AN ELUCIDATION OF JASPER'S CONCEPT OF EXISTENZ IN THE BOUNDARY SITUATIONS

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

Introduction is divided into three parts: the first part deals with the historical background and traces the development of the concept of being as dealt with by Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Thales recognized water as the basic reality; Anaximander too accepted one reality and gave it the name of boundless something. Anaximenes regarded air as the fundamental principle of all things. We also find this unity of being in the philosophy of Parmenides. Pythagoras proposed a radical concept when he said that the unlimited is real and the finite diversity of one’s experience is the limit imposed on the unlimited. In the philosophy of Plato being expresses itself through essences where as according to Aristotle abstractions like whiteness, horseness etc. become known only in the white objects and the horses etc.

Descartes distinguished mind and matter as the two levels of being, and Spinoza gave his theory of psycho-physical parallelism locating mind and matter as the two aspects of being. In the philosophy of Leibniz being is exteriorized as monads.
Locke and Berkley regarded sense experience as the source of knowledge, and Hume accepted knowledge as evolving from impressions. Kant gave a new impetus to this thinking by saying that sensibility or understanding alone cannot bring us knowledge: a synthesis of the two is a necessary pre-requisite. In Hegel’s system reason is the highest principle underlying the reality of being.

The second part of the Introduction is concerned with Kierkegaard occupying primacy of place in Jaspers thought: both for Kierkegaard and also for Jaspers the moment of choice is significant. The individual takes his own initiative and is not guided by any one. This freedom also makes him fully responsible for it. As far as the concepts of time and eternity are concerned both Kierkegaard and Jaspers hold identical views. For both of them it is the present moment which is decisive.

The second influence seems to be that of Nietzsche. Both Jaspers and Nietzsche are undogmatic in their approach to Christianity, but instead of Nietzsche’s Nihilism Jaspers asserts his philosophical faith. The main difference between religious faith and philosophical faith is that while
the former is based upon the revealed text and the authority of the Church, the latter is based upon personal commitment unsupported by any authority.

Jaspers was also profoundly influenced by Kant’s distinction of the phenomena and noumena. But unlike Kant who regarded God as a postulate only, Jaspers says that one discovers God when one goes beyond the sensory world.

Also worth noticing is the fact that Jaspers’ philosophy is rooted in his relation to Max Weber. One cannot talk of an influence on Jaspers as an element which could be separated from his own positive thinking.

Jaspers was a good deal influenced by Idealism and Protestantism. He however does not accept Christ as an incarnation of God through affirming at the same time that he is the ultimate reference-point illuminating for us the correct way.

Jaspers was also indebted to Platonic Idealism in which idea is an encompassing unity of the perceivable. Jaspers regards reality as neither
the subject, nor the object but something which encompasses both: he calls it Encompassing.

The third part of the Introduction deals with the structure and pattern of 'Philosophie' the various themes and motifs with which it deals and his approach to each problem.

The first chapter deals with Jaspers' very important concept of Encompassing. According to him it is not possible to grasp the totality of being: it is divisible into subject and object. In other words every intentional act is directed towards an intended object. Jaspers in his concept of Encompassing is indebted to Kant's transcendental philosophy. According to Kant the subject can never become an object. What looks like an object is some sort of detachment behind which the subject withdraws itself. This 'being for us' is called by Kant appearance.

Jaspers discusses Encompassing in terms of its modes. Encompassing is constituted of two modes: the subject and the object. Subjectivity provides us with three divisions of these modes: existence (Dasein), consciousness in general and spirit. To this Jaspers adds two other

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divisions of the encompassing: a transcendent mode of subjectivity (Existenz) and the other of objectivity (Transcendence). The medium of their realization is called Reason.

Many points of criticism are levelled against this concept. Knauss is of the view that the seven modes do not represent a clear-cut connection or order. Consciousness as such is the all-embracing structure of our self or being. The number of the modes are arbitrary. One is Transcendence, the other consciousness-as-such but there are many Existenzes and existences.

Insistence on the subject-object dichotomy as the basic situation of our knowledge invites us to look for being beyond this split. Jaspers admires those mystics who try to overcome this fissure in favour of a total oneness of subject and object through the disappearance of objectivity and the extinction of the ego.

The second chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses situation in general and boundary situations particularly. Like other Existentialists Jaspers also affirms that man is a situational being. He
cannot step out of one situation without entering the another. By boundary situation he means a situation which is inevitable. One cannot just ignore or avoid it. For instance, one is born at a certain time in history, belongs to a particular family, is a man or a women, young or old – in short one is not a man in general and this places him in the boundary situation.

The second part of the chapter discusses at length the boundary situations like death, suffering, struggle and guilt. Death as an objective fact is not a boundary situation. It is when we anticipate death and dread its approach that it becomes a crucial boundary situation. Here an attempt is made to compare this concept with Heidegger’s concept of death. It is significant to note that whereas Heidegger has close affinities with Jaspers’ concept of death, Sartre offers a contrast to it. Sartre is bitter in his attitude towards death.

The second boundary situation, suffering, is treated on similar lines. To be more explicit Jaspers says on the one hand that it is an objective fact, that suffering is inevitable, etc. On the other hand, be urges man to face it with courage and strength.
The third boundary situation is struggle. According to Jaspers, a struggle is waged at the physical level between two individuals. For example, the food that we eat, the place that we occupy, the position that we hold imply that we deprive our fellow beings in one way or the other. Marx's views are in close consonance with Jaspers' views in this regard. According to Marx it is in view of production that classes occupy dissimilar positions: the subordinate class is the target of all kinds of exploitation.

The fourth boundary situation is guilt. According to Jaspers, guilt is an inevitable feature of human existence. Every action that one performs involves us in guilt and each choice that one makes lands us into guilt. Kierkegaard and Hartman too regard man as guilt-laden.

The third chapter presents man as a concrete, finite and temporal being. Man's finitude involves him in history in which sphere he realizes his potentialities. One's theoretical knowledge of history becomes meaningful when its thought contents put up a challenge before us. Thus in obedience to the existential call the individual fulfils his sense of historicity when he is actively involved in the processes of history.
The questions of freedom and communication are also raised with regard to one’s finite existence. One grows and develops by communion with others. It is in his finiteness that he becomes aware of his potentialities and strives in such a way that from it springs the existential impulse to elevate himself through his freedom. In one’s finite existence is heard the unconditional imperative. This happens when one is in danger of losing oneself. The existential call comes as the command of one’s authentic self bidding one’s empirical existence. In response to the unconditional command one makes a choice and it stems from the sense of freedom.

It is in the boundary situations that the existential imperative is most clearly heard. In situations like death, suffering and guilt the choice seems to be whether one succumbs to these situations or faces them boldly. If one listens to the unconditional command one is supposed to take these situations upon oneself or else lose oneself.

The fourth chapter discusses existence in a special sense which is exclusively Jaspers’ own. According to Jaspers, one is able to win over
Existenz when one achieves authenticity. In an elucidation of Existenz one recognizes different concepts as signs of Existenz: choice, communication, historicity etc. Jaspers regards freedom not as an objective fact but an existential experience. In making use of freedom one is guided by the law of moral imperative, but it only enlightens but never determines one’s decision. What is significant in this regard is that one has taken an initiative even though it may not be rational. This freedom of choice places utmost responsibility on the individual which fills him with a feeling of dread.

Another sign of Existenz is communication. In communication one is illuminated if one is considerate towards the other. One must be prepared to take any risk and face any test if one wants to establish communicative ties with the other.

Existenz is also historic. Historicity stands for the exceptional moment: that in which the past and the future become coalesced. Historicity has to be distinguished from the cares and pursuits of existence. Enclosed by coercions and inhibitions one struggles to attain a sense of fidelity.
Fidelity implies keeping faith in one's parents, in experiences of childhood and in places which have impinged upon us.

According to Jaspers the situational character of Existenz expresses itself into three eventualities: being-in-the-world, being-amidst-others and being-towards-transcendence. Thus Existenz in relation to being poses a metaphysical issue and in connection with truth it becomes an epistemological question. According to Jaspers existential truth is individual and it has to be won over. Thus struggle is needed for the achievement of a truthful authentic existence. It is a combat between two entities who have a common objective: the attainment of truth. It is not aimed at achieving superiority over the other, nor is any secrecy maintained. Both wish to arrive at a conclusion, jointly. Sartres' views are also expressed in this regard. According to Sartre conflict ensues between two individuals when one's freedom is usurped by the other's 'look'. He has a feeling as if his whole universe is being demolished by this look'. This is one of the dimensions of a person's encounter with others.

The fifth chapter on the concept of Transcendence is of great
significance because the main thrust of Jaspers' process of argumentation is based on this concept. He points to two different approaches to Transcendence: formal transceding and existential relation to Transcendence. One can reduce Transcendence to the following categories:

a) the categories of objectivity such as being and Nothingness, form and matter, the universal and the particular.

b) the categories of objectivity such as time, space and substance.

c) the categories of freedom such as possibility, Existenz etc.

The four existential relations are expressed in the form of antimonies

a) Estrangement and love.

b) Fall and elevation.

c) Righteousness and passion.

d) Unity and multiplicity.

Estrangement or defiance expresses itself in questioning the ways of God and finding fault with them. However surrender is a corollary of defiance: one surrenders only after defiance.

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b) Elevation and fall: Existenz is both divorced from existence and is drawn towards it.

c) Righteousness and passion: Jaspers uses the simile of Day and Night for these opposed tendencies. Day stands for reason, stability, order etc. and Night symbolises impulse, bust and passion. Both these tendencies co-exist in man.

d) Unity and multiplicity: the concepts of unity and multiplicity are simultaneous: the concept of the one God beyond all personifications is there.

Another way to apprehend Transcendence is through revelation. This is mediated through the incommunicable language of being.

When the recipient explains his experience in terms of language, the second stage begins which may be termed as mythical communication. It expresses itself in the following three forms.

a) One personifies the objects of nature. Jaspers refers to experiences like spanning the sublimity of the sea through its immensity etc.
b) The myth of a world beyond reality reduces empirical reality to mere sensory phenomena. Existenz makes intrusion into the super-sensory world.

c) At the third level all reality becomes mythical. Jaspers gives the example of Van Gogh whose paintings make an appeal because he strove to discover a mythical quality in landscape, people and objects.

According to Jaspers ciphers are not limited to the three forms mentioned above. Anything can serve as a cipher of Transcendence, no matter how trivial it is. Cipher is not intelligible by interpretation, it is to be understood intuitively. The truth of the cipher depends on the person who apprehends this truth. It may be added that the reading of ciphers is not to be learned, for it is primarily a matter of faith.

Ciphers are manifested in nature, art and history and man himself is a cipher. According to Jaspers, the failure of all efforts to apprehend the absolute is itself the expression of an ultimate cipher which we may call the cipher of foundering.
In the chapter "critical appraisal" points of criticism levelled against Jaspers are mentioned, particularly that his philosophizing is positionless. The second point is that his philosophy does not culminate in logical reasoning. Thirdly that what he has to convey is very simple: his ideas are painstakingly formulated while one is groping one's way through his dense vocabulary.

In an elucidation of Existenz one may point out that existence has an antinomical structure. One is constantly faced with the choice of taking up a particular course of action and gain Existenz or evade a decision and sink into mere existence.

A boundary situation is expressed in an antinomy too. Take, for instance, death. Death as envisaged by us is something far-fetched and it is felt closely when it is experienced as the specific death of a specific individual. It is for this reason that besides potential death Jaspers speaks also of immanent death. It is this immanent death which points towards the 'beyond' of man's being. The fear of death is eased in exalted moments like an act of commitment, in view of a heroic dead or at the
point of a great vision. Thus death is embraced in order to win Existenz.

Taking into account the second boundary situation, suffering, Jaspers envisages if from two angles. According to Jaspers evil is rooted in the very nature of things. All entities are potentially perfect but actually imperfect. This evil is lack or omission of good. Furthermore, a basic distinction has to be made between physical suffering and moral evil. The former is entailed by nature and the latter is the result of man's actions. However, the dysteleology manifested in the misery of life can be alleviated by belief in teleology.

As far as the third boundary situation, guilt, is concerned Jaspers says that one is guilty through the very fact of being finite. In other words, every act that one performs involves one in guilt. This is opposed to the Christian concept which does not regard guilt as a constituent of one's existence. Similarly, the Christian belief that the death of Jesus on the Cross is an atonement of the sins of mankind is not acceptable to Jaspers. He thinks that each man is responsible for his own sins. However, guilt is condoned by goodwill.
The fourth boundary situation is struggle. According to Jaspers, however passively one demands one’s share and whatever fair means one uses in this respect, there is bound to be a clash between the legitimate claims of two persons. Existence no doubt depends on struggle, force or power, but it also depends on cooperation, compromise and understanding. This struggle for physical survival is counterbalanced by struggle for authenticity which Jaspers calls loving struggle. The struggle for physical sustainment is tainted by selfishness and egoism: loving struggle is based upon concern and care. Loving struggle does not aim at achieving superiority over the other. It aspires for a common goal, hence victory or defeat over one another is not conceivable. Criticism and questioning is welcome in this struggle. It is waged in different forms of relationship like master and servant, husband and wife, father and son etc.: it is supposed to be a clash of ideals and points of view.

Thus we find that elucidation of Existenz can best be undertaken in relation to morality. The moral dilemma that confronts the individual is whether to maintain one’s identity and achieve authenticity or to
sacrifice one’s integrity and lose Existenz. The conscientious individual faces the boundary situations courageously and thus rejects existence in view of a genuine true Existenz.

Boundary situations bring us to the edge of a precipice where one experiences Nothingness or God. It is Jaspers’ contention that the way of philosophical vision and the way of prayer and worship cannot be united in a single life. Again we arrive at the boundary and take one path or another. Jaspers’ message is that whichever path we take we must strive vigorously to achieve our end.

In the chapter “Jaspers and the global situation” such topics as Colonialism, Nationalism and role of the United Nations are discussed and this Jaspers talks about in “The future of Mankind”. Moreover freedom is jeopardized by Totalitarianism and human life is under the threat of the Atom bomb. Thus man has cognizance today on a global scale of the relevance of Jaspers’ basic concepts.
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PREFACE

Karl Jaspers, the great German philosopher, is one of the most seminal minds in the history of the philosophy of the twentieth Century.

He started his career working in a psychiatric hospital and retained this position for seven years. He then switched over to the teaching of psychology in the Faculty of philosophy. In 1919 he published his book psychologie der Weltanschauungen which is supposed to be the earliest writing in the so-called modern school of Existentialism.

The questions which were posed about the world and time, about man and his situation in this world and also ultimate situations (death, suffering, chance, guilt, struggle) questions about freedom, love, truth etc. were later elaborated on. These questions were not however systematically worked out. Nevertheless they created a stir in the world of philosophy and Jaspers says in his philosophical auto-biography that they became the corner-stone of his further speculations.

In 1922 when he occupied the chair for philosophy in Heidelberg, he took to the study of philosophy in a more thorough way. His Psychologie der Weltanschauungen was a great success. At that time courses in the
psychology of religion and in the psychology of morals were arranged. Thus there was a lot of scope for publishing such works.

In December 1931, his magnum opus work entitled 'philosophie' appeared in three volumes. It is based not on mere speculation but Jaspers unfolds the concrete experiences of the philosopher himself. It is not derived from a general principle but developed systematically. It is a master-piece of close reasoning and insight, subtle analyses and a confession of faith too. It will not be incorrect to treat his philosophy as basically religious in spirit.

Jaspers, during the national Socialist regime, hoped for the intervention by the Western powers to save Germany from tyranny. He was dismissed from his post at that time. In 1948 he accepted an offer to the chair of philosophy at Basle.

According to Jaspers scientific knowledge is incidental to all philosophizing. Philosophical truth however is not based on scientific accuracy. Science confers no meaning on life and offers no guidance. It has its own limits. There is a type of thinking which is not cogent or valid from the point of view of science. But it finds its way into one's true self and
evokes the potentialities within it.

Jaspers seems to think that the essence of man reveals itself in ultimate situations. For this reason he encountered even the most sordid realities of life unflinchingly. For the same reason he chose medicine and psychiatry in order to know the limits of human potentialities and to see through what was mere pretence.

Boundary situations and Communication are recurring themes throughout the writings of Karl Jaspers. He confesses in his auto-biography that inspite of the benign company of his loved ones he yearned for a company which could be pure and candid. Hence communication was a primary concern for him since his youth and it became one of the fundamental questions of philosophy later on.

According to Jaspers philosophy begins with an inquiry into the situation in which the philosopher finds himself in the world. Human Dasein is not existence according to Jaspers, but man in his Dasein is 'possible existence'. This possible existence realizes itself by an existential choice. By the exercise of freedom of choice one recognizes one's true self. Thus freedom is the beginning and end in the process of the illumination of existence.
INTRODUCTION

Though Existentialism as a movement actually begins with the post-war situation in Europe, yet it can be traced as far back as Greek thought. The problem with which all existentialist thinkers are concerned is the problem of being. This problem was dealt with by all Greek thinkers. Thales, for instance pointed out that Being is the universal principle of all things. By affirming that everything is water and from water everything comes, he made it explicit that the basic element of the universe is one.

His successor Anaximander put forward his theory of 'boundless something' according to which the opposite elements in nature arise from and melt into one single substance. Thus according to him, too, it is in the first principle of the universe that both the material and the efficient cause of all creation and destruction lie hidden\(^1\). Anaximenes, the pupil of Anaximander, proposed air as the prime substance and explained all change by the principle of rarefaction and condensation. Anaximenes pointed out that since the quantitative inequality between what is less in

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1. Sinari : Reason in Existentialism. p. 147-148
one place and more in the other characterizes all that is, no change can be explained without the existence of what is not. We find this unity of Being in the writings of Parmenides. According to him Being is complete, spherical, motionless which comes neither from something nor from nothing, for there is nothing outside it except itself. Pythagoras thought that what is unlimited is real, and that the finite diversity of one's experience is the result of the limit being imposed on the unlimited.

When we come to Plato we find that for him Being expresses itself through essences. When he explained that ideas or essences exist prior to and having no relationship with things of actual experience he meant that essences form the highest principle of existence only to be intelligible. Whatever is intelligible is universal and essential for a true knowledge of Being.

Aristotle disagrees with Plato's theory of essences. He was concerned with the living man, this or that, and not man stripped of all attributes.

1. Sinari p : 148-49
2. Ibid p : 152
The abstractions like whiteness, horseness and manness are known only as they become real in the white objects, the horses or human beings.

Among the scholastics we find Aquinas who claimed that essences exist in the particular objects as their whatness and it is the mind of God that is the repository of them all¹.

The age of Reason begins with Descartes. Though he accepted the dualism between mind and matter, that is, the two levels of being, yet he affirmed that it is the law of reason which governs them both. Spinoza propounded his theory of psycho-physical parallelism and regarded mind and matter as the two aspects of Being. It is this Being which in the philosophy of Leibniz is equated to the centres of spiritual force that reflect the principle of reason².

John Locke, the founder of empiricism, bitterly attacked Descartes’ theory of innate ideas. According to him it is through sense experience that one has access to knowledge. Berkley’s subjective idealism and Hume’s skepticism follow logically from Locke’s revolutionary theory³.

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1. Sinari p : 155
2. Ibid p : 156-57
3. Ibid p : 158
According to Berkley material things do not have an independent existence and as his famous dictum states esse-percipi, to “exist” and to be perceived are one and the same thing. Locke’s theory culminates in Hume’s philosophy, according to Hume all knowledge springs from “impressions” through a process of combination and separation. Hume had argued that this combination in an object was just a matter of habit and without justification Kant emphasized that such combinations are necessary in virtue of the very structure of human consciousness. This difference is profound and in this lies Kant’s answer to Hume’s skepticism.

According to Kant without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be intelligible; he says, “thoughts without concepts are blind”. Kant, however, is emphatic on the point that experience alone cannot give us objects. There is always a synthesis of experience and such synthesis is not found in experience: it is imposed by the understanding.

1. Sinari p : 159
2. Sloman R.C : From Rationalism to Existentialism p : 18 Queens College of the city University of New York. Humanities Press p :18
3. Ibid p : 16, 18
Kant's successor Fichte began with the assertion that the human ego is an expression of the Absolute. Being is a living and developing process which governs all individual consciousness. Schelling agreed with Fichte that the Absolute or God unveils himself in the form of conscious selves. It might be said that the philosophical systems of Fichte and Schelling present a kind of pantheistic Idealism. For them being is a passage in time culminating in the Absolute Mind or Reason.

