deal with the ways of forming metaphysical consciousness in light of the central aspects that had appeared in the elucidation of selfhood. Although the idea of historicity has been interpreted in this book as a transition mechanism reflecting a transcending of the framework of the explication of selfhood, Jaspers's criticism of positivism, as raised in the presentation of the second language, does not allow us to ignore the prominent connection this language has with the questions guiding the discussion of the early perception of selfhood.

The ongoing dialog Jaspers conducted with these early insights, which had become the constituting elements of the framework of the explication of selfhood in his philosophy, demonstrates the continuity between the different issues he discussed over the long years of his work. While the third language where the cipher's viewpoint is located is not satisfied with the one-time experience of *Existenz* as expressed in the first language, nor does it turn to the other extreme that organizes the metaphysical experience within the fenced boundaries of the myths that fill the second language. However, the third language is revealed from the interpretation presented above as anchored in the early philosophical processes represented in the two first languages. So the cipher language shows, on the one hand, recognition of the self-sinking ability of *Existenz* that typified the elucidation of selfhood, though unlike the first language this ability was directed toward the transcendent Being. On the other hand, the cipher language reflects Jaspers's attempt to satisfy the philosophical need for defined thought patterns at some level—though unlike the second language, the cipher language does not satisfy this need to the point of isolating it from its connection to the historic selfhood characterizing myths as such.

The combination of the existential element anchored in the processes of elucidating selfhood and of the more structured and communicative facet that developed in the framework of the explication of Being in the cipher language realizes what Jaspers saw as a condition for the constitution of the consciousness of Being: maintaining the tension between objectivity and subjectivity.¹⁷⁸ He walks "on the double ground" that consciousness of Being has "both in objectivity and in subjectivity."¹⁷⁹ So the cipher's viewpoint represents the process in which the development of the person's selfhood gradually becomes a reflection of transcendence,¹⁸⁰ without losing the connection with the concrete reality of

Existenz.¹⁸¹ Jaspers described the new situation created by the symbolic observation of reality as follows:

In the cipher, what is connected to the root of my Being and yet does not unite with me faces me as a Being. I am real in that I exist in the cipher as myself without chasing a [certain] end or serving some interest of existence.¹⁸²

Finally, the concept of cipher becomes a crossroads where the meeting of different aspects of Jaspers's philosophy led to the maturation of metaphysical consciousness—a maturity expressed in its ability to acquire a new philosophical language that does not involve losing the connection with its constituent elements. The ability of the cipher language to speak also the language of the philosophizing that characterized the elucidation of selfhood not only revealed the metaphysical depth contained in the Being of Existenz, but also demonstrated the thematic continuity from the elucidation of selfhood to the explication of Being. At this point we can find grounds for a comparison between Jaspers and Ricoeur, who argued that understanding the symbolic aspects is a moment of self-comprehension.¹⁸³ In this respect, the concept of cipher expressed a meeting between two potencies: the one existing in immanence, whose roots are in transcendence, and the one typical of Existenz, described in this context as experiencing reality as “the pure self-presence of transcendence in immanence.”¹⁸⁴ The same experience that in the perception of the encompassing was held in the duality between “the encompassing that is us” and “the encompassing that is Being itself” led in the framework of the cipher's viewpoint to the integration of Existenz and immanence with transcendence. As Jaspers put it: “in the cipher text *the separation between the symbol and what it symbolizes [is] impossible*,”¹⁸⁵ since “the cipher is a parable that is Being or Being that is a parable.”¹⁸⁶

CONCLUSION

Karl Jaspers's philosophical search for Being was based on the search for comprehensive existential wholeness. Unlike systematic wholeness, where the role of its system is merely the element that directs the process of philosophizing, the comprehensive wholeness does not function as a "guiding principle" but instead as a "fundamental drive," a deep motivation that cannot be silenced.¹ In this study, which aimed to make contact with the primary elements on which Jaspers's philosophy was based, as they developed over the long years of his work, I tried to find the element connecting the varied philosophical themes with which he dealt. These issues transpired during the study as combining into a unity that goes beyond the sum of all its components. I have called this unity "metaphysical consciousness." Since philosophizing was, for Jaspers, a drive rather than just a way of observing reality, the interpretation I have proposed to his philosophy sought to express the internal tension apparent in the process of the development of metaphysical consciousness and to avoid as much as possible eroding it through an interpretation that would devote itself to illuminating this philosophy as a harmonious whole.