In the Hegelian system Reason is the highest principle underlying the reality of Being. Society, for example, is the expression of reason objectified. It has evolved by means of the wills and desires of individual men. Its laws, customs, traditions, institutions are therefore rational. Similarly history is never the result of any one individual reason, but the outcome of the interests, desires, needs and purposes of the multitude.

One of the notable reactions to the philosophy of Hegel was the neo-Romantic tendency to uphold a creative principle which rejects the

1. Sinari p: 162.
2. Sinari p: 166.
3. Ibid
supremacy of Reason. We may mention Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and William Dilthey in this regard. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, through their doctrine of will, undermined the role of reason.

Besides these neo-Romantics, pragmatists and phenomenologists have put forward ideas akin to Existentialism. One may mention Husserl, Bergson and Max Scheler in this regard. Bergson, through his theory of dynamic intuitionism dissolved Being into a vital impulse (elan. vital) and explained the individual living being as part of that impulse.¹

The Existentialist debt to the doctrine of Husserl lies first of all in his insistence on the priority of every day world over the world presented by the sciences. It is on the basis of everyday world that the possibility of its scientific study arises.

A second debt is Husserl’s rejection of the cartesian cogito. Descartes viewed the relation between consciousness and its objects as contingent. Objects might never have been accessible to consciousness. For the existentialist as well as for Husserl this view is difficult to uphold.

¹. Ibid p: 172.
According to Sartre consciousness is nothing apart from its directedness: hence not something which could stand in causal relation to other things. The world we experience needs our contribution in order to be as it is, and Nietzsche was right in rejecting the illusion of worlds-behind-The-scene.¹

The greatest debt to Existentialism is the doctrine of intentionality. Phenomenology insisted on the fact that conscious acts must be directed to objects. Secondly the doctrine requires that objects are to be mediated by meanings. As Merleau Ponty puts it intentionality demonstrates that “we are condemned to meaning.”²

Finally one should not overlook existentialist echoes of Husserl’s conviction that philosophy is not a mere intellectual exercise but a procedure of self discovery. For example, Jaspers says that by Existenz philosophy man makes room for himself.³

¹ Cooper David E: Existentialism Blackwell publishers 1990 p : 46- 7
² Cooper David E : p : 47.
So far as pragmatism is concerned both pragmatism and Existentialism are opposed to abstract intellectualism. Both emphasize action instead of being. They both recognize the risk of faith as an attitude about which one is compelled to decide by the demands of concrete existence. Both look for the affirmation or falsification of faith in terms of its fulfilment or diminution of humanity¹.

Against this historical background we may establish the relation in which Karl Jaspers stands to the main tradition of Western philosophy. This may be expressed in two ways.

In the first place he has stated three conditions for a serious study of philosophy. They are

(1) Participation in scientific inquiry, experience of the sciences, their methodology and critical approach make the scientific attitude indispensable to genuine philosophical quest².

(2) The study of great philosophers. One cannot find one’s way to

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1. Macquarrie J. p:30
philosophy without a knowledge of its history. In this endeavour one must
take into account the work of great philosophers. But this will be fruitful
only through actual participation which is awakened in the course of such
a study.

(3) A conscientious approach to the conduct of daily life. Truth in
philosophy is that which must be incorporated in life. This truth must be
arrived at by personal quest and commitment and not by reflection alone.

In the second place, Jaspers aims at the renewal of the Western
philosophical tradition by incorporating into it the thought of Kierkegaard
and Nietzsche. While he does not accept the results of these, he is
indebted to the methods of both.¹

Jaspers is closer to Kierkegaard than any other existentialist thinker.
The loss of individuality which agitated the mind of Jaspers first
disturbed Kierkegaard. The latter complained against the loss of the self
in aestheticism.

The aesthetic individual is a creature of whims, self satisfaction and self gratification. He has no moral principles, is inactive and unscrupulous in practical affairs and ambiguous in intellectual matters. The aesthetic life consists in the enjoyment of the moment no matter what that moment consists in or brings to us. One can enjoy good health or beauty, or riches and honours or talent. It may consist in the enjoyment of music or poetry as long as they are enjoyed for the immediate satisfaction they bring to us.¹

The aesthete becomes restless trying to find novel experiences to suppress the feeling of meaninglessness. The natural way of escaping this as suggested by Kierkegaard is to lose oneself in the crowd of everyday collective life.²

The notion of choice is central to Kierkegaard’s thought. Choice involves tension and the individual is filled with dread. It is so because he gives up the comfortable and secure world in which he happens to be and is confronted with the situation of choice. In this moment of choice

1. Soloman R. C p : 93
2. Soloman p : 94
he is not guided by anyone. It is by a penetration into one's being that one chooses to be a Christian and makes a leap into faith.¹

Jaspers, though influenced by Kierkegaard, yet endeavours to put before us a variety of choices without persuading us to commit ourselves to any particular one. This choice becomes efficacious through the subject himself by way of acceptance, rejection, estimation and giving meaning to it.²

The resolution in freedom is entirely unconditional and need not depend on any reflection, insight or intuition. Nor is it made in terms of an adequate ground or general principle. It springs all at once from the depths of one's being.

This freedom also makes man responsible to himself. In achieving a sense of complete responsibility one experiences a sort of dread. It is so because in self realization one relinquishes the familiar and stable possibilities for a realm that seems alien and precarious by comparison.³

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Jaspers and Kierkegaard have a remarkable similarity as far as the concepts of time and eternity are concerned. According to Jaspers Existenz is the union of time and eternity. For Existenz time is the present moment in which irrevocable decisions convey the assurance of freedom. Or it is the future which is capable of infinite possibilities of choice. Thus Existenz has its own relative (time) and its reality depends on the strength with which it acts in the present moment.¹

Kierkegaard also emphasizes the fact that Being can be apprehended only in relation to Eternity. Eternity, as Kierkegaard thinks, enters in/to temporality making only the present its container. Thus time and eternity are the foundation which produce existence.

As far as Jaspers' similarity to Nietzsche's views is concerned, we may uphold that Jaspers' thought cannot be neatly fitted into the frame work of Christianity though Jaspers does not share Nietzsche’s animus and hard-hitting attitude to Christianity. Nietzsche bitterly attacks Christianity and refuses to accept the final authority of the Church. He

indignantly repudiates the traditions, beliefs and institutions of Christianity. For instance, he vehemently recommends the creative employment of the passions as opposed to the Christian doctrine of their denial and rejection.¹

Jaspers stands close to Nietzsche while dealing with the problem of Nihilism. Nietzsche’s Nihilism is essentially metaphysical and not ideological. The latter implicates a negative and destructive attitude towards the beliefs, tastes and attitudes of any authority. Nietzsche’s difference from the Nihilists is clearly brought out in his attitude towards science. Science, he holds, is a set of useful conventions.² Our whole conceptual scheme is an imposition of thought upon reality. For instance, thing and attribute, cause and effect, appearance and reality all are an imposition of the will-to-power.³

His Nihilism is metaphysical in the sense that he believed that the world is a blank picture having neither structure nor order about it, nor

¹  Kaufmann J. Jaspers relation to Nietzsche in “The Philosophy of Jaspers” ed. by Schilpp. p : 415, 17
³  Ibid 227
meaning, purpose or value inhering in it. Man acting on the impulse of will-to-power imposes on the world a definite shape and form and this enables him to turn it into a rational, secure and congenial universe.¹

Though Nietzsche’s Nihilism presents a world which is absolutely indifferent to human aspirations and he affirms it without any hope or expectation which had consoled man through religion, yet he does not leave us in despair. With a Dionysian Yes he affirms the world as it is, without form and meaning. Dionysus stands for the prolific embracing of life in all its variations of joy and suffering. Thus Nietzsche’s Nihilism culminates in Optimism.²

Nietzsche’s enthusiastic yes to life reverberates in the whole of Jaspers’ philosophy. He opens his section of Skepticism and Nihilism with the comment, “The first and the very last question concerning weltanschauung is whether one says yes or No to life as a whole”.³

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1. Dant p. 35
2. Ibid p: 33
As against Nihilism which is rooted in the meaning lessness of reality and which is a total negation of all values, Jaspers asserts his philosophical faith. The main difference between religious faith and philosophical faith is that while the former is the bond of common life under the authority of the Church and rests upon revelation that gives assurance, the latter is individual without any authority or sense of security.¹

It is Jaspers’ contention that the Divine cannot be defined in terms of human categories; it can only be witnessed by the Cipher. Cipher, as Jaspers understood it, is a sign of Transcendence but unlike the symbol the Cipher has no correspondence with Transcendence. These Ciphers prevail everywhere but are visible to those who are able to behold them. They are opaque for those who are oblivious of them. Any trivial or magnificent thing can serve as a cipher. Thus no sacred book contains them nor any institution ascertains them. They assume meaning for those who endeavour, contemplate and have faith.²

1. Allen E.L : Existentialism from within. p. 120.

(15)
Jaspers' philosophy is ingrained in his communication with Max Weber. Communication means an interaction in perfect harmony in search of truth. Max Weber has been the living spring from which Jaspers thinking has taken its origin. Thus one cannot talk of an influence of Max Weber on Jaspers as an element which could be separated from his thinking.

In the Monograph on Max Weber, published in 1932 Jaspers compares the spiritual situation of his time with that of antiquity. Just as Socrates appearance on the stage of history was a challenge to the Ancients, similarly Max Weber's appearance was a challenge to the people of his times. Thus the true flame of philosophy was kindled by the coming up of these extra ordinary men. Those who understood the philosophical significance of Socrates existence were his pupils famous among whom was Plato Jaspers out of modesty does not compare his relation to Max Weber to Plato's relation to Socrates.

In Max Weber we discover the same straight forwardness and lack of

2. Ibid. 370.
pretence as in Socrates. Max Weber points out the limits of empirical science in order to make room to the existential freedom of the individual. He gathers all light which reason provides and tries to focus it on our choice and decision. Weber's example, like that of Socrates inspired those who were capable of such an undertaking. Just as Plato's philosophy could be interpreted as his attempt to say what he experienced through Socrates, so we find Jaspers thinking as his way of expressing what he had experienced through Max Weber. Max Weber was not a philosopher in the technical sense and Jaspers received from Kant and Kierkegaard and to some extent from Nietzsche the conceptual tools which he needed in order to express what he experienced through Weber.¹

A reader who is familiar with Jaspers' style and expression may feel implicit reference to Weber even in his most abstract writings. However, Weber's personality is brought out when grief stricken over Weber's death he addressed the students of Heidelberg in a commemorative Assembly.

¹ Manasse EM p : 371.
What he said was later developed and expanded in a monograph. The occasion for this second publication was the rise of National Socialism in Germany.¹

In the Commemorative Address Jaspers had stated that through Max Weber the philosophical Existenz became visible to others.² In the Monograph Jaspers points out that Weber's appearance was full of contradictions. There was something antinomical in Weber's personality and thinking. Jaspers talks about many pairs of contrasts like elevation and descent, defiance and devotion, unity and multiplicity etc. Weber, says Jaspers, combines the fulfilment of the moral demands as law of the day and the clear sighted openness for the demons of the Night.³ In the Metaphysics there is a section entitled "The law of the day" and the "Passion for the Night".

Jaspers speaks of Max Weber as a demonic person. The demonic type of person happens to have a lot of vitality engaging in one enterprise and

1. Manasse Em p: 372
2. Ibid p : 375
3. Ibid 376.
another. He may seek fulfilment in politics, in sciences, in the arts. If he chooses the sciences, he is a turning point in the history of ideas. Yet he doesn’t build up a system or a school of thought and despises the idea of having any followers. Max Weber was a dynamic person was always striving and did not want to set forth a system. He was ready to re-examine his choices in view of actual situations rejected the role of the charismatic leader and regarded every one as an equal.\footnote{1}

The Monograph culminates in a discussion of the meaning of foundering. According to Jaspers human existence is supposed to founder or to suffer ship wreck. In the last chapter of the "Metaphysics" too, foundering is recognized as the decisive cipher of Transcendence and one which gives value to all the others. In the Monograph Jaspers accepts Weber’s fate as" genuine foundering."\footnote{2} Max Weber’s last words "The true is the truth is not mere tautology, but the cipher of absolute truth itself. Absolute truth can only be where falsehood is not possible, that is, in Transcendence.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{1}{Manasse EM p: 383-384}
\footnote{2}{Manasse EM p: 376.}
\end{footnotes}
It will not be an exaggeration to say that Weber's philosophical Existenz is alive today because of Jaspers: through his philosophy as well as through his evocation of Weber's personality. Those who study Weber's works in order to apprehend that idea are dependent on Jaspers whether directly or indirectly. There are of course other sources from which we gather information about Weber's personality. But to them applies what applies to Xenophon's writings on Socrates. They complete the picture Plato had sketched, affirmed and add question marks to it. But what Socrates means to philosophy is known only through Plato.¹

Weber is a philosophical power today because he is the soul of Jaspers' philosophy. The question that arises here is whether Jaspers has created a Weber myth. The answer seems to be in the negative. Myth implies a picture which is but loosely connected with historical fact and which gains authenticity because of its aesthetic appeal. Jaspers never ceases to refer his readers to Weber's own writings. Jaspers was fascinated by a 'demonic person' and since he wanted to speak of him, he had to talk philosophy.²

1. Ibid p: 390.
Jaspers' philosophy owes considerably to Protestantism: Jaspers speaks of the Bible as a revelation but does not accept it as inspired in the traditional sense. He regards it as a record of how men meet God at the limit situations of their lives and prevails through them.\(^1\)

Moreover, according to him, no man can be an incarnation of God. He regards Christ as an ultimate reference-point which can outline for us the way most clearly and convincingly. Jaspers, in the third volume of ‘philosophie’ makes Jesus the cipher of Transcendence. He also points out that Jesus had always concentrated on the inner being of man: an idea which is recurrent in his own thought.

Jaspers in his book “The Great philosophers” regards Jesus and also Socrates, Buddha and Confucius as paradigmatic individuals who faced the human situations and the extremities of life with utmost patience. Jaspers also high-lights the role of suffering in the life of Jesus as an aspect of his uniqueness.\(^2\) This may be one of the sources of Jaspers concept of boundary situations.

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As far as the influence of Idealism is concerned it may be said that the concept of Encompassing which occupies a conspicuous place in Jaspers’ philosophy is in a way rooted in Idealism. In Platonic Idealism idea is not a reality but is an encompassing unity of the perceivable. The ideas are again encompassed by the highest idea of the one and the Good. Hence Jaspers’ fundamental presupposition is that “Reality is neither the subject nor the object but is something which encompasses both”. He called the unity of subject and object by the new term “Comprehensive”.¹

This view is based on the Kantian dualism of the phenomena and the thing-in-itself, noumena. In place of the traditional dichotomy between subject and object Kant put forward a new dichotomy between objects as they appear to us which he calls phenomena and things as they-are-in-themselves which he calls noumena. Thus all versions of idealism based on the idea-world are rejected by Kant. Hence according to Kant and later on according to Husserl, the world is not my idea ‘the world is the phenomenon which must exist independently of my idea of it.’²

Hegel in his critique of Kant's theory of knowledge points out that by this distinction Kant considers knowledge a tool with which one masters the Absolute. Thus one cannot know reality (The Absolute) but only as it has been distorted by the instrument of knowledge.¹ It is noteworthy that whereas for Kant God was a postulate only Jaspers, though profoundly influenced by Kant's distinction of phenomena and noumena, goes beyond it. Hence he remarks, "We apprehend its meaning only as we pass beyond the world of objects and through it discover authentic reality". In other words, according to Jaspers, one finds God sometimes as one rises above the world and sometimes as one enters into it to hallow it. The world so to say mediates between God and one's true self.

The philosophy of Karl Jaspers is a protest against the spiritual impoverishment which was the result of the rise of modern science. The Nineteenth Century which brought in its wake the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution was a period of crisis both is respect of religion and philosophy. Man lost his faith in religion and a strong

¹. Ibid p: 50.
impetus was found in the power of independent human reason and science.\(^1\)

Jaspers was very much conscious of the fact that man has become a mere cog in the vast machine of the modern state. The modern state has produced a standardized man with the help of educational curricula and publicity media. The modern technological age encourages mass organization and dispels the idea of genuine community.\(^2\)

We long for a system of knowledge complete and final in itself that will provide us shelter. Hence the appeal of two systems of thought, Marxism and Freudian psycho-analysis. Each lays claims to total knowledge, a final answer to the problems of human life.\(^3\)

Jaspers is critical of the theoretical dogmatism which is characteristic of Marxism and the psychoanalytical school. He finds fault with the psychoanalytical method which makes man a slave of his unconscious drives, the most powerful of which is the erotic impulse. Marxism also

\(^{\text{1. Knudsen : p. 1.}}\)
\(^{\text{2. Collins J : The Existentialists, p. 84.}}\)
\(^{\text{3. Allen E.L. : Existentialism from within. p. 102.}}\)
tried to find a single explanation for the activities of man: man's consciousness is determined by his mode of production in material life.¹

Jaspers also disapproves of the theories of society which are a menace for human personality. For instance, genetics, sociologism and anthropology boast of providing the most adequate approach to our understanding of man. They however treat man only in his empirical aspect wherein the manifold and diverse shades of his personality do not become apparent. Hence man is assigned the status only of a class member, a cultural unit.²

Furthermore, experts on eugenics and race theories offer their contribution. But no sociologist can give an adequate explanation of free will and destiny, no psychologist has ever been able to understand human behaviour and no race theorist can breed a perfect individual.³

Jaspers was well aware of the fact that man cannot be fully comprehended in terms of any conceptual or scientific acknowledge. Man has in him ingrained infinite potentialities and is therefore always more than

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can be known about him. He pointed out that there is another kind of awareness which is concerned with the individual's inner development.

Jaspers belongs to that class of thinkers who despite the so-called analytic studies of man still insist that Existenz-philosophie must necessarily figure as a system. Before we proceed to articulate what Jaspers precisely means by his 'Existenz philosophy' let us focus on the general framework of 'philosophie', the different themes and subjects with which it deals and the approach of the philosopher.

In is not a treatise on religion in the sense of being loaded with religious implications. According to Jaspers the most significant aspect of human life is its search for the eternal truth. The deity to which Jaspers' philosophy refers is neither the transcendent God of theism nor the immanent God of Pantheism. So far as the proofs of the existence of God are concerned he admits their usefulness as tools for an intellectual approach to God. These traditional proofs stem from different empirical realities of a cosmic, psychological and moral nature. They emphasize the contingency of the world, the failure of human planning, the abrogation
of man's ambitions which leads us to the abyss where one experiences either Nothingness or God. A conviction of the existence of God is a pre-supposition not a result of the philosophical argument.¹

According to Jaspers conventional modes of worship, and religious propaganda lead us away from God rather than draw us near to Him. One can approach God only personally.² Thus according to Jaspers faith in God is not justifiable. Here he agrees with Martin Luther who was opposed to institutionalized religion. In the philosophy of Jaspers as in the dialectical theology of Karl Barth there exists an antagonism between faith and reason. The act of faith is generated by freedom which is rationally justifiable.³

It is not a book on ethics though it does contain moral suggestions and recommendations. Jaspers never speaks in a matter-of-fact way of a psychologist though there are deep psychological insights embedded in his work.

2. Reinhardt p: 196.
Jaspers' concern is with reality as it unfolds itself before us and with thinking in the form of re-interpretation of his personal experiences. Jaspers adopts a two-fold method; on the one hand he present man's subjective and emotional re-actions and attitudes towards his environment. And, on the other, he raises questions that stir man out of his complacency and reveal the precariousness of his situation and appeals to everyone to respond actively to his authentic self in the limit situations of death, struggle and guilt, in moments of crisis and in extreme moments of distress. It is, however, note-worthy, that Jaspers does not believe in dogmatizing and therefore does not tend to offer any final answer to life's problems. This invests his philosophy with a note of tragic doubt which distinguishes him from other existentialist thinkers.2

Jaspers was seriously vexed with the diminution of human individuality. This brings us face to face with the existential problem of the realization of the true self. To begin with, one's self is identical in structure with

1. Heinmann : p. 64.
other selves. But it is more; potentially it is made up of Existenz. Existenz is as it were "the axis around which all I am, and all that can become truly meaningful for me in the world turns".¹

The touch-stone of Existenz is not any abstract criteria of truth according to which one's actions are measured as right or wrong nor is it the ideal which one wishes to represent.² It becomes independent and responsible only in its relation to Transcendence.

Jaspers says, "Existenz is either in relation to Transcendence or not at all".³ In other words, one can realize that the transformation of one's mere existence into authentic Existenz occurs only in its relation to Transcendence or Godhead.

The pertinent question is whether he accepts this challenge or whether he resigns himself to a mere representation of man's condition. Existenz either soars in its relation to Transcendence or it goes under. Hence an attitude of neutrality in regard to Transcendence is not admissible.

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AN ALLEMBRACING REALITY

The question of Being, proposed by the Greeks, and re-examined by the Medieval thinkers came to be dealt with later by the rationalist philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Hobbes on the one hand and by Bergson, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Heidegger in our own day on the other. In Heidegger, in a special sense, Being attained its re-orientation. According to Heidegger Being is not a genus or class name but all individuals are designated thus indiscriminately. It also recognizes that existence is not a property of things which things may or may not have. In other words, being is not the name of an entity or refers to any particular property. In search of a true metaphysics of Being Jaspers initiates his philosophic inquiry that would lend due weight to the conceptual analysis which is pursued by science and would also bring into relief the self-realization which is the mainstay of Existentialism.

1. Sinari : Reason in Existentialism, Bombay Popular Prakashan p : 69
Being cannot be grasped in its totality but always appears to us divided into subject and object. Consciousness is the basic phenomenon of the split into subject and object. We are cognizant of objects through consciousness. Even the unconscious is derived from phenomena in consciousness. This subject object dichotomy is our stage for the appearance of all that is and can be. The term that we employ for such appearance is called the “encompassing.” Since Kant this idea has been conspicuous in philosophy. Whenever one thinks, thinking relates to something definite. Hence every intentional act is directed towards an intended object.

The first cleavage of Being into subject and object is enhanced by a second one in so far as each object, besides its dichotomy with the subject, also opposes itself to all objects. Thus every being that we meet as an object is a limited, partially determined particular, and not being in its totality. One’s recognition of objects always takes place within an objective horizon. No matter how much we endeavour we cannot go

beyond the horizon by which we are encompassed. It is the source whence all horizons emerge. There is a point where the limiting horizon vanishes and from where one could survey the whole.

In an attempt to bridge the split between subject and object the mind may evolve the concept of Being of which subject and object would be the two modes. This is unacceptable to Jaspers. He would say that in order to grasp the concept of Being the concepts of subject and object must harmonize with each other.¹ But they do not do so because spontaneity which is supposed to characterize subjectivity and substantiality which is the essence of objectivity are incompatible categories.

It is the basic insight of Kant’s transcendental philosophy that the subject can never turn into an object. What looks like an object is some sort of detachment behind which the actual subject with/draws itself. This ‘being for us’ is what Kant terms ‘appearance’. Kant illuminates this consciousness by withdrawing from those things to which we are attached to the consciousness of these things, from the representation to the

¹ Ibid. p. 56.
possibility of representation. Thus existent things are really imagined
things enclosed in a transcendental form of appearance which is identical
with the basic faculty of our mind.

If the shift from object to subject implicates a transformation of one’s
immediate consciousness, then the manner of one’s thinking should also
be transformed. The thinking which occurs thus is called ‘transcendental
thinking’ by Jaspers. This new attitude also paves the way for philosophical
faith. By recognizing the limits of knowledge and of the unknowable we
enter the realm of faith.

So far as the concept of Encompassing is concerned it goes so far
back as Greek thought. In Anaximander we find a similar concept which
we call apeiron. Apeiron is an encompassing of reality which contains
all the elemental materials and thereby it rules over and regulates every­
thing. For Plato ideas are not objective counters but ideal realities. This
ideality is an encompassing unity of the perceivable. These ideas are
further encompassed by the highest idea of the one and the Good¹.

The history of the Idea in Western thought is at the same time a history of the idea of the Encompassing. Two thinkers are significant in this regard and they have deeply influenced Jaspers' thought. Kant and Kierkegaard. As regards Kant's theory of knowledge it may be held that totality and non-limitation are of the essence of the idea. The idea is the Encompassing of the subject and the object and as such the Idea represents the highest point in Kants' thought. Kierkegaard offered a radical approach to the concept of truth by maintaining that truth is subjective. One can speak of truth only in an encompassing sense in which is contained both the subjective and the objective.

The basic idea of the philosophy of the Encompassing is to accept all possible truths without however losing the unity of Being\(^1\). There is a peculiar meaning of truth in each made of encompassing. In consciousness at large, truth means cogent validity and we reach a consensus between inter changeable points. In existence it means success, happiness and self realization. Here the interests of self preservation and self enhancement

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1. Knauss G. The concept of the encompassing in “The philosophy of Jaspers” ed by Schilpp, pp. 143, 144

(34)
will coincide or exclude each other. In mind it means comprehension, understanding and interpretation. In Existenz it mean unconditional resolve in which individuals are united in a communicative loving struggle. The Encompassing implies totality and is inclusive of the various manners of one's finite approach to it.¹ It may be added that the encompassing is not a common denominator because each mode encompasses in a distinctly different way. The point is this: each of them is the whole of Being in a specific way and encompasses all the rest in different ways.

These relationships form a complex net-work in which the meaning of each mode changes according to its relation to others. Like the notes of a melody which articulate their meaning in harmony with the larger movement that expresses itself in them the meaning of each mode only becomes explicit when we consider it as a complex stream of sense.²

Jaspers discusses encompassing in terms of its modes. The main modes of the encompassing are two; the encompassing in which we are the subject

¹ Knauss: The concept of the encompassing, p. 147.
² Samay, p. 63.
and the encompassing in which being itself is the object. An analysis of subjectivity provides Jaspers with three main divisions of these modes: existence (Dasein) consciousness-in-general and spirit. To this Jaspers adds two other basic divisions of the encompassing a transcendent mode of subjectivity (Existenz) and of objectivity (Transcendent). The Being which embraces us is called world and Transcendence and the Being which we are is called existence, consciousness as-such, spirit and Existenz. The medium of their realization is reason. Existence, consciousness as such and spirit are the ways in which we participate in the world. The world is more than we are. The fact that there is a world is not identical with the fact that one exists.

Existenz is potential being which has ample choice at its disposal. The possibility of being is latent in us as we try to elucidate what Existenz may be. It is a possibility which can be pointed out or appealed to and must be actualized by each person himself. It forms the ground of each

individual self. Existenz is the ground and the axis through which every
genuine thing becomes intelligible.

All the modes of the Encompassing are united by the bond of reason.
Reason plays a constructive role, it is the unifying, recollecting and
progressive power which allows no gap, break or violation. Reason stands
for unity and it brings together into communication Existenzen who are
separated by a void.\(^1\) Reason becomes enunciated when it is enclosed
within definite forms and it tends to expand when it appears as a self-
sufficient substitute.\(^2\) Reason opens doors, provides impulses and
forbids us to rest on what we know and it is always in evolution. All the
real and possible stand points have their place in the sphere of reason
which is more than a stand point. Reason enters into all ways of the
subject object split, but in itself does not know the split.

Reason always goes hand in hand with intellect. Intellect is never to
be abandoned, for to despise it is to despise reason. Reason works in
coordination with Existenz. they are inseparable and inter-dependent.

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2. Ibid. p. 66.
Reason would not surrender to Existenz or Existenz to reason. Existenz is vivified by reason and is substantiated by it. They develop simultaneously, and illuminate and strengthen each other. Reason is validated by Existenz as well as inspired by it. Without reason Existenz remains passive, dormant and non-existent. As divergent powers they are at cross-purposes with each other and separate only to become symbolic of aggressivity.\(^1\) The modes of Encompassing are the basic realities. One must feel each mode, yield to it and awaken it in one’s self. To become real they have to be lived through. The tension between them constitute one’s facts of life.

According to Jaspers Dasein is one’s being in the environment we react to and act upon. One’s vital interests, laws, customs, institutions-in short a whole culture in which one is a participant is required for this world or situation to be ‘posited’ or apprehended. Desires, drives, tensions, hopes, fears and perceptions-one’s intentional life is incomprehensible outside this participation and engagement.\(^2\)

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¹ Jaspers : Reason and Existenz, p: 68.
Dasein is also capable of consciousness and it is supposed to be the second mode of subjectivity. This state of consciousness disrupts contentment and peace and man is shocked to know that all his enterprises will slip into an opaque past and what lies ahead of him is an uncertain future and a certain death. Consciousness confers on him a sort of plasticity and he is also to sense that he is more than a mere particle of nature. Consciousness at large implies in fact the accuracy of cognition. It illuminates ideas, making them clear and lucid. It is also distinguished by the stages of its illumination. Thus the self-will and the urge to survive is there. According to Jaspers things and animals happen to be there without being cognizant of it. Man also happens to be there in space but he is aware of it. He can always say “I am”. By the spell of the world one takes possession of one’s being: instead of merely enduring one’s being one can affirm it as one’s own.

Jaspers is at once with Husserl in the belief that a person or self retains identity over the course of time. In other words the human ego is reduced to the transcendental ego.

3. Cooper David p: 42-43
According to Jaspers man is an incarnate being, yet one is not identical with one's body. He manifests himself in objective fragments and these objective aspects are only partially identifiable with one's being. Moreover, man is a productive being. One very often tends to equate one's self with one's achievements and to evaluate one's self through one's work. Yet one is not totally absorbed in one's work and therefore feels alienated from it. Man is more than a mere sociable subject. If one is expelled or alienated from society one may maintain one's being for one enjoys certain rights and is crowned with dignity. One's character is the sum total of biological, social, economic and psychological factors. However one can shape and fashion one's character according to one's own lights.¹

"I stand above it" as Jaspers puts it. Furthermore one has a certain linkage with one's past and can look ahead to future. Infact one is truly oneself when one creates a future by an act of his own discretion. A person is thus a contingently existing individual and the subject of empirical, psychological investigation.

¹ Samay. p. 37, 38.
The third level is spirit or mind. Jaspers regards it as a synthesis of existence and consciousness. Like existence it is something concrete and like consciousness in general it is universal in character. The mind is animated subjectivity and consciousness at large but it is more sophisticated than both.¹ The subject of the mind is imagination: it carves images and confers meaning on them. The objective side of the mind is the force which acts in terms of order, measure, and definition. It grapples with reality, assimilates experience and eliminates what is alien to it. It illuminates in the process of communication. The mind as a whole manifests itself in works of art, scientific studies, human wisdom and revelations, artistic visions, political perceptions etc.² this provides the context of understanding of the historical epoch.

The question arises in regard to their relationship and order. Each mode of the Encompassing, though it refers to each other, yet has its own point of origin. Their relationship is one of supplementation and

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accentuation. The relationship of the modes become apparent only if all
the modes are visualized.

Each mode of encompassing shows in itself a sort of diversity.
Consciousness at large, while conceived as one, is manifested in numerous
thinking entities that share in it. Existenz is either in harmony or at discord
with other souls. The world in split into many aspects and fields of study.
Transcendence becomes intelligible to those who hear and see its ciphers.
The modes of encompassing do not yield a harmonious whole.

One wants to transcend the dichotomy of the subject and object, to go
beneath it and to get to the bottom of things. Two possible ways are there
for us the first is mystical experience. Mystical union of subject and
object involves self annihilation and self negation.

Language ceases to be and so does communication. The second way
to transcend the split is to comprehend encompassing as such. One
remains in the subject object split, but it takes us to the point where the
sense of our condition in encompassing effects a change in us. Thinking

about the modes of encompassing violates the security of ones' natural sense of being. Our accustomed idiom is to say that we are pulled off our feet. Fulfilment by encompassing in which both subject and object are present as one- this is what we call faith in the full sense of the word. Faith in a broad sense that goes beyond immanence is found in affirming Existenz and Transcendence¹.

A critical analysis of Jaspers' concept of Encompassing raises an epistemological problem. It may be pointed out that scientific knowledge is objective knowledge. The Encompassing in the subject object split confers meaning on the objective along with the subjective. If we make a comparison with Kant's doctrine of Ideas we find that Kant takes the Idea in its objective sense its subjective impulse and as the source of systematic investigation. The Idea in this triple implication undergoes change of meaning. According to Jaspers the Encompassing finds its illumination in the split and it is supposed to be the ground of the moving force and the goal in all its aspects: it never exhausts itself. The Encompassing

¹. Ibid p: 79.
is present in the object and in the subject as also in their mutual relationship.¹

Knauss is of the view that Jaspers' seven modes of the Encompassing do not exhibit a clear connection or order. Consciousness as such emerges as the all embracing structure of our selves as thinking beings. It is still one of the modes of encompassing. The number of the modes seems arbitrary. Thus there is one Transcendence, one world, one consciousness as such but many Existenzen and existences. Jaspers defends his position by saying that he was opposed to any kind of derivation. It is not a definite stand point that gives rise to the seven modes but the conscious perception of each mode is latent in the process of transcending the subject-object split². It may be added that the modes of the Encompassing are the figures in which the whole image of Being has been contrived ever since the beginning of western philosophy. They have been called by many names: matter, life, logos, apeiron, spirit, will, God, nature, idea, cosmos, existence and so on.

² Ibid p: 791
Though Jaspers thinks that each mode is an Encompassing in itself, yet he insists that they should not be separated, for otherwise they diffuse themselves into all types of isms: materialism, idealism, vitalism, intellectualism, and cosmism. Such isolations are the work of the intellect which is a reductionist faculty and hence Reason is called upon to unite them.¹

The aim of insisting on the subject-object dichotomy as the basic situation of our knowledge invites us to look for being beyond this split. If Being cannot be thought or spoken of Jaspers seems to think that one is able to read certain 'signs' or ciphers which somehow indicate its character. Jaspers admires those mystics who try to overcome this fissure in favour of a total oneness of subject and object through the disappearance of objectivity and the extinction of the ego.¹ They think that being can be neither an object nor a subject, but must be the encompassing which appears in the form of the fissure.

¹. Samay S p: 64
². Cooper p: 82
David Cooper seems to think that Jaspers' argument for the conclusion that being consists neither in subject nor object, but in some kind of ground on which this distinction appears is weak. Jaspers seems to think that one is able to read certain ciphers which somehow indicate its character.

According to Jaspers "the Encompassing is thought as being itself, transcendence (God), the world, and that which we ourselves are: life consciousness in general, spirit and Existenz. This, according to David Cooper, does not provide a substitute for the Existentialist attempt to dissolve the dichotomy. What Jaspers is doing is to describe the world and ourselves in ways that are free of dichotomy. Jaspers holds that one's thought and speech are constrained by the subject-object distinction. Though Jaspers has not been very successful in resolving the subject-object dichotomy, yet his concept of Encompassing serves as a basis for penetrating the three realms of Being world, Existenz and Transcendence.

1. Cooper p. 82.
II
THE CONCRETE SITUATION

An understanding of the concept of boundary situations is most essential for determining the climate of Jaspers’ philosophizing. The situations which are felt, experienced and conceived at the limit of one’s existence are termed boundary situations. Experiences like death, suffering and guilt are discussed under the heading “boundary situations”.

The first section of the chapter on boundary situation in Karl Jaspers’ seminal book ‘philosophie’ is entitled ‘situation’. The term situation defines various complex and profound conditions. The simplest kind of situation distributes physical objects in space. As an empirical being one is related to such a kind of situation. This also involves other people’s interests and combinations or chances of the moment.

“It is a sense related reality neither psychological nor physical but both in one. It is the concrete reality which means advantage or detriment, opportunity or obstacle for my existence”.

Unlike some other existentialists, Jaspers catalogues many levels of situations. One may discern the economic and political structure of a society, the conditioning power of a scientific outlook and techniques relevant to it and the potentialities produced by the cultural relations among men.\(^1\) One investigates either universal typical situations or historically determined non-recurrent ones.\(^2\)

A situation becomes unique and significant when it is personally embraced and accepted as the inevitable feature of the human condition.\(^3\) Yet one's knowledge of the situation is always inadequate. It is only the unconcerned observer who is able to comprehend the situation though not in all its aspects.

A situation exists in terms of the law of change. One can grasp the laws which control the situation and thereby change and produce the desired situation.\(^4\) One can for instance, create situations in technological,

\(^1\) Grimsley R: Existentialist thought 174.
\(^3\) Grimsley p.: 174.
\(^4\) Latzel E: p.: 187.
legal and political sphere. The same situation will assume an entirely different character when others contemplate and react to it. This is a crucial aspect of the situation.

Since existence implies the fact of being involved in situations one cannot leave one situation without entering into another. Moreover to be placed in a situation has a wider meaning than to be placed in the world, although situations cannot be separated from their worldly context. It is the particular sphere in which man’s activities are displayed and his welfare enhanced or endangered.

Jaspers shows man’s active role in a given situation, for here he makes full use of his potentialities. He takes the situation in his hand, chooses a definite line of action and thus modifies the situation.

There are, however, some situations which are more urgent and challenging than all the rest and these are termed “boundary situations.” They differ from ordinary situations in the sense that they do not undergo any change. They are like a wall against which we collide and shatter. We cannot alter them but only make them passable. They are thus inevitable.¹

¹ Grimsley R: p: 174.
Boundary situations form an essential constituent of human existence itself. Man lives and like every other living being is subject to death. He experiences joy and sorrow.¹ One attempts to avoid, ignore and forget these situations even though one finds oneself constantly delivered up to them.

The third section of the chapter on 'boundary situation' is entitled 'boundary situation and Existenz' which implies that to experience boundary situation and to exist is one and the same thing. In other words one achieves authentic existence when one envisages these situations without any pretence.

It is potential Existenz which responds actively to the demands of the boundary situation and makes us walk open-eyed into them. A sort of tension is generated because on the one hand there are a number of possibilities at our disposal and, on the other, the situation stands as an insurmountable barrier.² It is in this crisis that the meaning of the conflict becomes poignantly clear.

1. Latzel Edwin: p: 188.
Now the boundary situation is very precarious because it is up to us to
give meaning to it by assuming it as our own. It places the absolute choice
of gaining or losing oneself. And it is precisely at these crucial moments
that one is able to test one's authenticity.

In boundary situations authentic reality is revealed as if by a leap.
This is fulfilled by three stages and forms the subject of the fourth section.

In the first form of the leap one deviates from the immediate practical
interests and becomes an unconcerned observer who wishes to know what
has gone wrong with himself and with the world "I even face my own
existence as if it were a stranger's."\(^1\)

In view of the fragmentary and doubtful world one postpones one's
pre-occupations and suspends all activities, thereby engaging oneself in
experimenting with a clear eye. To quote Jaspers, "whatever happens in
the world is doubtful, everything fades away, my own existence included;
but I stand outside the world, a place from which I aimlessly gaze upon
the world as on a billowing atmosphere without limits".\(^2\)

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The knowledge which one acquires obviously refers to a knowledge which is purely factual and descriptive. This comes as a gift of the substantial solitude and serves as one’s only safe point of anchorage ‘an isle of safety in mid ocean’. One is thus on the mundane plane.

The first leap is merely a preliminary step in self elucidation. One is still anchored on to existence. The germ of Existenz, however, incites existence in the furtherance of its quest. To be more explicit, it is the achievement of Existenz which spurs existence to move ahead. “My conception of the completed way prepared me rather to re-enter the world”.¹

The world ceases to be an indifferent object of knowledge because existence is immersed in it. One captures the knowledge about the world without which one would remain enmeshed in obscurity. Nevertheless one draws a sharp line of demarcation between the being of the world and Existenz. The former can be glossed over as a specific dimension of being but one cannot do away with the latter.

The boundary situations which were earlier vanquished now become

¹ Jaspers : Philosophy vol. II. p : 180.
worth consideration. They compel us to choose whether we venture to expose ourselves to their authentic reality and thus realize ourselves or sink in to mere existence. Here one is supposed to clinch the choice instead of merely imagining the different possibilities.

In this second leap the boundary situations which were earlier veiled now become crystallized. The time is ripe for the illumination of Existenz. Yet this is merely the contemplative state, a sheer possibility. "It is not yet Existenz".¹

It is the third and decisive leap that leads from potential to real Existenz. Unlike finite situations which are piecemeal and fragmentary like keeping promises, loyalty to an oath, fidelity to truth, boundary situations are infinite and involve Existenz as a whole. The leap from mere existence to genuine Existenz means a real transformation of being. One is able to say 'I myself' in a new sense.² There is however no mechanical growth of existence. It is a deliberate, conscious effort and

². Ibid. 181.
decision that leads from 'heretofore' to a 'hereafter'. Existenz is defined as supratemporal in the sense that it stands for all such values as honesty, justice, truth, generosity and these values being valid for all times make Existenz eternally valid too.