The effort to reveal the wholeness at the basis of Jaspers's thought relied on two viewpoints, genealogical and thematic, on which the research methodology of this study was based. The *genealogical viewpoint* was intended to clarify the development dynamic of Jaspers's work, from his psychiatric period up to the peak of the philosophical period, while the *thematic viewpoint* was aimed at elucidating the various issues presented in the different chapters. However, with hindsight it seems that the fuller understanding of the metaphysical consciousness in Jaspers's thought did not rely mainly on the implementation of these two viewpoints, each of which illuminated Jaspers's work from a different angle, but instead on the fact that it was not actually possible to separate them.

It was not possible to present the stages of the development of Jaspers's philosophy from the genealogical viewpoint without being aware of the various issues discussed in the framework of the thematic study. In this respect, the thematic viewpoint served as an infrastructure enabling the genealogical study. Only thanks to the existence of this understanding in the background of the genealogical study was it possible to determine what would be considered as a milestone in the development of Jaspers's ideas, and to distinguish between the primary and secondary stages. The genealogical study of Jaspers's philosophy could not be structured as a descriptive spread, a sort of "narrative of the

development of Jaspers's ideas" from the "starting point" to the "end," since the "narrative" itself was only enabled on the basis of acquaintance with its end. Against the background of these ideas we can characterize the genealogical viewpoint as a "progressive method" in the sense that it always aimed to advance from the early to the late point. The awareness whereby in the background of this viewpoint there must exist a thematic understanding of the subject enables us to understand more precisely the nature of the genealogical study, and to see it as a detracting progress, meaning progress achieved from extricating the aspects relevant to the subject and abandoning those the thematic understanding already knows are not essential for elucidating the topic.

At the same time, the formulation of the discussion of the different issues in Jaspers's philosophy, the focus of the study from the thematic viewpoint, would not have been possible without understanding the philosophical moves that led to the constitution of the issues included in the wider topic of the metaphysical consciousness. The thematic viewpoint, relying on the background genealogical study, can thus be defined as a "regressive method." But since this method is eventually aimed at revealing the connection between the issues in the studied philosophy, we can make the definition of the thematic viewpoint more precise, and see it as cumulative regression, meaning a method that requires acquaintance with the early stages of the development of the philosophy in order to formulate the topic on which the study is focused.

In the end, it transpired that not only is there no way of separating the two viewpoints on which the research methodology in this book was based—they actually simultaneously present the existence of both continuous phenomena and non-continuous phenomena in Jaspers's philosophy. We can call the non-continuous phenomena "tears" (*Zerrissenheit*) in the sense Jaspers gave this term in the context of the perception of Being.² As the genealogical study reflected the different stages of the philosophy's development and served as a basis for its division into periods, so this study showed the continuity unifying all the various stages of development. But as the thematic study aimed at reaching a coherent understanding of central topics and concepts in Jaspers's thought referring to their appearances throughout the years of his work, so it also revealed the processes of alteration and meaning-change these topics and concepts underwent during the development of his thought.

This book exposed two philosophizing axes along which Jaspers's philosophy developed: one aimed at achieving what I have called the "explication of selfhood," the other aimed at what I have defined as the "explication of Being." The structure of the book apparently reflects the understanding that the first axis of philosophizing led to the second, but against the background of the renewed discussion of the nature of the two viewpoints on which the research methodology was based, we can state that these two axes were actually simultaneously present throughout the stages of the development of this philosophy, and only the mode of

their presence is what changed. Our study of the explication of selfhood, relying on the publications where Jaspers discussed this issue directly, showed that the perception of Being was also present implicitly in the background of insights that were apparently not related to it, but to selfhood. In contrast, in the explication of Being his arguments were aimed directly at Being, and apparently they had nothing to add to the character of selfhood that had been elucidated earlier. Subjectivity or *Existenz*, which were focused only on elucidating their selfhoods, were revealed as different from those perceiving themselves as existing in the face of transcendence.

The change in the mode of presence of Being and selfhood in the two axes of the explication can also be understood as Jaspers's attempt to exhaust his discussion of these two objects of philosophizing on two levels: as a possibility (*Möglichkeit*) and as a reality (*Sein*). Within the explication of selfhood, selfhood portrayed the reality to which the philosophizing was directed, while Being itself was placed in the background of this framework of explication as a possibility that had yet to find its realization within the philosophizing. In the second explication, in contrast, Being or transcendence constituted the reality the philosophical discussion was intended to elucidate, while selfhood was delegated to the background. In this respect, the category of reality expresses the central object of the philosophizing that is given overtly and directly, while the category of possibility has two different meanings. In the explication of selfhood it refers to the Being portraying the horizons beyond the boundaries of the philosophical discussion, which still lacked the tools to explicate it. In the explication of Being this category represents selfhood, which had served in Jaspers's philosophy as an a-priori infrastructure on which the discussion was based, and which actually enabled it.

Illuminating the changing mode of presence of the two main objects of Jaspers's philosophy has great significance for understanding it as one whole. It prevents the option of seeing selfhood or Being as a decisive issue in this thought, and implies that in fact there is no significance to Jaspers's perception of selfhood without his perception of Being, and *vice versa*. Just as the explication of selfhood was unable to fulfill all the needs of selfhood, which required the explication of Being to complement it, so it is impossible to understand the explication of Being without knowing the existential infrastructure that led to it and remains implicit within it. The completion of the two frameworks of explication can only be achieved outside them. In this respect, the "turning point" in Jaspers's thought reflected primarily the context in which it was revealed. From the perspective of the entire philosophy, however, the transition from the explication of selfhood to the one aimed at Being is perceived as the exposure and realization of philosophical potentials that had existed in this thought from the very beginning. In this sense, the three parts composing this book reflect the essential limitations of the philosophical explication, which by its very nature was unable to illuminate

the wholeness of the philosophy all at once without spreading it out over several stages.

The illumination of each of the two objects of explication, both as a possible element and as a real element, reveals the depth of meaning of the metaphysical consciousness being constituted in Jaspers's philosophy. On the one hand, it is presented as the realization of a possibility that selfhood had chosen, and thus it should be seen as having significance only for selfhood rather than as an expression of a deterministic process. On the other hand, the very existence of the possibility as background and even as an a-priori condition for the constitution of metaphysical consciousness contains the basis for the realization of this possibility—a reality that is not tested by its actual realization, but that has value even without this realization. Jaspers's philosophy does not lay down "the road to the constitution of metaphysical consciousness," but only entails one of the possibilities for constituting such a consciousness.

Finally, just as the method guiding this study was not prior to the very act of research, but was formulated during it, so also the metaphysical consciousness typical of Jaspers's thought was not a teleological object to which the philosophizing consciously aimed itself, but became tangible only after it had actually been achieved. The secret of the authenticity of Jaspers's philosophy stems from the constant dialog he conducted with the basic intuitions that had guided him at the beginning, intuitions that at various stages along the way were put to the test, but that survived despite the criticism of them as part of the framework of philosophizing, which constantly expanded. Metaphysical consciousness, portraying at the early stages of the development of his thought the self-consciousness of *Existenz*, and seeking at the later stages to meet not only the "searchlight" illuminating Being, but also "this light itself,"³ apparently always found its way to the selfhood in which its starting point was anchored.