According to Jaspers the first boundary situation places man in a concrete human situation. The fact that he exists in a certain social milieu, at a certain time in history, belongs to a particular nation, is a member of a specific family, is a man or a woman young or old in short that he is not a man in general places him in a concrete situation.

This way of conceiving the situation determines how one stands in relation to a particular situation. What is general about the situation depends on the bearings one takes from the physical world. One is not finally dissolved into the universal but remains perched on the concrete situation. It is this insoluble remainder that makes existence profound. Intellectually speaking, one cannot construe this as a boundary situation because intellectual knowledge is discursive, relative and inaccurate. Hence the boundary situation remains concealed.
Jaspers also goads man to deal with his definite situation actively, clearly and consciously and accept it as one's own. The place which a particular situation holds in the general scheme of things is derived from destiny. Nevertheless, if we are supposed to draw forth this destiny from this general whole, Existenz is lost. Jaspers invites the reader to participate with him in a groping for a sure foundation for Existenz. In this quest universal historicity is recognized as the ground of Existenz. The essential features of historicity are concreteness and determination. Self-determination becomes the basis for the unfolding of the highest potentialities of man. As a matter of fact the decisive turn given to determination as 'seizing potential Existenz' makes the future as important a dimension of historicity as is the past. This ground is in individual phenomena of objectivity, that is, historicity appearing in the objectivity of the past, in the forms of historical knowledge and speculations on the meaning of history as a whole. It is also seized and enriched by subjectivity.¹

¹ Henning J: Jaspers' attitude towards history in "The philosophy of Jaspers" ed. by Schilpp, P.A. 569.
A situation, Jaspers proclaims, is barred by ‘resistance’ and confinement and binds us to mere possibilities. Jaspers has imagined two ideal cases of freedom. In one we achieve absolute control over all opposition. For instance, the material coerces us when we sit down to make use of it; we overcome our sense of repulsion. Hence living organisms and plants are used as nutriment and individuals are treated as mere automata.

Moreover, when one steps on the threshold of life it almost, always develops contrary to one’s expectations. One meets this opposition by contriving one’s life in a most agreeable and decent manner. One aspires to create for oneself Heaven on Earth and in this attempt to secure perfect felicity uses those inferior to oneself as tools for the realization of one’s ends. The latter then cannot exercise their independent wills, cannot take an initiative and are entirely at the mercy of their superiors.

Such people express themselves in open rebellion and refuse to be subservient to any authority. One contrives ingenious devices—training, habituation and instruction to actualize one’s purpose. Hence through cultivation they force them to subordinate their wills and in return assign
them a freedom which is only marginal.

The second ideal case of freedom signifies complete harmony and solidarity. In this case the independence of both individuals is vouchsafed for. They are agreed on all vital issues and join hands in undertaking any enterprise. Both are borderline cases. There are bound to be discrepancies among individuals save when suitable conditions are contrived which will harmonize the force of resistance and bring temporary corrigibility within it. The contingent character of reality would offer resistance even if its elements were fully controlled.

Though Jaspers conceives these two concepts—freedom as an imperious force, and freedom as an ideal and absolute accord, simultaneously, yet he is of the view that both, these cases would erode Existenz.

Existenz becomes profound when the situation is elucidated by a break-through. This certainly does not imply that one has spurned the resistance and achieved accord and harmony. The only import of it is that ample choice is available and one is able to sift the truth which lies in this situation alone. One’s choice is guided by a definite line of action (57)
and one is confronted with a concrete situation. In this choice one either freely accepts or rejects one's definite existence as one's own. But one cannot provide plausible reasons for one's choice.

Jaspers declares that every individual is defined by his background. Objectively speaking one's existence depends on the fact that one's parents have met, got married and this is determined by heredity, education and economic circumstances. One looks for one's origination and learns that it has followed upon a certain process of evolution-birth. One's personality make-up is the gift of one's parents' guidance and ministration. One is linked to one's parents by the strongest and most genuine ties. This is peculiar of all forms of communication and even if the situation compels us to infringe upon it our love and our reverence for them remains the same whether we enjoy life or decry it.

This relationship to one's parents demands a sense of fidelity to it. One cannot ignore it, transgress or alter it even if it appears odd or discomforting. It allows no substitutes. Yet it is not offered as something one has not toiled for.
Existenz is won when we comprehend the fact that there exists an indissoluble bond between oneself and one's parents and one owes a solemn commitment to it. If one tries to dispense with it one is destroying and cancelling the roots of one's being. This family background intrudes upon us as a boundary situation which both narrows us down and enlarges us.

The random coincidences of life also encroach upon us in the form of the boundary situation of chance. What vocation one chooses, what goal one pursues, what religion and ideology one believes in depends to a large extent on the social and economic set-up in which one finds oneself placed. One's love for the partner of one's life depends on a fortuitous meeting.

In the course of action chance may neither be yielded to, nor vanquished. It is not merely decisive or whimsical but something to be accommodated within life. At the time of option one falls a prey to it or ascertains the particulars with which one is concerned. But this absolute necessity is sometimes treated as a chance. One behaves capriciously

(59)
seeking release from it by way of the other i.e. from random chance by the idea of necessity and from relentless necessity by the idea of chance.

This precarious state will come to an end only when the vicissitudes are willingly embraced with a view to over/coming the breach made by chance and necessity. One is deeply immersed in the circumstances of life so much so that good or bad will cease to be antagonistic and one is preoccupied with the idea of one’s fate.

Jaspers asserts that one is firmly rooted in one’s historic situation. Historicity in the philosophy of Jaspers signifies a certain sumptuousness of existence. It also implies a synthesis of freedom and necessity. Although man is always projecting himself in to the future, yet he is one who has stemmed from a particular situation and who is a product of a specific environment.

Historicity also refers to a union of time and eternity. The implication of it is that one stands above time though not outside it. This sense of historicity makes us cognizant of fate itself. There are seeming obstacles that stand between one’s own self and one’s sense of fate. The universal
values and truths come into conflict in our individual case. They have to be undermined for one's own good. However, absolute particularity stripped of the universals is a mere empty concept. Similarly, the universals entirely separated from the particulars are mere abstractions.

Jaspers proposes different approaches to life and rejects each one of them. For example, the theoretical view holds good in science but this cannot be conceded as relevant to the best way of living. The perfectionist view has a bearing upon short-term aims. The existentialist view is that one must affirm one's particular situation, accept historicity and thus win Existenz.

As referred to earlier, Jaspers subsumes death under the concept of the boundary situation. To neglect it is to ignore one of the most significant aspects of life. Death is a piquant reminder that our wisdom and power are strictly limited. Death as an objective fact of existence is not a boundary situation. Man no doubt shares the fact of dying with the animals but is distinguished from them by his capacity to anticipate and dread its approach.  

Although man knows about his death, yet he is unaware of its definite time. Despite the certainty of death man unconsciously seeks to avoid it. He endeavours to prolong life and struggles to maintain and extend the bounds of his existence. Time and again he is struck by the transient nature of things and each time he shies away from this thought.

One is inclined to concur with Heidegger, "As soon as a man enters life he is old enough to die". He relates death to care. Facticity, the moment in care, concedes that it is prior to the self. From the very beginning of life, the human existence is already involved in the situation of mortality. Death is and will remain part of the factual human condition. Care also implies 'falling into the impersonal collectivism of 'they'. This is reflected in the everyday attitude to death which is one of flight and avoidance.¹

Jaspers maintains that the definite boundary situation is either ones own death or of some near and dear one. The death of a loved one is a traumatic experience. It results in a total break of communication, a

¹ Macquarrie J: Existentialism. p. 197.
rupture in friendship and love. We experience a profound sense of grief, for it is an irredeemable loss. We are over whelmed by a deep feeling of isolation after we have parted from the dead person.

We meet death with an avowal of loyalty. We try to remain true to the dead person by cherishing his memory in our hearts. We would try to live up to his ideals and prize his values most. In short he is existentially present though death has severed all communicative ties with him. As Jaspers puts it, "yearning may crush me when I stay behind alone, the parting may be physically unbearable and yet these are phenomena of being sheltered"... We are mere existence when we are thus solaced.

Death is encountered on its true plane when it is regarded as the dawning of a new life or another birth. It is as if we have taken a leap onwards. To quote Jaspers, "This leap is like the birth of a new life. Death has been received in to my life... has ceased to be just an empty abyss. It is as though in death I were no longer forsaken". A sober serenity thus seeps into our being.

For Jaspers the crucial boundary situation is one’s own death. It is only when one realizes that ‘I must’ die that one is able to comprehend this annulled event. It is by this unique experience that one faces the last hazard. One clings to life no matter how wretched and worth/less it be. Death, on the contrary, revokes every possibility of requital, and threatens to cast one’s existence into nothingness.

Jaspers maintains taciturnity as to the question of what will follow after death. Hence he remarks, ‘the rest is silence’. This Shakespearian idea of silence alludes to an ignorance of what will befall us after we are dead. Death throws a challenge to us in the sense that one has to face the trial of death while one is still alive.

This silence is impregnated with meaning in Sartre’s thought, too. In a beautiful simile he calls death ‘the final chord of a melody’. To quote Sartre, “An end of a melody in order to confer its meaning on the melody must emanate from the melody itself. A death....will therefore resemble a resolved chord but will not be one, just as the group of letters formed by the falling of alphabet blocks will perhaps resemble a word but will
not be one”¹ To be more precise the melody looks towards silence or the exhaustion of sound which follows from it. But the silence is inherent in the resolved chord as its meaning. In other words we may say that the melody without the help of words does convey meaning. Hence death is the meaning of life as the resolved chord is the meaning of the melody.²

Heidegger also seems to think that death is inherent in the Dasein, though it is neither completed nor fulfilled in death, as a work of art is finished or fulfilled in itself. The end of Dasein is present to it from the beginning.

Heidegger calls death as Dasein’ supreme possibility to which all others are subordinated. There is a kind of hierarchy of possibilities with death occupying the key position.³ Moreover, death is something that everyone must take upon oneself. It is ‘own most’ because it is not delegatable. This, his critics argue, is either false or trivial. That it is false is shown by cases like Sydney Carton’s standing in for Charles

¹. Sartre : Being and Nothingness. p. 537.
Darney at the scaffold. Carton could not die Darney's death in the sense that he could wear his hat. Secondly, is it not absurd to describe death as a possibility unless one believes as Heidegger does not that there is also the possibility of immortality.¹

What these critics ignore is that the death Heidegger describes as one's 'own most' possibility is not the event of one's demise but what he calls ones' being towards death. It is a living in relation to the prospect of death and not one's execution which is one's 'own most' possibility—which people fail to take up preferring to be 'distracted' against the prospects of their deaths.²

According to Jaspers the success and prosperity that we ascribe to life dwindles away little by little. What seems like a goal is merely the steppingstone of life. If one plays the most active role in life and aspires for some decisive end one is soliciting one's own death. Death no doubt has some sort of impetuosity about it but Existentz is the essential limit of its possible completion.

1. Cooper David E : Existentialism.
2. Blackwell Publisher Basil p. 137.
According to Heidegger death is the end of one’s possibilities which ultimately makes life meaningful. Death is, on the one hand the end of life, but sometimes it seems that it is also the goal of life. This ambiguity persists through Sein und Zeit, but in his later writings, death does become the goal of life and not just a threat to it.¹

In the boundary situation death remains an irrevocable fact but our attitude towards it keeps on changing as we renew it throughout our life. It is quite possible that one fails to unravel the enigma of death but also feels attracted towards it. A man may adhere to life and prefer any kind of existence to total annihilation. Such an ambivalent attitude to death is inconsistent and self-contradictory. Death becomes profound when it is embraced single-mindedly and also when it is not sought after as a refuge. It is then that it becomes dearer than life.

It is significant to note that whereas Heidegger bears close resemblance to Jaspers’ thought Sartre offers a contrast to him. Heidegger’s answer to death seems to be incidental to his main philosophical quest

the question of the meaning of being. It is Dasein—the human way of being the concrete individual—that is to be questioned in relation to the meaning of Being.¹

According to Heidegger the inauthentic mode of existence reduces death to a biological occurrence, makes us evade the subject of death and treat it in a trivial manner. The authentic existence responds to the call of conscience, faces the most important choice to be made between authenticity and its opposite and thus frees itself from the tyranny of das Man.²

Sartre, on the contrary, does not stoop to death. He treats death with bitter scorn. He is agitated with the thought of death, therefore he ridicules it when he says that man can be compared to one who is condemned to death amidst others standing in the same queue. He, however, musters up enough courage to make a fine show on the gallows but in the meantime dies of influenza.³ Sartre’s defiant attitude is in sharp contrast to Jaspers’ smug placid acceptance of death.

The second boundary situation, according to Jaspers, is suffering. Suffering, as Jaspers understood it, is a trial which everyone is supposed to face and which shatters all human endeavour. Suffering is education, says Plato. It keeps man away from laxity and indolence. It is also in the nature of punishment and serves as a deterrent.¹

Jaspers maintains that the natural reaction to suffering is to eradicate it at all costs. Everyone participates in this campaign and with all the mean at one's command. The outcome is always contrary to one's expectations because the success achieved is meagre. Still man deludes himself with cherishing the hope that technical competence which has made big strides in this direction can help in eliminating all suffering one day.² As a necessary concomitant of it, death, too, will be a painless fading of light which is neither feared nor desired.

There is an evasion of the boundary situation of suffering when we do not accept suffering though recognizing it as a necessary datum. We

repudiate it by showing the absence of suffering among animals simply because they do not react like human beings. Still another evasion of suffering is brought to view when one stubbornly refuses to comprehend it. For instance, we do not allow the doctor to tell the truth about our disease, do not take notice of what troubles us, do not admit our mental and physical ailments etc.

Regarding the suffering of others one behaves selfishly even cruelly. To quote Jaspers', “I evade suffering by keeping my distance, by withdrawing in good time if his misery becomes incurable .... I grow indifferent and inconsiderate, indeed I despise and finally loath the sufferer, just as some animals are inclined to torture their sick fellows to death”.

Jaspers treats suffering on an empirical basis and confines himself to a descriptive analysis of it. Nicholai Hartmann, on the contrary, considers it as a value. But to discuss its negative aspect may prove its worth. For instance, one who is incapable of bearing grief feels shattered if a misfortune befalls him. On the other hand, one who has a capacity for

endurance is sustained by it. His perseverance, patience and steadfastness grow under its impact. For Hartmann, suffering means the pulsation of our innermost being, the unearthing of the depths of our nature, the actualization of our noblest energies.¹

Death and suffering are boundary situations to which one is exposed inspite of oneself. Struggle and guilt, one the other hand, are situations which we ourselves contrive and bring into being. Evasion is not feasible because existence entails our participation in them.² Struggle, as political realists from Heraclitus and Callicles to Machiavelli and Nietzsche have recognized, is an inevitable feature of life³.

Jaspers recognizes two forms of struggle. At the empirical level it is waged for physical and psychological superiority—a fight for power. In the first instance, to live at all is to occupy useful space, to eat while others remain hungry, and to hold a position that others aspire to. Hence

¹ Hartmann N: Ethics Vol. II. p. 139.
² Latzel Edwin: The concept of ultimate situations in Jaspers' philosophy in "The philosophy of Jaspers" ed by Schilpp. P.A.
such emotions as envy, malice, jealousy, spite will endure as long as the earth is populated.¹ More often than not this is the struggle which the individual wages unknowingly. It happens when the groups, social orders and states carry it out for him.

This is the case when the conflict is so acute that even a trial of strength cannot settle it. Hence one of them get the support of a whole group which considers the freedom and comfort of a few individuals only. He profits himself at the price of exploiting others. The average individual, on the whole, suffers on account of these power relationships.

Struggle is often ignored or explained away by members of the upper classes, by whom food, shelter, clothing and gainful employment are taken for granted, until large-scale disturbances such as economic depression, wars, momentary instability and mass civil disobedience force it to their unwilling attention.² However, socio-economic knowledge and individual differences show that the very existence of the intelligentsia and the

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2. Ibid p : 151
cultural values which they cherish depend upon the dull and unrewarding labour of the congenitally incompetent persons.¹

"The premise is always a cruel one and at crucial points violent exploitation which the individual need not consciously know about, since others accomplish it for him. The individual merely consumes what comes to him by right from somewhere, not in payment of any material service rendered on his part".²

The boundary situation is conceded when one imagines the state of affairs as harmonious and seeks to approach everyone on the basis of peace and equality. One is contented so long as the real situation is concealed and tends to misrepresent the character of struggle as efficacious. In other words one covers up the situation and puts a blank on the face of the struggle.

There is an empirical fact which shows that only in small groups or enclaves—the family, the church, the small homogeneous community-

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do we find reciprocal cooperation. Where huge organizations are concerned, it is only the slow tempo of the struggle which gives the illusion of lasting peace.¹

"It is only the slowness of the gradual process, the silent sinking at the end, which hides the battles, the triumphs and annihilations from an eye trained to see only suddenness and pathos. Eventually the sole reality appears to be the peaceful blossoming and multiplying of the survivors".²

There is a striking similarity between Jaspers' views and those expressed by Marx— in an even more distinct and pronounced way than Jaspers. According to Marx classes occupy dissimilar places in production. One of them is dominant, the other subordinate. The exercise of domination is a question of material production. It is competition which has placed the subordinate class in the most inhuman situation. The worker is the slave of the property-holding class, rises and falls like a commodity. If the demand for workers increases, the price of workers rises, if it falls, their price falls.³

It is Marx's hypothesis that human productive activity in every sphere of life, and not only in the economic realm, is alienated labour. It is so because work is not voluntary but it is imposed and forced labour. The compulsion that curbs spontaneous, free and creative activity turns it into alienated labour is the need to accumulate wealth.¹

The boundary situation of struggle is concealed when one acts as if the struggle does not exist or looks upon power and struggle as things to be vanquished. Here one adopts a partial view and becomes indifferent to the waste, disintegration, chaos and anarchy which are abundantly found in life. One views struggle as healthy competition and believes life to eventuate into coherence, cohesion and harmony.

"But there will be occasions when I scent threatening perils, when I get nervous and feel vaguely oppressed as it becomes clear that lawlessness and strife may be insoluble. Or I may calm down when I do not feel imperilled, living in fact by combat constellation that favour me, I may again believe in a life without combat".²

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Jaspers maintains that the boundary situation is veiled when we remain passive and do not use force even in self defence. Such an extreme kind of non-resistance and submission is not conceivable unless of course one surrenders one’s own existence. Diametrically opposed to this is the view that power is of supreme worth and should be one’s target at all costs and at every critical juncture of one’s life. It is the attainment of power which embellishes human existence and it is what confers value on it. This affirmation of struggle for struggle’s sake means the fulfilment of Existenz.

The boundary situation of struggle is explained away by an appeal to reason. One entertains the false notion that perfect reasoning can chalk out an ideal programme for human existence. Thus true justice might prevail, power will become an agency for realizing the right, righteousness would be put in/to actual practice. Furthermore, power might become an intelligent force and a safeguard of justice.

One aims at a new order but it will be pernicious and maintained by the same threat of force and by similar laws. Only it is upheld and
enforced by new sovereigns. Everyone is conscious of it, but everyone pretends to be oblivious of it in so far as he is himself well-off. Each one profits by it and favours it in so far as his vested interests are served by it. In an unpropitious position one bears it disadvantages as long as they foreshadow optimum prospects.

Marx, in the German Ideology, says that there is a dichotomy in the midst of the dominant class between material and mental labour. Every dominant class possesses its band of workers, clerics stamen, jurists, moralists. They may or may not perform their function, but it is they who provide the cloak beneath which the industrialist profits from the labour of others and circulates wealth which he has not created. The capitalist needs the judge first of all to ensure that the law which serves his class is held in general awe, and then to flatter him with the illusion that it will eternally prevail.¹

It is Jaspers’ conviction that no definite peaceful state of human affairs exists nor is such an ideal state credible. Moreover, the boundary

situation provides no permanent solution. The so-called solutions are only of an ad hoc nature and provisional. Struggle there is beyond all dispute, the pertinent question that remain to be asked is. How and by what means should we struggle, when to benefit from it, and precisely how long should we suffer and endure?

Along with death, struggle and suffering guilt stands as the fourth situation of extremity. Jaspers discusses it in connection with ‘defiance’ and ‘the passion for the night’ which are two specific modes of linkage between Existenz and Transcendence, Jaspers also refers to the revolt of Prometheus—the myth of an immemorial guilt of becoming human. This reminds us of the Biblical fall of man. Here also knowledge drives Adam out of paradise.¹

Guilt is an inevitable feature of human existence whether one acts or does not act. Every action that one performs for one’s means of livelihood, for survival, sustainment and growth results in the other’s deprivation, elimination and displacement. No doubt one is guilty through

¹ Allen E.L: The self and its hazards. p. 36.
the very fact of being finite. Furthermore, one’s engagement and preoccupation with life’s trivialities is tainted with guilt. For example if a young girl witnesses the T.V. plays table tennis and goes out with her friends she cannot lend a helping hand to her mother which she is supposed to do.

Again and again one incurs guilt because every affirmation of one’s freedom and thereby every choice that one makes rule out other possibilities. For instance, a working woman chooses to be fair to the claims of her family she cannot justify her job in a way in which she is supposed to do. Often one is haunted by the fear that perhaps one’s love is too selfish. Politics and business as well as war thrust upon us an impure motive. To deter from action is guilt beyond question, an evasion which in itself is a kind of decision. Moreover, action involves a sort of self-deprivation.

Kierkegaard envisages the problem of guilt thus. Aesthetically considered the dialectic of guilt is this’ the individual is innocent. In the daily routine of life, in business, in the common daily intercourse of life
one man is held guilty in this respect, another in that. Thus innocence and guilt are alternate determinants of life.

Kierkegaard maintains that in the ethico-religious sphere man feels guilt as a burden which one carries from place to place from which one never gets out. Unlike the beast of burden, from which the burden is sometimes taken off, unlike the labourer, who once in a while enjoys freedom. Not even at night does he get out of the harness”.¹

According to Hartmann, the phenomenon of the consciousness of guilt does not constitute the basis of an independent argument. It is akin to the phenomenon of responsibility and accountability. One can either assume or absolve responsibility but one cannot shrug guilt off one’s shoulders. Like Jaspers, Hartmann also thinks that guilt always follows as a consequence and exists in moral transgression.

Guilt implies authorship, not of some moral agency or invisible power, but man is his own monitor. It is a power that gets accentuated within

man himself, speaks out to the moral consciousness something over which man has no control. It weighs so heavily upon man that he bends under its strain. It can drive man to pain, misery, anguish and confession. The feeling of guilt is not something anticipated but it is very much there. "It bursts in upon a man like fate. He makes no mistake about the guilt. It is suddenly there, judging, contradicting over powering".

According to Jaspers one might reconcile oneself to conflict, pain and death if one could hope to preserve a clear conscience. But what one does not intend and can not condone are often laid at one's door.

Jaspers in his two books "The way to Wisdom" and "The perennial scope of philosophy" discusses man as we envisage him ie concrete, finite and temporal. His psychological make-up includes his descent and parentage, natural endowment, the situation in which he is placed, the blind natural processes and death.

Man's finiteness further implies his dependence on the historical world order produced by human collectivity. It is only man whose finiteness involves him in history in which he realizes his potentialities.

Man's historicity is from the outset multiple historicity. First, it is objective history presented in re-collection and documentation. The basic feature of history is that it constitutes a transition. In history nature is present at every moment. It is the reality that changes very slowly and unconsciously like nature. But once spirit comes in,

consciousness, reflection and unceasing movement are entailed by it.

The more decisive, single and less identical repetition there is, the more authentic does history become. Authentic truth, however, is related to that permanency which is not duration in time, but time effacing eternity. This truth one meets in the present, in one’s own transition and not in imitation of the identical repetition of phenomena.¹

Secondly, it is the unity of the history of mankind. The implication of it is that though there are many peoples, many cultures and a multiplicity of historical facts, yet men are always concerned with each other. They are always interested in one another, confront one another, learn from one another. Moreover, in the choice of one’s future course one is motivated by the past. One admits the guilt of past actions, conditions, motivations and decisions of the past so that one may find the way to truth. Changed views of the past come from a will to make the right decision now, in a new situation. Mere presentation of history turns into responsible historic consciousness, the expression of

a will to be either noble or mean, truthful or reprehensible.¹ One's theoretical knowledge of history becomes meaningful when its thought contents put up a challenge before us or make an appeal to us. Thus in obedience to the existential call the individual fulfills his sense of historicity by expanding so that it is subsumed in the all embracing history. But he truly fulfills it when he is actively involved in it.

Thirdly, one becomes aware of the total historicity of all existence, of the universe and of mankind when one compares it with eternity. One objectifies the singular in the reality of natural phenomena ranging from an individual landscape or tree and on to the order of the cosmos. Historicity, according to Jaspers, is the historic consciousness proper, an awareness that the individual does not become historical by the mere fact of being situated in space and time. Nor is the individual the representation of the universal. The historical is rather the unique, the single, the irreplaceable—that which animates the

universal. The real individual is consumed, permeated and transformed by the historical individual.\textsuperscript{1} Man is not history as a natural being, but only as a spiritual being.

There is a whole chain of determinancies of one's situation, chance occurrences and objective conditions. Above all, there is the historic determinacy of existence itself. One's nature is disclosed in heredity, one's history in tradition, stability through heredity is contrasted to the weakening of tradition. Our everyday life may break loose from tradition, the historically evolved ethos may cease and the life-form may turn down. The fact however, remains that it is not heredity but always the content of a tradition\textsuperscript{2} that makes us human.

One disowns one's temporal existence so much so that one disparages existence itself. The fact is that it is in existence that one is assured of oneself and of the historic origin that links one to all. Moreover, one acquires authenticity when Transcendence is submerged

\textsuperscript{1} Jaspers: Origin and goal of history p: 242.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid p: 236.
in it. What one has rejected as mere existence is the physiognomic aspect of one's being. Only in this physiognomic aspect, and not outside it, does one become a substantive being.

There is a seeming dichotomy between the historic being and historic reality, whereas existentially they are so much inter-twined that one cannot be conceived without the other. One achieves self-unification when one's being has been accepted and grasped and condensed in the historic process of possible Existenz.¹

Besides historicity, the questions of freedom and communication are raised with regard to one's finite existence.

Jaspers seems to think that an isolated being is a mere empty concept with nothing to sustain it. Moreover, birth and heredity do not make a man fully human. He is supposed to be equipped with a sense of tradition, of norms and etiquette which make up his world. He is, however, not a mere recipient of tradition but is replenished by it.

Thus if one feels forsaken in the process of communication or eschews it, it looks as if one is sunk into a void. One shudders at the thought of an existence that has become arid. "I go waste when I am nothing but I".¹

One grows and develops by conciliation with the 'other'. One can rejoice at one's freedom only when the other is free, too. One affirms one's existence only in the other's assertion. One carries the burden of not only one's self but of the other. The other conveys what none else can impart to him. One owes to him impulses which no one can implant in him. The evocative power of this appeal breaks the hard shell in which one is enclosed like a monad. Although they remain distinct individuals yet they strive jointly for their mutual self-revelation.

A sordid relationship develops when the 'other', instead of welcoming one as one does a friend, belittles oneself and acts as an object. "As my obedient slave he keeps me from coming to myself and he does the same as my master. Only mutual recognition allows

¹. Jaspers philosophy vol II p: 52.
both of us to rise to ourselves. Only together we reach the goal each one is aiming at.”

Nevertheless, communication is bruised by the multitude. “I destroy communication by my very pursuit of it with the largest possible number. If I want to do justice to all—that is to say to everyone I come across I fill my existence with superficialities”.2

Man is not merely finite because he bears a certain relationship with other fellow beings. It is in his finiteness that he becomes aware of his potentialities and so he constantly strives and quests and in such a way that from it springs the existential impulse to elevate himself through his freedom.3

Freedom does not exist in isolation, it also points towards Transcendence. At the core of one’s being one is related to Transcendence and this makes one into a free being. But it is no less true that had

2. Ibid p: 55
there been only Transcendence the will should have followed involuntary obedience.

Human freedom is at the heart of all potentialities and through Transcendence man is guided to his own inner unity. This guidance offers no objective conviction and it is apprehended by subjective certainty. Guidance functions through man’s judgement as regards his own acts. this spurs him on as well as checks and confirms his actions.

One would like to know the judgment of his fellow men, but the decisive judgment that matters is that of God. Obedience to God’s command always involves the risk of error, the risk whether one has truly heard the guiding voice never ceases.¹

In one’s finite existence is heard the unconditional imperative: this happens when one is in danger of losing oneself. An absolute imperative has its source in one’s own self. It is not grounded in finite aims or accounted for by some external authority.²

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2. Ibid p: 33-34.
The existential imperative comes as the command of one's authentic existence bidding one's empirical existence. It ordains man's life and decides whether it is worthwhile or meaningless. The absolute does not become temporal: it is eternal existing in every new moment. In paying heed to the unconditional one makes a choice. This decision is the result of deliberation and springs from freedom.

Freedom, according to Jaspers, exists as volition. The will gains momentum when it is stirred at a specific moment and is called upon to take a decision. It also requires a certain amount of tenacity because without strict adherence to the purpose the thing in question cannot be accomplished. Sometimes vehemency reigns supreme when the individual concerned pays no heed to the conditions and situations. But the unconditional volition remains superior to each of these.

Man's conation is directed towards an object, but there is another sense of willing which does not aim at an object. The 'volition proper

2. Jasper: The perennial scope of philosophy p:34
is unconditional, groundless, purposeless'. One cannot achieve one's freedom by one's will. In other words it is not possible to "will" this will.

At the peak of freedom lies a feeling that one cannot will and act otherwise. Thus though free and spontaneous one cannot make a fresh beginning. The consequences that accrue from decisions are beyond one's initiative: they are decisions made before one's birth.

As existence one moves in a restricted sphere and is capable only of marginal freedom. The encompassing sense of historicity in which necessity and freedom coalesce confers on us immense freedom. In this the past still lives, its decisions are not totally but only relatively final. They can be revised.\(^1\) Thus one adheres to decisive freedom dispensing with lukewarm decisions.

Though one is bound by the laws of nature, history the divine will and the cosmic order, yet the materialization of every action takes place only by the individual himself. Moreover, freedom can be exercised

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within a particular framework and it is relevant to call oneself free in that context only.

According to Jaspers the individual choice entails moral obligations and duties, commandments and prohibitions, for there can be no freedom without law. Yet the moral law is always below Existenz and so, if duty requires something to be done outside oneself, it may not be responded to. This is so because one has to abide by the Moral Law.¹

Jaspers lays great emphasis on the point that the decision becomes the substance of the man. He chooses what he understands as the good in the choice between good and evil. Evil from this standpoint is the will to submit to evil passions and impulses. It is the urge to destroy and inflict torture and pain and finally to annihilate. Good is a return to the authentic life in obedience to the unconditional imperative. Man becomes authentic when he distinguishes between good and evil.²

The decision has its poignant meaning on each of the following three levels. Morally, man bases his decision on thought. Ethically he liberates himself from perversion through re-birth of his good will. Metaphysically, he achieves awareness of his being in his capability of love. He chooses the right and his motives become pure. On each level a decision is to be taken and an alternative is visualized. Only when the three levels are united or submerged in each other is the unconditional realized.¹

The existential imperative is also expressed in the will to communicate. The appearance of the ‘other’ is a gift and not an achievement. The impulse to communicate is not enough to establish a rapport unless one commits oneself to it and even then success is not achieved by mere formal acquaintance.

According to Jaspers it is a unique kind of relationship in which one has access to those finer feelings which hold us accountable. Further, one may be pressed down by animosity but is ready by all

means to dispel malice at the hour of death.

According to Jaspers it is not one’s privilege to have friends. Inspite of one’s deep earnestness to solicit the presence of others one may be deprived of their company. It is only when one suffers the agony of being alone, wishes to have a sense of security and eagerly desires company that communication matures. It may be added that communication disrupts if it is reduced to mere revelry and gossip. It is Jaspers’ contention that one can gloss over the impulsion or can live it so that it is eventually subdued.

One is implicated in the rupture of communication. Likewise its fulfilment implants in us a sense of something that has been conferred on us in an incongruous manner. Communication is a perpetual struggle in which individuals are either bound in unison or are at variance with one another. Such a communication is sustained at the expense of a moment’s solidarity.

Jaspers points out that man and his world grow and develop not instantaneously or with monotonous regularity. One has to accept
fluctuations which both repel and lead to our fulfilment. One who observes fine decorum is moved by scruples and wants to make his life spik and span does not become Existenz. Life, so to speak, is not a bed of roses but an arena of struggle and conflict.

Jaspers proclaims that to seek perfection of the other is not a legitimate demand. It is also not possible to tailor the other according to one's own taste and judgment. One is supposed to be considerate and generous to put up with his lapses and failures instead of judging him by super human standards. All criteria are supposed to be secondary and can only be a means of communication, not a condition of it.

It is not in communication but in the boundary situations where the absolute imperative is most poignantly heard. Taking into account the concept of death, Jaspers speaks of instances where death has been conquered and man has acted unconditionally without giving heed to the consequences. A historical survey will bring out the fact that individuals staked their lives in willing conformity and surrender to

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an absolute imperative.¹ They have risked their lives in love, in battle and in achieving lofty aims. The finest example is Socrates who went along his way unhesitatingly, unmoved by the passions of anger and hatred and rejected the opportunity for flight and drank hemlock staking everthing on his fate.

Certain martyrs like Thomas More, have shown the purest moral energy in respect of their faith. To die for something in order to bear witness to it is to render one’s death impure. Martyrs inspired by a longing to die in imitation of Christ are still more impure.

Seneca awaited his death sentence for years and finally overcame the desire to escape death and in the end surrendered himself when Nero demanded his death. Boethius sentenced by a barbarian died calmly.

Seneca, Boethius and Bruno were people who had to conquer themselves. And precisely for this reason they can point the way to us. These are historical examples of men who knew how to die.²

In an attempt to conceptualize death, Jaspers points out a clear cut distinction between what may be termed an actual and a potential death. With reference to actual death one may quote him, "in objective thought... The necessity of death belonging to life is incomprehensible, although this knowledge of (death) being inseparable from life is nevertheless inextinguishable.

Actual death refers to the fact of its inevitability. We fail to anticipate the exact hour of the occurrence of death but are at the same time most certain of its advent. It is potentially immanent death which establishes the unique certainty of actual death. It makes us think of death negatively visualizing it by means of imagery and ideas. For example, one can live in physical pain, in fear of death in situations in which death seems inevitable.¹

As Jaspers speaks of actual and potential death, similarly Sartre says that the word 'waiting' (ie for death) implies two things: one

¹ Kunz H: Critique of Jaspers concept of Transcendence in "The philosophy of Jaspers" by Schilpp P: 505.
can expect death in principle and one can wait for it. The latter happens when one is sentenced to death and the execution is to take place at such and such a time. In the former case one can and may take death into account but one is not sure of its exact hour of arrival.\footnote{Sartre Being and Nothingness. Translated by Barnes H.E. University of Colorado p: 535.}

There is a marked difference between death through old age and pre-mature death. Death that concludes old age allows us to make the most of our resources, but life looks like an utter failure when one is plucked in the prime of life. The truth of the matter is that death takes us all by surprise.\footnote{Sartre Being and Nothingness p: 536.}

It is Jaspers contention that we move at the superficial level when we are gripped by fear to look at the flux of things and seek the point of stasis in it. It is necessary to take note of the fact that a tacit purpose is involved in the fleeting and transient nature of things: the phenomena of evanescence as it may be called.

Furthermore, if we take a positivistic view of all things we would
sink into an apathetic state. Or in a mood of utter despair one regards
death as the most catastrophic event or again one is so much lured by
the prospect of continuance of living that one acquiesces to remain at
the level of mere existence.

There is nothing morbid about this contemplation of death, yet with
such subterfuges proposed death loses its true meaning.

Jaspers is emphatic on the point that the ultimate situation should
not be evaded. The reason for it is that only then do we become
identified with Existenz. It is from this point of view that he
critically examines the traditional answer to death.

The boundary situation is concealed when one retreats from this
situation and comes to regard death as merely accidental, or becomes
unmindful of it, or defers it by the notion of uncertainty regarding the
time of its occurrence. The situation is glossed over when one
pacifies oneself and is not provoked by what may take place in after
life. This merely shelves the boundary situation of death and does not
release us from the horror of it.
According to Jaspers the limit situation of death is evaded when one befools oneself with the prospect of pleasures likely to be available in the next life. The so-called proofs of the immortality of soul are trivial and not of much consequence.

Paradoxically, it is through belief in immortality that Marcel resolves the problem of death. Marcel is worth quoting here; “Death is the spring board of an absolute hope. A world where death is absent would be a world where hope would exist only in an embryonic state”¹ It is significant to note that what provides others with the basis for the experience of death, becomes for Marcel the basis for the experience of immortality.² Marcel’s views regarding the immortality of soul are based on the distinction between one’s life and one’s existence.

It might be suggested that one’s life is the sum total of all that happened in the past. But such an account would tear it off from the present in which one is actually living. The final import of one’s life

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2. Ibid p: 257.
is seen in the relationship between one's self and one's body. One affirms one's life as one's own in which case one can discard it as one does an old suit of clothes. On the other hand one completely disowns it by asserting that I am not my life, nor do I have a life. Thus one's life sharply segregates itself from one's existence.¹

Jaspers rejects the notion of immortality without however ignoring one's quest for Existenz. He is no less conscious of the fact that the impulse to life and the appalling fear of death is inevitable. It is only in the most exalted moments of life that this fear can be shunned. But since these crucial experiences do not constitute the banality of everyday life one is perpetually gripped by the joy of living on the one hand and by the assurance of Existenz on the other.

Jaspers, like every right-minded person, reconciles himself to death. Courage, as Jaspers understood it, is to die truthfully without any pertense. Courage in the face of death is not a firm, austere calm, for

this would evade Existenz. Tranquility is something which is to be constantly retrieved from the realm of pain. If equanimity is altogether immuned from despair Existenz is not worth having. Any one who is oblivious of the horror of death is much the same as one who is enthralled by it. Jaspers remarks. “Composure in the face of death is the calm attitude in which both these elements can still be heard. In this composure we overcome life without scorning it. Time and again the pain of death must be felt and each time the existential assurance can be newly acquired”.¹

Thus the whole of Jaspers philosophizing means an act of learning to die. This learning to die has nothing to do with the stoic ideal which is based on the power of reason to control one’s emotions or timidly succumb to death. So far as Jaspers is concerned it is only when one is faced with the ultimate situation, is confronted with death and thus experiences utter failure and total ruin that the experience of Transcendence is achieved.

The leap from foundering into Transcendence is the leap from anxiety into calm. It is in the midst of this infinite calm that Jaspers comes to terms with death. This certainly does not allude to a union with the living God. What Jaspers gives is not religion but philosophic faith without creed or dogma.

This triumph over death is also significantly brought out by Jaspers while dealing with the boundary situation of suffering. One is at the superficial level when one refuses to stand up the tragedies of life or becomes a passive recipient of them. One is mere existence and the matter is thus glossed over. The existential call, however, directs us to look suffering in the face. Questions about the validity and sense of suffering are discarded as irrelevant ones.

There is a moral insinuation in Jaspers' thought when he regards suffering as a trial which everyone is supposed to face and which shatters all human endeavour. Moreover, according to Jaspers, everyone is supposed to bear his burden alone. It may be added that suffering

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opens the way to existential fulfilment and illumination. He seems to think that the pursuit of mere happiness is grossly despicable and destroys the inherent richness of man.

The existential impulse demands an active participation in the struggle against suffering postponing and alleviating it to the best of one's ability, keeping one's poise all the same till it is finally liquidated.

Jaspers regards the endurancce of suffering as inevitable for the elevation of Existenz. Similarly he contends that it is from pollution that one emerges pure and purgated. In other words one lands in situations and incurs guilt so that one may come up undefiled. In the boundary situation of guilt one's quest is for the purity of soul. In order to win Existenz it is necessary to acknowledge the 'guilt' and accept life's discipline where it is sternest and most exacting. It involves no remorse and the conscience is clear. Embracing the boundary situation and making oneself responsible for the act makes it genuinely one's own.

According to Jaspers the boundary situation of guilt is avoided when
one interprets one's act in a moral sense by saying that one is not responsible for those acts which do not issue from one's motives. Moreover one is overwhelmed by feelings of complacency smugness and self righteousness thus confusing oneself with the purity of one's possible existence. One may also ignore the boundary situation by imagining all guilt as specific and something which can be expiated.

Hartmann and Kierkegaard stand close to Jaspers while dealing with the concept of guilt. Hartmann proclaims that guilt cannot be blotted either by a change of disposition or through a sincere forgiveness one the part of one who has been wronged. Forgiveness relieves the guilty of that special pang of conscience which inheres in the attitude of one who has been wronged, but it cannot extirpate the moral guilt altogether¹.

According to Kiekegaard man encounters guilt both in the ethical and in the religious stages of life. For him, in a particular situation, one can cast off his guilt and so be without guilt. When a person

defends himself thus he admits that he is essentially guilty. And it is this totality of guilt which presumes that in a given situation one can be guilty or otherwise. One the other hand one who is essentially innocent has nothing to do with guilt. Kierkegaard, however, affirms that one enters the realm of religion when one accepts guilt as the permeable aspect of one’s existence.¹

In the boundary situations of death, suffering and guilt Jaspers beacons us to choose the existential way of life. The two modes of life are clearly introduced and sharply distinguished: there is a constant urge to aspire for the authentic existence by transcending existence at the mundance level.

¹ Kierkegaard: Concluding unscientififorc postscript published by princeton University Press 1941 p: 470-1.
AN ANIMATE EXISTENZ

Existenz and Transcendence which in mythical terms are referred to as soul and God are subjects of metaphysical inquiry and speculation and not of theoretical cognition alone. They are thus largely inaccessible and inexpressible.

At the level of existence one leads a blind, vegetative life which is rounded off in death. Existence is blank, odour less and insipid unless it is vitalized and nourished by Existenz.¹ Existenz should be regarded as the opposite of the persona or mask and of the role which existence has to play. It has very much more to do than with the position, behaviour patterns and costumes which society prescribes.²

In an elucidation of Existenz one grasps different concepts as signs of Existenz: decision, choice, communication, historicity etc.³ Existenz

2. Wallraff C: Jaspers An introduction to his philosophy, p. 100.
is not reflected in lukewarm, tentative and indifferent decisions but is compellingly felt in the highest moral decisions. The approach to Existenz then must begin with freedom.

Freedom, as Jaspers understood it, is not an observable fact but an existential experience. Jaspers speaks of objective freedom which is opposed to physical coercion, torture and black mail of every kind.¹ Objective freedom is the condition of the appearance of freedom, not existential freedom itself.

The question of freedom originates in the self who wills its existence. Though cognition is not identical with freedom, it is indispensable to it. Without knowledge there can be no choice and meagre knowledge implies a limited choice.²

There is another variety of freedom which is termed as psychological freedom. According to it, one is free to make a choice as far as motives, desires and tendencies are concerned. In the second place

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freedom involves a moment of impulse. In other words, there is an
element of spontaneity which makes choice unpredictable. This is not
to be rejected by some mechanical process (e.g. tossing coins), for the
process would itself have to be chosen. Impulse, spontaneity and
caprice, though not identical with freedom are among its ingredients.¹

At the moral level one preserves one’s autonomy at all costs and does
what seems to be right in a particular situation. The moral imperative or
command is just a means, a mediation and not something magisterial. The
moral law can only enlighten but never justify one’s decision.²

The resolution implicit in choice which expresses one’s real will is
the absolute decision of Existenz. Its criterion of truth is not success
but what is true in failure. Thus the crux of the matter is that “I
choose”. This resolution also demands that one firmly adheres to it.

This freedom of choice also makes man responsible to himself. But
this sense of responsibility fills him with a feeling of dread. To quote

¹. Ibid p: 111.
Jaspers, "I may resist decision shut my eyes because I do not want to will, horrified by my freedom to bind myself to decide something for all time I would like to shift the responsibility and let things happen. To welcome freedom or to shun it-whichever I choose over any length of time is the phenomenon of what I am.".

Thus one's choice is existential and absolute. It cannot be reduced to psychological explanation in terms of motives, nor subsumed under a rational ethical principle and is not an automatic obedience to law. These enter in to one's decisions but one is certainly not bound by them.

Another sign of Existenz is communication. Communication is the realm that lies between Existenz and Transcendence. In conformity with the Christian tradition Jaspers asserts that each individual self stands on its own ground and is not exchangeable for any other self. These two are disparate except for the unity of Transcendence by which they are encompassed.

2. Blackham p: 42.
The term communication signifies different shades of meaning and there are qualitative leaps in the use of this term. If we take language in a universal sense it extends upwards to God or downwards to nature. Jaspers, however, is quick to emphasize the merely metaphorical use of this broader sense.¹

The problem of communication is conspicuous in Jaspers' philosophy because it had a bearing on his own past life. The very fact that communication is introduced by Jaspers as a break-through of solitude reflects a desire for it which he was obsessed with since his youth. It is not merely a philosophical axiom but something born of his personal experience and has thus an autobiographical significance.²

Communication, according to Jaspers, has its legitimate place in the human realm as such. According to Jaspers such questions as “why communicate” and “why am I not alone”? Cannot be answered in purely

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¹ Ibid p: 231.
² Ibid p: 211-12.
rational terms. One cannot prove the others’ existence as a corollary of one’s own Jaspers is at one with Heidegger and Sartre in the belief that the other’s existence is a self-evident fact. The other is encountered as a factual necessity which is as primordial as one’s own existence. Thus one’s task is not to prove the other’s existence but to ascertain its implications from the point of view of its relevance to one’s own existence.¹

To begin with, we find an embryonic form of communication in social relationships. We meet as teacher and student, doctor and patient, superior and subordinate, buyer and seller, clerk and customer etc. There are wide ramifications of this process of communication. We are either members of the same profession or enter into a contract with others, or engage in a law suit, one either raises arms against the other or is bent upon a friendly emulation. In all these cases one finds that there lies at the base a psychological realism, an intellectual medium or an impetus to achieve a comprehensive ideal.

According to Jaspers one's individual consciousness harmonizes with the general consciousness of the community. However, upright one is in one's pursuits one it still tethered by social bonds. The substance of the community, its mode of thinking, its manners and ideals are not subject to censure or reproof. One acts, thinks, believes and passes judgement like everyone else. Opinions, goals, fears and joys are related to other people because of an unbreakable identification of all.

It is not enough merely to exist within society, one must project a good image of oneself. Character has little visibility, but an attractive appealing personality matters a lot. The more successfully the self conceals behind the mask, the more is one acceptable.¹ In a communicative situation one manipulates the other by concealing the real motive and the actual purpose of the action. One recognizes the other's existence insofar as it is geared to one's own needs. If there follows a struggle one will try to supersede the other. In all these modes of communication

¹ Wallraff : Karl jaspers. An introduction to his philosophy p: 118.
one moves on an impersonal plane. A true communication is thus inhibited.

Though communication does offer a sense of satisfaction, yet it is not adequate enough. One is oppressed by the idea that one is a mere existence—a part of a larger whole, a fragment in an ideal unity, embracing a given demeanour but not one’s real self. This sense of impoverishment in communication is thus the origin of a break/through to Existenz.

Existential communication is not to be imitated or exemplified. Each moment is unique, is not to be arrested and is not repeatable. One transcends beyond the concrete and is thus not limited by time. It is an active process rather than something finished and static. In communication one is illuminated only when one is magnanimous towards the other. To presume that it is one’s inherent disposition that sparkles in the company of the other is to decry the possibility of Existenz.

So far as one’s inborn potentialities are concerned, they serve as data for possible Existenz. Existenz is the vantage point whence one takes decisions, chooses the guidelines of our conduct and makes a
passionate quest for manifestation. If one wants to be illuminated one
may be prepared to undergo any trial and face any hazard. But if one
wishes to remain in a smug little corner, pure and undefiled, one will
not take any risk.

"For in manifestation I lose my stable empirical existence in order
to gain my possible Existenz; whereas in seclusion I maintain my
empirical stability at the cost of losing my possible Existenz."¹

Existenz is also historic. Existence is within time, while Existenz
being in time transcends time. To be more explicit Existenz is, on the
one hand, a record of changing events, while on the other, it reaches
out beyond the limits of time: its historicity is eternity embodied in
time.² Only by virtue of its historicity is Existenz able to apprehend
Being intuitively in the flux of appearances.

Historic self-realization is an elucidation of Existenz. Historic stand­
points are the steps in which Existenz manifests itself. One cannot

2. Hoffman K; Basic concepts of Jaspers' philosophy in "The philosophy of Jaspers
formulate them and cannot ascertain their origin. From them man acquires his knowledge and volition, his prototypes, his criteria, his thought patterns and his symbols etc.¹

The paradoxical unity of time and eternity finds its expression in the exceptional moment: that in which the past and the future become coalesced. It does not project itself into the future, nor does it find fulfilment in the past. The moment, the instant of decision, must be opposed to the passing moment. Historicity, while subsuming both, stands for the unity of what is ephemeral and transient with the substantial density of the moment. It is not however a single moment but a series of collective moments.² The animated and exhilarating moment is the culmination of the existential process.

Furthermore, historicity has to be distinguished from the cares and pursuits of existence. One’s coercions and inhibitions to which one is subjected provide a sense of fidelity. One may be consistent and

coherent in one's habitual way of life, but still may be unfaithful. The authenticity of a pledged word, moral responsibility and a straight demeanour are the corollaries of fidelity. Fidelity in the true sense of the word implicates one's genuine link to one's past.

Fidelity implies keeping faith with one's parents, experiences of childhood and places which have impinged upon us. Fidelity thrives when every tiny detail is picked up and willed. He who tears away from the vital concerns of life cannot sustain himself.

In infidelity one can abuse and disown one's origins. Here nothing is warranted. It will be a false appeasement if one ignores the man or the matter by such remarks, "What done is done" or "such things will happen".¹ To be authentic one is supposed to strengthen the bond of communication instead of cancelling it out or betraying it. What were merely superficial contracts become strong and inviolable ones. Furthermore, fidelity admonishes us to keep distant from being atrophied.

Historic Existenz tends to be both broad and narrow. The breadth of one's situation has nothing to do with its physical expanse. The domain of one's existence which is always confined, entangled in all sorts of situations, burdened with tasks and enriched with traditions confers on one a genuine breadth of freedom.

The commonplace existence in time means the everyday happenings of life. One grows and develops while living in them: they however do not point to a terminus to be led up to. One may indulge in casuistry, but what matters is that the ethos seeps into our being and eventuates into meaning. An individual's conduct is neither something given, nor formally laid down. In this process of self-appraisal one proceeds step by step and what strikes him as right makes him amenable to it in one's historic existence.

The every-day situations of life may be as stern a test of historic fidelity as a great crisis if they are permeated by an existential awareness.

These, as Jaspers says, "impart to existence the tension that prepares it for their reception when the time is ripe and the situation is at hand. It is from these moments that every day life gets the background which confers solemnity and weight upon it even when its particular substance is poor, the background which makes it glow even where it cannot be more than disciplined toil".¹

According to Jaspers the situational character of Existenz expresses itself in three eventualities: being-in-the-world, being-amidst-the-other and being-towards-transcendence. Thus Existenz in relation to Being poses a metaphysical issue and in connection with truth it becomes an epistemological question². So first the relation of Being and Existenz.

Existenz takes its bearings from the world. In the first instance, the world appears as hostile to us. One seems to be a pawn in the huge cosmic scheme and a mere speck in the cosmological order. The world is neither harsh nor benign and not intelligible either. Facing it

squarely one finds repose in the world. Though its ways may be forbidding and bewildering both in point of our achievements and failures we trust it all the same.

From the practical stand-point one is faced with a degree of ambiguity while dealing with it. This world is not one which one has shaped and contrived. It is that which is variable both with reference to time and the people who live in it. One may feel quitting it for its distractions or cling to it because of the blind will-to-live. Existenz is the danger-signal which warns us to be on our guard lest we should be ensnared by it. The world fascinates Existenz as the medium of its realization and disdains it for its possible sinking into mere existence. This generates a tension between Existenz and the world.

Existenz is not tied by the fetters of subjectivity and objectivity. Though one is bound by the objective social amenities one does not remain stuck up to them. Existential solidarity is not to be sought in the objective realm. One is a consolidated whole and forms a totality by himself.

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The struggle for existence is a passive phenomenon though actively undertaken. It becomes the medium of existential struggle, one in which it is realized and finds fruition.

Possible Existenz is at war with itself. It fights the sinister forces pitted against it: the sensuous side of nature and a wretched damned existence without Transcendence. Only in this struggle which ensues after each victory and is waged in more rigorous way after each defeat can a possible Existenz come to be real.

Another form of struggle is that which is carried on between existence and Existenz. To take an example from the concept of death where Jaspers, besides the fear of death, speaks of the fear of existential non-being. Existential non-being implies a state of utter despair, ambiguity and infidelity. The fear of existential non-being is so distinct in kind from the fear of death that despite our use of identical words non-being and death belong to two different categories. As regards existential non-being Jaspers says, "I do not live, and so my possible Existenz suffers the agony of being unable to die. The peace..."
of radical non-being would be a deliverance from this horror of continual death".¹

The import of all this is that an existence which is divorced from Existenz is tantamount to death and one is condemned to live thus. So this vulnerable Existenz yearns for death which would be a solace in the perspective of the eternal curse. Further more, existential dread is significant because if it is dispelled one is damned to a wretched kind of existence.

As far as the communion with the other is concerned, one is fascinated by the other only in his segregation. The self in its richness and diversity does not absorb any other being. Love of being centres on the innermost vital and dynamic core of one’s being.

Communication cannot be established with the crowd. It is possible only with selected like-minded men who are committed to an existential solidarity and who are mutually bound each to each in a nexus of loving relationship. In the day to day world the option seems to be

between the ego-centric isolation and collective unity. The only solution for Existenz lies in Transcendence.

As far as the relation of Being to truth is concerned, individual truth is included and enveloped by the truth of Being.¹ The elucidation of truth—the truth which is cogent, qualified and identical with the self is what enables Existenz to become real. The truth which is cogent has a wide connotation. Qualified truth is also upheld by a sizeable number of men.

According to Jaspers existential truth is alive in a triple relation Existenz, co-Existenz and Transcendence. Kierkegaard’s famous dictum that subjectivity is the truth is thus renewed, for existential truth is individual.¹ Existenz enjoys existential solidarity only when truth is identical with one’s self. One cannot part with it, behold it at a distance or comprehend it properly. One can declare it to be absolute only at a given moment because truth cannot be revealed in all its

transparency even by an elucidation of its diverse aspects.

Truth is either unequivocal and not chosen or it is made unconditional by choice. It dispenses with all other untruths and emerges as one single truth. Truth, we may add, cannot be got at immediately. Crisis and fresh beginning, effort and enterprise are rooted in the human quest for truth. Jaspers says, “He does not enter in to the process and become untrue because he is unreal. If I want to be true I must dare to make mistakes and to put myself in the wrong; I have to carry things to extremes, to place them on the razor’s edge if I want to bring them to a truthful decision”.

Since one subscribes to one’s own truth, one cannot comprehend all other truths but must join others in their pursuit of it. The truth of the other person concerns one as seriously as one is concerned with and for the person himself. By harmonizing with their truths i.e. the ways in which truth presents itself to them, one helps their possibilities to become actualized. But there is no import of personal truths, nor

do the truths of others which one recognizes and respects take the place of truth which presents itself to one and whose born representative one happens to be.

Jaspers seems to think that struggle is inevitable for the achievement of a truthful authentic existence. It is to be willingly embraced, else existence remains embryonic only. The struggle is needed to kindle the spark latent in man. To be sure one is not a product of circumstances but maker of his own self. Indeed existence is purged when it is put on trial. To quote Jaspers, "I stunt possibilities that are inherent in me and coerce my impulses; I shape my given propensities; question what I have become." Furthermore "there is no limit to the questions that are the implements of this fight for criticism and purification of soul."

This quest for true fulfilment brings to us the realization that,

independent though we are yet we are not complete and self sufficient beings. We are finite and particular, bound to our historicity—a particular state, community, nation etc. Furthermore, we become aware of our concrete human situation in which we are placed and also realize the concrete content; the everyday world of common place objects and the round of occupations with which we are supposed to deal.

In a concrete situation one comes into contact with another self—hence a unique loving struggle. One really matures through the revelation of one's self to the other.

It will not be out of place to express Sartre's view in this regard. According to him conflict is the meaning of being for others. It is so because while one regards others in an objectifying manner, one receives the same treatment from others.

The instance given is that of a person sitting in a public park on a summer day enjoying the soft soothing air, the sun-shine and the

flowers. All of a sudden a man appears on the scene. At first one regards this man as no more than an object. But a 'look' on the part of the other is felt as a threat to one's freedom. One has the feeling that he has stealthily taken away one's world. Every thing is in its place, every thing is the same, but one has been raided in one's isolation. One's whole universe becomes disorganized and disintegrated by this other self. The others' presence has created a tiny crack in one's solid substantial world.

Even more embarrassing is the situation when one is listening through a key hole and hears foot steps behind him. One shudders at the thought that one has been seen by the other. The other's look usurps one's freedom. For example the obscurity of the dark corner which signifies the possibility of concealment is wiped away when one apprehends that while the other has his hand in his pocket, he has a weapon there. His finger placed on the electric bell is a signal to

call the police. The other can reveal one’s identity by illuminating the corner with his flash light.¹ Thus with the others’ ‘look’ one has been totally deprived of ones’ freedom. One retaliates against the deprivation of ones’ freedom by a continuous effort to imprison the ‘other’ in his objectivity. One finds out ‘ruses’ to make the other an object. But one ‘look’ on the part of the other is enough to make all these schemes turned down and to make one experience once again the transfiguration of the other.² This is one of the dimensions of a person’s encounter with others.

Jaspers’ reciprocity between the selves bears a close resemblance to that rapport between the selves which Sartre offers as the solution to the conflict. It happens when a “Third” appears on the scene and embraces the two combatants with his ‘look’. Thus the “Other’s” possibilities and one’s own are levelled into dead possibilities and hence the relation becomes reciprocal³. The other’s possibilities earlier

¹ Sartre : Being and Nothingness p: 264.
² Ibid p: 297.
³ Sartre : Being and Nothingness p: 418.
aimed at striking his fellow and one’s own employed for defending oneself are “now complementary to each other, imply one another and involve one another for the “Third”.

This is the origin of class consciousness. The peasant, the labourer, the servant, the proletariat: all are organized in a single whole because they have in the feudal lord, the capitalist, the master, the bureaucrat a common antagonist. It is through these superiors that these weak people experience the collective alienation and are able to look them as ‘our burdens, our ‘miseries’ and our suffering’. It is not however the hard work, the low living standard and the humiliation which comprises the oppressed collectively as a class. The solidarity of work as a matter of fact constitutes the labouring collectivity.

According to Jaspers, in loving struggle one must control psychological drives like egoism, envy, aggression, for they lead to self-centeredness.

2. Sartre p: 421.
and isolation. In this striving one is related to one's fellow beings by the bond of love. Love is not in itself communication but the source from which it springs and by which it is animated. Its embodiment in existence lends it an air which both binds us to and estranges us from the other.

Love refers here not to the blind clinging to impulse but the clear-sighted summoning of one Existenz to the other. Real live demands self-commitment and fidelity. It thrives only when it is embedded in communication. Hence a final rupture of communication is the end of love. Jaspers also stresses the inner independence of selves though they embark on a relationship of a most delightful kind. They are intimately close and yet infinitely remote from each other. They form so to say a community of monads.

In Satres philosophy love has an entirely different connotation. It signifies one's desire to assimilate the 'other' in one's own self. In

this absorption one does not reduce the other to an object but wishes to possess his freedom. This again gives rise to conflict, because the 'other' refuses and resists this sort of assimilation.

Jaspers emphatically says that loving struggle is not to be understood as being protected in quiet love being free from all argumentation and having the full claim of acceptance and affirmation. Love is magnanimous and spontaneous. It is something that happens, not something that one chooses. It has a cathartic role: It refines, purifies and educates. The desire to possess or domineer over some one whom one loves and respects really erodes it.

It is interesting to note that this is what Sartre precisely means by love. The lover reveals and organizes his beloved's world. He demands that the beloved makes of him the absolute end and value of one's existence. He is no more a mere object in the midst of others or one that had fallen in the world. He is justified in the very fact of existence.

To quote Sartre, "These beloved veins on my hands exist beneficently."

How good I am to have eyes, hair, eye-brows etc.... We now feel that our existence is taken up and willed in its tiniest details by an absolute freedom which at the same time our existence conditions and which we ourselves will with our freedom. This is the basis for the joy of love when there is joy. We feel that our existence is justified."

Jaspers finds the culmination of love when in the case of a common peril both Existenzes freely put themselves at stake. Sartre sees the culminataion of love in seduction which consists in making oneself in to a fascinating object so that the other yields his freedom to him.

Jaspers regards loving struggle as inevitable for Existenz. Hence an evasion of it will leave existence at the superficial level only. Thus for Jaspers Existenz is an act of commitment: it has to decide in time. Existenz must dare and must make a decision: It cannot wait. It is not the moral judgment one passes as an observer but a moral decision made in one's life which is implied by the living practice of Existenz².

Jaspers shows certain deviations from the loving struggle. For instance there is a display of intellectual superiority. Thus instead of enduring the other's short comings, there is an assertion of one's abilities and talents. In an actual verbal discussion one is so much over whelmed by egoism pride or complacency that one ends up the debate ill-humouredly or drops the subject, turning the conversation in to another channel.

There is a break-down of communication due to differences in race, nationality and religion. Hence prejudice, suspicion, envy and malice thwart a free communication of selves. In case such pepole come in to contact with one another they fall into an unpleasant taciturnity.

There is a lack of social inter-course when individuals engage themselves in loose and idle talk or one of them prefers to end the discourse by conceding the other's point of view. One actively participates in the fiery discussion of ideologies-such as the protestation of love for humanity though having no love or sympathy for one's neighbour.  

Loving struggle is spurious when one adopts the charitable posture of sympathy and outward aid.¹ Here one’s real motive is the pleasure which charity guarantees in one’s own superiority, the relish of it springing from pity and compassion. Moreover the delight one has in the little acts of generosity which are suitable and depends on one’s mood takes the other by surprise and a sense of gratitude.

Loving struggle is an affectation when one claims deep concern and keen interest in the other’s growth and well being: this is sheer hypocrisy and exhibitionism. Such persons believe in idle compromises and wish to keep up appearances all the same.

In all these cases there is no genuine involvement and reciprocity between the two individuals. Here instead of existential manifestation there lurks in one’s behaviour a tendency to assert one’s individuality. It happens when one who suffers from an inferiority complex develops a vindictive desire to defeat every body and have the consolation that no one is happy. It is also the case when a dejected man puts up

absolute ideals for others in order to spurn them when they do not come up to the mark. To quote Jaspers, “A loveless one defies the others, with the idea of judging him by divine standards and crushing him... Here it seems as though a fighting one could always make me trying to trap the other to show up his failures”.

Sartre, too speaks of the deviation from a genuine communication. Instead of true intercourse of self with other selves one accepts and adheres to the picture which others have of him. The doctor and the clergy man merge their persons in the official. The artist who leads a Bohemian life may do so because he knows that people are prepared to make him do so. The politician says what his audience are waiting to hear from him. Social life, as a matter of fact enhances play-acting. Success and popularity are achieved by the role which others want us to take on.

IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE

The concept of Transcendence forms the bed-rock of Jaspers' whole philosophizing. It becomes conspicuous when he bases the main thrust of his process of argumentation on this very concept.

In his Metaphysik Jaspers points to two different approaches to Transcendence: formal transcending and existential relation to transcendence. One can apprehend and reduce transcendence to a variety of categories:

a) the categories of objectivity such as being and nothingness, the one and the Many, form and matter, the universal and the particular.

b) the categories of actuality such as time, space and substance.

c) the categories of freedom such as possibility, Existenz etc.1

Transcendence stands over and above mere concepts and cannot be exhausted by the logical categories. They however constitute cipher scripts which though they fail to give us knowledge of Transcendence, yet open

the way to the existential relation to Transcendence. Jaspers describes four existential relations in the form of antinomies.¹

a) Estrangement and love.

b) Fall and elevation.

c) Righteousness and passion

d) Unity and multiplicity.

Existenz envisages Transcendence as estrangement. Estrangement or defiance is grounded in a refusal to identify oneself with the source of one's being.² The question is posed thus: why is one born? Why does one suffer and die etc.? Moreover, the desire to question the ways of God is a kind of defiance. It may be asked: how is the course of things with its oddities and absurdities vindicated? The bounties and gifts of nature are not commensurate to the deeds of men. This defiant attitude turns man into a cognitive and inquisitive being.

Jaspers cites the myth of Prometheus who was guilty because he introduced knowledge to mankind. Prometheus, the rebel, was accused

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1. Ibid p:176.
of crime because he refused to succumb to force. The story of Job's continuing argument with Jehovah is a conspicuous example of the first act of defiance against God. These myths are similar to the Biblical myth of the fall of man. Adam was guilty because he disobeyed God and the lure of knowledge caused him to be driven out of Paradise. What is implicit in these myths is the sense of freedom. Man's worth and glory lies in his act of defiance.

Defiance is the natural human response. One who is clear-sighted, looks at facts and makes queries and will say 'No'. In defiance one lives on one's own impulses, follows one's own whims and chooses one's course of action. Godlessness is not defiance. It involves a sense of remoteness and a lack of faith. Godlessness may become blasphemous and God becomes dead. It is no less true that the Deity does not want him to submit blindly. He allows him to be pugnacious and then to resign and thus surrender turns into a corollary of defiance. Defiance and surrender coalesce when one feels belittled before Transcendence. One feels utterly crushed and trembles before the mighty power.

1. Ibid p : 183
Defiance or estrangement is not far removed from love, for it is in isolating oneself from Transcendence that one achieves a clear insight into and a deep devotion to the source of one's being. Were defiance to pre-dominate, Transcendence would vanish and were devotion to triumph Existenz would be destroyed.\(^1\) Estrangement and love go together without touching the point of contiguity. To deny God is mere feigning. It conceals an implicit affirmation of Him; it is more sublime than blind faith. True surrender must spring from a defiance that has been won over “To chide God is thus to seek God and every no is a plea for a yes, but for a true honest yes”.\(^2\)

**Elevation and fall**

Existenz is both divorced from existence and is drawn towards it.\(^3\) One is the author of one’s actions and the arbitrator of one’s possible rise and fall. One enters into communication with one’s fellow beings to discover their worth and help them come out with the best in them. One

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is not genuine if one isolates oneself. Descent or fall is the result of affectation in one's behaviour and gestures. One is on the decline if one's judgments and approvals are put forward to cover up latent motives. One may, for instance, praise a man not because one loves him but because by praising him one's intention is to hurt others. Or one may disdain the possible Existenz because one does not wish oneself to be evaluated by absolute standards. Thus the motive, in both the cases, is the same.

Historically speaking, elevation and fall are real in the present. The transcendent relation of the categories of time stands for the pure present, against an immense future and against a sumptuous past. For an Existenz the only representation of being is each present moment. The truth is not to be located in the past, nor is it preserved in the future. The truth lies in realization at the moment into which all history is absorbed.

One descends, or rises above, if either the demon or the genius (as Jaspers terms it) supervenes. Demon and genius are the two aspects of one's inner self. Demon is the sinister force in us. It contrives evil and instigates us to bring it about. It plunges us into reckless and passionate

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commitments. Genius stands for loyalty, fidelity, and rationality. While genius gives certitude the demon is ambiguous. While the genius speaks in a firm clear voice the demon speaks in a hoarse whisper. Jaspers expresses these two forms thus, “They are close to me like friends who share a long history with me, and they assume the form of enemies who challenge or tempt or enchant me. They do not leave me in peace”. ¹

Righteousness and Passion.

By ‘day and Night’ Jaspers seems to evoke two opposed tendencies: the one signifies reason, stability, order, consistency, clarity and the other is the irrational urge towards darkness, ruin and disaster.² In the growth of the individual both interact with each other and this interaction has its impact upon their respective roles.

Impulse, lust and passion are manifestations of night. The night is evil in relation to day, because every definition moves in to the light of the day and is relative to the day. In a concrete real situation a decision is

called for. Come what may, one embarks upon day or surrenders to night. But if one surrenders to passion and chooses disaster one is bound to be guilty for in so doing one moves away from constructive, harmonious life.

The theme of guilt dealt with by Jaspers in the boundary situations occurs with a new force in the analysis of defiance and of the “passion for the night”. It seems that one who is guilty of being incited by the passion for the night has forfeited the right of being pardoned. Here a question crops up: ‘Is this inevitable guilt directed towards disaster and not towards redemption? Does this cover the true guilt which Biblical injunction, in Jaspers phrase, equates with vanity and servitude? What follows from it is that guilt takes a different dimension here. It is neither evaded nor redeemed.

Unity and Multiplicity.

God is supposed to be One and He is revealed as the ground of all Existenz. Though He is in close proximity to us, yet He maintains an absolute distance. In Other words though He is too remote and inaccessible, yet He is a felt presence. As a concept, the one God is supposed to be a

personal God who listens and answers our prayers. One invokes God in prayer. To quote Jaspers, “Prayer is an invasion of the mystery, an importunity which man may dare in his greatest loneliness and need, but as a daily habit and developed custom it is a dubious fixation”. To be more explicit offering prayers to the Deity every day becomes stereotyped and impoverishes the relationship to God.

Multiplicity is equally defensible. Multiplicity is not a concept set apart from unity. It is very much inherent in it. Inspite of long standing polytheism the concept of the one Deity has always been there beyond all personifications. The idea becomes crystallized as an omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient Deity, as loving and wrathful, as just and merciful and so on. The fact however remains that multiplicity has to be curbed for the sake of unity.

From this we go on to divine reserve. God does not manifest Himself to us but remains hidden in mystery. He reveals Himself in our experience and every feature of it serves as a sign or symbol of his presence and will. A symbol denotes some non-objective entity.

The cipher, as Jaspers terms it, resembles the symbol in that both refer to an absent and abstract reality. In a cipher, symbol and what is symbolised are united in such a way that their separation is not possible. In his early writings Jaspers makes a distinction between a cipher and a symbol. This corresponds to his distinction between an interpreted and an intuitive symbol. An intuitive symbol never takes a final form and has no definite meaning. It is simply a code entity. Jaspers, in his later work uses cipher and symbol interchangeably thinking that his use of cipher will be equated with an intuitive symbol. In cipher reading one makes a raid on the meaning which is not far removed from the symbol and discerns into the very kernel of the cipher itself. Instead of finding its meaning elsewhere it dissects its interior layers and penetrates its depths. Thus they play an evocative and not a semantic role.

There comes a decisive moment when God permeates a particular

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object, event or thought so much so that consciousness is saturated with it. At that crucial moment all the elements are woven into a rich web of meaning and a decisive certitude. However, this certitude is not final or absolute: what appears to be the fruit of metaphysical quest becomes the starting point for further inquiry.¹

Jaspers has elaborated a hierarchical arrangement of ciphers. He wishes to show how consciousness rises from a silent reflection of ciphers to a meditative awareness of Transcendence without going out of the domain of symbolism.²

Such an experience takes place when one is free from all distractions and when one detaches oneself from all objects and pre-occupations. It is in the midst of such elevated moments that Transcendence dawns upon us and one feels the presence of Transcendence pervading all things. Since one does not deliberately invoke these states so when they come one discards them as merely subjective. But if one accepts them without bias, they can bring revelation in a flash.³

Jaspers calls this phase as 'the immediate incommunicable language of being'. This sublime experience is the reading of the first language. Its reading does not depend upon a rational approach or logical insight. It goes beyond that: the most superb thoughts are conveyed through the most trivial aspects of reality. A metaphysical experience cannot be delineated or demonstrated nor can it be produced at one's will. One's experience of a cipher diminishes when it is universalized. It is rich when it rests on the particular and it is grasped there and then.¹

At first one is a silent recipient but immediately it advances towards communication. The silent recipient formulates his experience in terms of language. Thus a second stage begins which may be termed as mythical communication. In this phase man detaches himself from the immediate present and tries to articulate his experience. What was basically the language of Transcendence becomes part of culture. Mythical language both preserves and transmits the original experience.² It appears in three

forms: as myths, as revelations of a beyond and as mythical realities.  

a) One encounters the Greek gods in the objects of nature. Hence they are personified and stand parallel to physical realities. Jaspers seems to refer to experiences like spanning the sublimity of the sea through its immensity etc. In other words, it is the vastness of the sea which instils in us a sense of awe. Myths are based on a complex logical structure which is not easy to comprehend. They serve to ease existential tensions not rationally but by telling a story. Myth is meaningful for one who has faith in its truth although one has not arrived at it by one's own insight.

b) The myth of a world beyond reality reduces empirical reality to mere sensory phenomena. Existenz makes intrusion into the supersensory world which is coalesced with Existenz by revelation.

c) At the third level all reality becomes mythical. Jaspers gives the example of Van Gogh for the use of imagination to invoke a world


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beyond this physical world but manifested in it. Van Gogh's paintings make an appeal because he sought a mythical quality in landscape, people and things.

Finally one formulates one's own cipher-script or one's thinking itself becomes symbolical. Such a form of expression is more coherent and rational than the language of myth.¹ In other words, one tends to give an existential interpretation and a metaphysical meaning for the mundane course of events.

Another way to talk of Transcendence is to talk of it analogically. But this apprehension remains on the speculative level. Speculation is not a cult, it is only an analogous to it. Speculation reveals the ciphers, not the Absolute which the cult evokes in prayer. Thus it is not the nature of God that matters but the relationship to Him. There is beyond all philosophizing a certitude that God is, no matter how faint that certainty my be.²

A third way of speaking the speculative language is evident when one

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2. Wallraeff : p: 188.
discovers being ontologically. In other words, one comprehends one’s substratum as the same with being.

The fourth way is to reflect upon the origin and end of all things. This contemplative way of apprehending Reality takes us to the brink of a precipice where one encounters Nothingness or experiences God¹.

The rich abundance of ciphers include everything that comes within the range of one’s experience no matter how trivial it is². Thus it is not limited to the three cipher forms mentioned above. In the realm of ciphers one is nearer to Transcendence and also farther away from it. It is so because the symbol influences extraneously. The cipher makes Transcendence transparent without impairing either Existenz or Transcendence. However, a penetration into cipherology makes Transcendence into an object, and subjective behaviour patterns are conceded for the apprehension of metaphysical experience.

According to Jaspers, each symbol represents Transcendence in all

1. Ibid : p: 182.
fairness and totality. There may be disparities as far as proximity and remoteness go, but every symbol is an aspect of Transcendence as an absolute. However an access to Transcendence is always beyond any cipher or myth.

There is a perfect unity between Transcendence and the physical object which symbolizes it so much so that an interpretation would mean a violation of this unity. A conscious symbolism wherein things have their co-relates in terms of signs, metaphors and models is not a cipherscript. An unconscious symbolism is equivalent to that in which one places a cipher parallel to Transcendence and it is in this alone that Transcendence manifests itself. Thus the cipher is what it is, it cannot be explained in terms of something else.

The apprehension of Transcendence through the ciphers is a continuous achievement as well as a recurrent loss. The expression of being is silent. What will speak depends on the Existenz that sympathetically listens to it. Ciphers are saturated with meaning everywhere but are not always intelligible. The truth of the cipher depends on the person who beholds
this truth. Its ambiguity is not cleared by one’s effort or endeavour. Each
of the countless number of ciphers can be read in numerous ways and
each attempt to read becomes a cipher, their ambiguity is their very
essence. It may be added that to read the ciphers is not to be learned for
it is a matter of faith. Furthermore, the transcendent experience which is
conveyed by empirical facts loses its veracity when it is universalized
and prescribed for all.

There is a definite systematization as far as ciphers are concerned.
They are not all on the same plane. Jaspers treats nature as a cipher.

Nature as a cipher In poetry and in painting the natural world is treated
as a cipher. Ciphers are found in nature as well, for our existence is a
part of nature. Objects of nature fill us with a rich and indelible
experience. The import of these ciphers of nature is that they are a means
of human interaction. It touches our sensitivity’ and gives us immense
joy. One feels a sympathetic affinity with one’s fellow beings.

1. Hoffman K: Basic concepts of Jaspers philosophy in “The philosophy of Jaspers
History. The past is preserved whereas the future is the reservoir of immense and unknown possibilities. History educates us according to the divine plan. We obey or disobey God and are likewise rewarded or punished individually or as people. We live under the protection or threats of God. History is regarded as a progress or an evolution.

Man: The cipher par-excellence is individual existence, for here self-determination and choice is the conjunction of nature and history in a microcosm. Thus in Jaspers' philosophy art mediates the reading of ciphers in nature, history and in man provided this mediation takes place at the intuitive level.¹

Thus myth, poetry and the plastic arts suggest a certain 'aestheticism' because Jaspers gives to art a seriousness which is contrary to the conception of "art for art's sake". It may be added that in Jaspers art becomes an aesthetic equivalent of revelation.² According to Jaspers religious myths and dogmas are valid as ciphers, but they should not claim

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² Ibid p: 627
to be more than that. The ciphers provide no definite conclusion. Their language is ambiguous and leads on to different interpretations.

According to Jaspers the fruitlessness of all endeavour to apprehend the absolute is itself the expression of an ultimate cipher which we may call the cipher of foundering.¹ Foundering is a pointer to that invincible hitch which Jaspers delineates in the boundary situations. In other words, in the boundary situations and in foundering, too, one encounters an insuperable situation, against which we either shatter or collapse. Foundering, one may add, determines all other ciphers though in itself it remains uninterpretable.²

According to Jaspers, Transcendence is apprehended when one makes a leap from anguish to calmness. Furthermore, it is not a passive endurance but bearing suffering with every iota of strength that remains. It is in this active suffering that one experiences foundering.

The reality of Transcendence is apprehended in its relation to embodiment. It is so because man has a psychological yearning to see the deity clothed in corporeality. Opposed to it is the immanent reality which has the abundant wealth of phenomena and all that manifests itself to one's senses. Thus cipher or reality: that is the heart of the issue.

The pertinent question that faces us is: whether reality stripped off corporeality can remain effective as a cipher? Is the cipher strong enough to exercise force awaken and guide us is it as strong as embodiment or even stronger? Take for instance the eternal punishment of hell which is supposed to be a very influential cipher. The question arises whether the cipher makes an impact if one is not threatened with a future hell or is it the human actions which carry weight? Instead of separating guilt from punishment, that is the sin committed now would be answerable only in the hell in future. Will the cipher be strong enough to invoke the feeling of remorse which follows as a result of wrong action? Has the cipher an appealing force to invoke our existential decision to win or lose ourselves?

In the past, cipher language and embodiment were intelligible to the common man: it was the air they breathed in. Today the situation has changed. The cipher language is not tied to embodiment. Embodiment cannot be maintained in a world tainted with scientific realism. Thus embodiment may strengthen us psychologically, but weakens existential certitude.¹

Every embodiment, as an object of empirical observation, has a general character and is likewise replaceable. Embodiment enjoys distinction when it is taken into historic consciousness and thus becomes unique and irreplaceable. For example, faith in revelation rests upon a unique historic embodiment. The revealed God was not embodied once upon a time he remains embodied at each moment here and now. Though the corporeality of God is rooted in time, yet the cipher that becomes conspicuous in the revealed God is not tied to the corporeality of revelation. In other words, we may say that though God has revealed himself at a particular moment, yet this moment is arrested for all times to come. The

cipher that emerges as powerful, challenging and commanding is still not bound to the corporeality of revelation. Thus cipher, too, is historic but its embodiment is in language which is mute and is called language only metaphorically.¹

An embodied God is also a personal God. Our thinking fascinates us to equate the personal God with Transcendence. The cipher of the personal God is the only communication of the human and the divine as I and thou. We assign attributes to the personal God as one who protects and commands, is merciful and wrathful, loving and forgiving etc. Man approaches Him with utter trust but also fearfully. In prayer man feels personally addressed by God and addresses Him in return. He beacons Him in the hour of need and also surrenders to His will. He asks questions and complains to Him. He expects answers and is forsaken if he doesn’t hear from Him. He listen to God’s directives and goes his way by reposing trust in Him. He will feel the presence of God while fighting injustice, in being benevolent to his neighbour and even in the most agonizing moments of life.

This personal God is the cipher of Transcendence. In the Old Testament we have both the commandments to make no image or likeness as well as an abundant images of the personal God. The commandment refers to Transcendence while the images and likeness are the ciphers of Transcendence. Throughout the Old Testament the tension persists between Transcendence which is real without image or likeness and Jehovah who reveals himself concretely. The cipher of the personal God had a tremendous effect whether he resides somewhere on Mount Sinai or in Heaven.

Besides the personal God there is the incarnated God Christ who is regarded as a unique cipher. The incarnation of God in Jesus is not just any incarnation, it is of the one God and all the other so-called in carnations are false. Christians believe that God is present in human form and He is both human and divine at the same time. It is laid down in the New Testament that God is physically present, rose in flesh and blood, was crucified, showed himself to his disciples and talked to them. Belief in the truth of this testimony is the basis of the Christian faith. Here we

1. Ibid p: 141.
find not the propagation of any doctrine, the framing of any law, or the furnishing of guidance. Primarily it is the revelation of God assuming human form, entering into the world and undergoing extreme suffering. His human experience is such that he is to die alone, on the cross forsaken even by God. But the end is the resurrection in the flesh, the miracle that voids all suffering and anguish. To believers this act of God is historic reality in the world of objective fact.\(^1\) Ciphers are supposed to give us access to this revealed reality. They refer to God's emergence into the world at one particular place. They mark a fictitious point where the reality of Transcendence and the spatial temporal reality are to coincide. Such an interposition is superfluous for Transcendence is still hidden from us.\(^2\) Those who are witness to this revealed reality put a stamp on the authority of this revealed reality but declares the process of revelation as come to a close\(^3\). In other words revelation is concerned with time, with the particular instant when God entered into the world.

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It is the basic perversion of thought to transform cipher language into embodied reality. One draws a sharp line between reality and cipher because cipher is never the reality of Transcendence but only its possible language. One wants to seek purity and the purity of any cipher depends on truthfulness. One must be truthful enough not to mistake it for embodied reality.

Man dwells in the realm of ciphers from the day he starts thinking, but it is only when his vision expands that he purifies this realm of ciphers.¹

This realm of ciphers is not a series of signs-for signs denote something which can be said, seen or known directly. There are modes of ciphers. Ciphers mean a language that is understood in ciphers alone that does not denote something else and whose speaking subject is unknown, unknowable and untraceable. They can be interpreted, but only partially, their meaning remains inexplicable. Anything can act as a cipher whether it be real or a product of imagination. Ciphers are sought in mythological, ritual, poetic and artistic tradition as well as in philosophy.²

¹ Ibid p : 93.
² Jaspers : philosophical faith and Revelation p : 123.
Art and poetry are the fountain head of the most splendid and purest cipher language. They lift us out of barbarism and make us human. The great poets, Dante and Shakespeare, manifest ciphers through their poetry which fascinates us because they mean no such embodiment as a fixed cult does in its object of faith. Poetry delights us in forms and figures because we enjoy a lack of commitment and the appearance of all possibilities of life, the good as well as the evil.

Ciphers cannot be arranged in a particular order because any attempt to infix them would diminish them. To quote Jaspers "to stay alive, they must remain suspended. Talking in ciphers we are philosophically truth only as long as we keep them in this suspension." As far as their interpretation goes, they never mean what we seek, sense or experience in them. Hence our effort to transcend penetrate or ascend to the height fails. Thus speechlessness is the limit of interpretation: it culminates in silence. Yet this silence is achieved not by abstaining from thought and speech but to carry them to extremes where they make us fall into taciturnity.¹

The cipher world is not a harmonious realm, but a struggle is waged for the purity of ciphers against their realization in myths and revelations. To be more explicit, it a struggle for the reality of Transcendence against its distortion: it is fought for its preservation against its confusion.

The second struggle is waged in ciphers against other ciphers and does not emerge till the first, for the purity of cipher world has been won. This struggle begins when ciphers evoke an existential response. Some ciphers will envision our path in life, while others may be repudiated for seducing us. Some ciphers may fascinate us whereas others may instil a feeling of rebellion in us. It is also possible that they may not create an impact upon us at all. In this struggle of ciphers, it is the truth of individual cipher which is at stake its import and its proximity to the ground of Transcendence.

A silent struggle ensues in our soul unknowingly even unconsciously in the way we live with the ciphers. We may meet them casually or impressed by them or turn them down—the crux is always the struggle for

the adoption of what guides us. This determines our attitude towards them all and our association with them.\textsuperscript{1} We cannot explicitly explain this core or pervasive principle because we have no pivotal point where all things are apprehended and where every thing in its place is true and real.

Ciphers have their weight in an ascending order. First they are manifested in aestheticism as convey multiple meanings. Then we feel their impact and partake of them. Finally they illuminate Existenz in real situations. There is no objective neutral understanding of ciphers.\textsuperscript{2} The interpreter either aims at a rational, psychological or sociological explanation of them or at a personal experience of them by living in them. Both ways are distinguished in principle and are not distinct in actual interpretation. What begins as an objective observation in myths and symbols can in fact become a form of adoption.\textsuperscript{3}

The cipher realm that speaks to the individual may be scant and arid or rich and abundant. The struggle that takes place in this realm is for the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Jaspers : philosophical faith and Revelation p : 127.
  \item Ibid p : 119.
  \item Ibid p : 117.
\end{itemize}
achievement of truth and the most conspicuous is the struggle for truth itself. The cipher struggle continues even if we are not conscious of it or ignore it as trivial. Sometimes we may forget it, and often it makes us self conscious. This struggle keeps our mind open, urges communication and removes the bars to our understanding. Mutual understanding in ciphers means communication in contact with Transcendence. It allows the most profound ties and the most strange antagonism. Men who feel an affinity with Transcendence are still forced to struggle for the purity of the ciphers. It is the case when there is a rift between men but they still want to understand each other, not in this or that language, but in the whole motion of the cipher world.

In a critique of Jaspers’ concept of Transcendence, Holm has rightly pointed out that Jaspers doesn’t give an anthropomorphic concept of God. But he puts up the question whether cipher is only real and God merely a fictitious notion. He finds it difficult to separate reality from symbolism in Jaspers’ philosophy. Holm further inquires whether God is to be understood ontologically or only axiologically. He himself answers this
query by saying that Jaspers has not raised these issues sharply and he would reject these possibilities. Jaspers himself affirms that with this last statement Holm has understood him perfectly well.¹

Jaspers points out that Pfeiffer has expressed this objection most beautifully. He asks whether it is presumptuous on our part to speak of God at all. Lichtigfeld too recognizes in Jaspers thinking the Biblical idea of an unpictured God².

Jaspers elucidates his position by saying that though one finds a clue to Transcendence in ciphers, yet this reality is not present in any cipher or myth³. When Jaspers speaks of demythification he does not mean the interpretation of mythical content but rather a going beyond all myths. Thus it is a reality which is beyond all myths and thinking though experienced only in myths and thoughts⁴.

¹. Reply to may crities in "The philosophy of Jaspers ed. by Schilpp p : 781.
². Ibid p : 783.
³. Reply to may crities in "The philosophy of Jaspers ed. by Schilpp p : 783.
⁴. Ibid p : 782-83.

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VI

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

A modest attempt to elucidate Existenz in the boundary situations necessitates a critical analysis of both Existenz and boundary situations. But before we could do it, let us hurriedly examine the points of criticism raised against Jaspers' philosophy in general.

Mr. Samay in his book "Reason Revisited" has levelled the charge against Jaspers that his philosophical system is positionless. Jaspers does not attempt a massive system that claims universal validity. Such a kind of modesty may be genuine and should not end the philosophical quest itself.¹

Jaspers himself says that this is a deliberate attempt on his part because he does not want imprison the reader to be tethered to definite positions. He would like him to retain an order of possibilities whence to choose a definite standpoint on his own.²

Jaspers goes on to say that he does not offer his system of thinking as

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2. Reply to may critics in "The philosophy of Jaspers ed. by Schilpp p : 833-34.
the only true one but he only tries to work out ideas. These ideas do not leave everything in suspense: there is implicit in it a sort of decision. He invites the reader to an analogous decision, namely, to come to oneself as Existenz.¹

Baumgarten maintains that Jaspers' philosophy revolves round a fixed centre. It is Jaspers' contention that his thought moves round something which at the centre implies guidance. From this follows well-defined decisions which are not supposed to resolve into abstract formulas. His thought, therefore contains both complete tolerance and unconditional determination.²

Henning says that in Jaspers, emphasis falls more on striving than on its content, more on potentiality than on stability, more on freedom than on obedience, more on the future than on the past.³

As regards Jaspers' philosophy it has been pointed out that if we sift his terminology we find that what he has to say is basically very simple

1. Ibid p : 829.
Even so it is an arduous undertaking to penetrate through the dense vocabulary in which his thought is expressed. Moreover, it is only when we take off layer after layer of this vocabulary that we are able to make some headway with his thought and grasp its full content.

It may be maintained that Jaspers' existentialism is a philosophy of Becoming rather than of Being. It is thus anti-intellectualistic and voluntaristic. Like many German thinkers, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Jaspers prizes more the 'elan' of seeking and striving rather than of possession. The critics of Jaspers in their argument point out that Jaspers' philosophizing is not based on logical reasoning. Jaspers has a good reason to do so for the suspension of logic must give way to philosophical faith. Taking the boundary situations one by one we find that he does not round them off by way of logical unity, nor does he find a rational coherence in them. They are all harmonized when they are merged into Transcendence.

Not only the boundary situations but all existential concepts like

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freedom, communication, historicity etc. sink in to Transcendence.

As far as the concept of freedom is concerned, Jaspers concludes by saying that freedom assumes meaning only in its relation to Transcendence. In other words freedom is a gift from Transcendence. It is bestowed upon us from above. So freedom coupled with necessity is the essence of freedom.

Historicity, too, finds its culmination in the ciphers because they refer to God's emergence in to the world at one particular place and time. Ciphers are supposed to give us access to the interposed and revealed reality. They mark a fictitious point where the reality of Transcendence and spatial temporal reality are to coincide. Such an inter position is superfluous for Transcendence is still hidden from us.¹ One must make a distinction between ciphers, words, writings which are tied to the revealed reality and ciphers, words, writings which are the work of man. Those who are witness to this revealed reality put a stamp on the authority of this reality but declare the process of revelation come to a close.²

² Ibid p : 110.
words revelation is concerned with time with the particular instant when
God entered into the world. To believers revelation is a reality in so far
as God is a historic phenomenon in the world of objective fact.

Communication too consummates in its link to Transcendence.
According to Jaspers communication with the deity is superior to
communication with man. Although in the literal sense there is no
communication between Transcendence and Existenz, yet one is assured
of His presence in one’s will to communicate with one’s neighbour. Such
communication is a kind of holy communion and divine service. To speak
with Franz Kafka “This relationship to our neighbour is the relation of
prayer.”

According to Jaspers love finds its fulfilment in Transcendence. He
sees in love the human endeavour for union with God through communi-
cation with man. This concept was first hinted at by Plato who found its
Christian version in Augustine and then Kierkegaard confirmed it. 1

1. Kaufmann F: A philosophy of communication in the philosophy of Jaspers ed. by
   Schilpp P.A. p : 223.
Although it is through love that God can be experienced, God is not love. It is only by way of a symbol that one can speak of him as love.

As far as his procedural analysis goes Jaspers insists and rightly so that thinking proceeds from experience.¹ In the boundary situation he pursues the same line of thought. As regards death he explains it on an empirical basis saying that it is an objective fact, and that it is inevitable. Likewise, we come across, on the one hand, the responses of the common man and on the other the existential answer of a truly Existenz being.

If we make an attempt at elucidation of existence, we may employ the negative method. We would point out what existence is not. According to Jaspers existence is not something given, present and positive.² It is something which is created, moulded and shaped. The affirmation that existence is both what is, and itself makes what is poses a serious problem for us. How can one think of something that is its own cause and

2. Ibid p : 142.
effect, donor and indebtor at the same time.\textsuperscript{1} We may meet this objection by saying that existence is the reservoir of immense potentialities and existence has a lot of plasticity in it: thus it can always be fashioned cultivated and refined.

Existence is absolutely dissimilar to things in the world. The individuality of things consists in their each being a member of a class of things and they can be known through class concepts. Existence is not an illustrative case of a class and hence cannot be known thus: it can only be elucidated.\textsuperscript{2}

According to Jaspers in speaking of existence we use concepts like temporality and eternity simultaneously. Existence has consciousness of both being in time and being above it: Jaspers calls this form of consciousness ‘historical’.

Similarly solitude and communication refer equally to existence. One learns of solitude only when one encounters the other in communication

\begin{itemize}
  \item[1.] Samay S p: 142.
  \item[2.] Ibid p: 143.
\end{itemize}
and one enters into communication only as a solitary being.¹ The theme of communication tempers the isolation of existence and thus through the concept of communication the autocreation of the individual is expanded into a reciprocal creation.

The solidarity of a person no longer appears as an endeavour of a lonely person facing a hostile world but a gift and a blessing received from a friend who inspires authenticity in oneself while receiving the same through him. This relationship protects the participants against being, impersonalized at each others’ expense. Instead of making every effort to keep the other as an object, communicative existence challenges the other person to come out with the best in him. Instead of passing on and receiving general in formation, both the combatants speak in their own person and express their own selves. Existential communication is not a mere utterance in public but a revelation and a sharing.²

Samay expresses it thus, "The language that serves such an existential

¹. Ibid p : 156-57.
². Samay S p : 151.
dialogue cannot be a neutral meeting ground, a linguistic no man’s land where nameless opponents discuss some abstract issue but rather must be the very battle-field of a ‘loving struggle’ where two persons meet face to face not to vanquish but to liberate each other.”

Whereas ordinary communication sink differences between the combatants, existential communication shows a preference for the unique personal and particular aspects of communication and puts a premium on self expression.

Existential communication is the delicate hyphen which both links and separates the selves who meet there. That is why loving struggle is the permanent situation of existential communication: love seems to unite, while struggle separates and loving struggle maintains this unity in separation.  

According to Jaspers existence has an antinomical structure. It is asserted that what has positive worth in its has a negative aspect too.

2. Samay S p: 151.
One is released from the negative side only at the price of losing the positive one. The antinomical structure of existence implies its fragile, brittle nature. In choosing a particular course of action one weighs the different possibilities and favours that which promises optimum results.

Hartmann expresses a similar view when he says that if we observe the table of values we find a contradiction in them. For example, one who considers justice above love gives preference to justice although the two values justice and love are not opposed to each other. Every such decision favours only one side not both at the same time. Hence it is both a fulfilment and a violation of the valuational scheme.¹

According to Jaspers a sort of tension is generated when one has to choose between mere existence and Existence. This also takes the form of an antinomy. One way of evading the situation is to adopt the attitude of a spectator who merely beholds life from a high pedestal instead of living it through himself. He is fascinated by the alternative courses open to him and refrains from making a genuine choice.

The other way of evasion is to undermine one of the terms of the antinomy by illuminating the other. In so doing one suppresses the precarious demand of the concrete situation.

A boundary situation is expressed in an antinomy, too. Man as a mortal, suffering and sinful being faces the challenge whether to succumb to these situations or to stare at them undauntingly. The experience of the boundary situation however makes us desperate and lonely. Such a feeling is associated with man's need for Transcendence. For it is precisely within this physical domain that man apprehends the absolute presence of Transcendence. Boundary situations are thus merged in to Transcendence. In other words, it provides the vantage point from which to look at these situations.

We begin with death. From the experience of death which is unique and single (happens only once) we infer the power of one God.\(^1\) As death never recurs and doesn't take place in a similar way, so the experience of

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Gods' presence is unique and is peculiar to each individual. Moreover, the singularity of factual death is revealed in potential death. Death as viewed by us is something far-fetched and beyond our comprehension. It is felt close when it is encountered as the specific death of a specific individual. For this reason along with death, we speak simultaneously of possible death. It is this immanent death which points towards the beyond himself of man's being.¹

Jaspers says that Kunz's analysis of the concept of death is open to question. Jaspers points out that the certainty of death as based upon the experience it death is subject to criticism. The prospect of death which is foreshadowed in such psychological states as conditions of illness, one's own constitution and the concrete situations in which one is placed seems inevitable. It may be pointed out that there is certainly no fact which is common to all human beings. Moreover, there is a contradiction in saying that one does not believe in one's own death even though one is aware by experience of its occurrence. One is so much immersed in

being alive that at the conscious level one does not realize death even though one affirms it at the intellectual level.¹

The second argument Kunz offers must also be examined. The presence of potential death within man as the source of the idea of Being. One is pressed by the need to question, search and discover the origination and destination of one's being. By this idea of derivation Kunz seems to mould the very old philosophical problem of being and Nothingness.²

Summing up, we may hold that death no doubt finishes off life but the boundary situation of death makes us face the pertinent question whether one has lived an abundant and rich life or not. It may also be added that Jaspers stands for the acceptance of death without any furtherance of life in the next world. This is so because he categorically rejects the notion of immortality.

Immortality, as Jaspers understands it, is not a metaphysical certainty that belongs to the future, it is immanent in being. When one thinks of

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immortality one does it in concrete terms. Jaspers, however, insists that
it must be apprehended symbolically by way of a cipher. What follows
from it is that we must face death as a boundary and as far as immortality
is concerned it is shrouded by a grim unknowability.

Rejecting immortality, Jaspers goes on to affirm the authenticity of
existence. Thus in favour of an elevated Existenz, one may disdain
existence. Hence in moments of exaltation, like an act commitment in
view of a heroic deed or at the point of a great venture, man embraces
death and finds dying easy. Death is thus counterpoised to existential
non-being. Death is also encountered by the individual within the
specificity of the historic character of each moment. In other words it is
the transient moment that announces death. Pause and duration are the
possible symbols of eternity.

One is filled with false optimism when one is blind to eternity, talks
away death and trusts in reason. True optimism, on the other hand, makes
us look into the abyss of reality.¹

¹. Reply to may critics p : 831-32.

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The notion of suffering is next to death in Jaspers' thought. One finds a clue to this concept in Jaspers' voluminous book "The Great Philosophers". Here Buddha is described as posing the three pertinent questions: what is suffering? Whence does it come how can it be overcome? He prescribes the path which leads to redemption from suffering. In the same book Jesus case is also cited: he had to undergo terrible suffering. But he did not suffer passively. He acted in such a way that his suffering should be a goad to men.

Jaspers, in another of his major works "philosophical faith and Revelation" clinches the issue. He envisages the problem of evil from two angles. According to Jaspers all evil is rooted in the very nature of things. All entities are potentially perfect but actually imperfect. They are limited and unfinished. Furthermore, all entities are antithetical. Such an antithesis is expressed in terms of two opposed powers. In the physical world it exists as light and darkness, in society as constructive and destructive elements and in action as good and evil. Evil from a different

angle is mere nonbeing. It is simply lack or omission of good.¹

Evil, as a matter of fact, calls for a basic distinction to be made between physical suffering and moral evil. One lies in nature, the other in man. The former springs from necessity, the latter from freedom. To take a few examples one may say that man is assailed by physical ills and sufferings, like the ailments which not only shatter human existence but also destroy human physique. There are congenital defects and abnormalities. There is suffering which man entails upon himself. And, moreover there is misery and pain caused by servitude. There is deterioration caused by poverty and starvation. Thus there is no limit to human suffering, true there are various degrees of suffering but suffering, nevertheless, is an inevitable accompaniment of life. No one is relieved of it fully. Moreover, everyone is supposed to bear his burden alone.

According to Jaspers there is dysteleology manifested in the disaster, ruin and misery of life but there is still the mysterious teleology exhibited

in the glory and beauty of life. Thus, instead of ignoring and reducing pain and suffering, one should illuminate the other aspect of reality. One may highlight the poise, equilibrium and coherence which is no less apparent.

The antithesis between good and evil is symbolised by Jaspers as ‘Law of the day’ and Passion for the Night’. The former signifies reason, stability, even fidelity and the latter aims at destruction. It is an embodiment of defiance. Jaspers also speaks of genius and demon which refer to the humane and rebellious aspects of human beings. Genius is the inherent goodness latent in man and demon is the passionate side of his nature. Hence genius and demon stand for the godly and satanic elements of human nature. Thus damnation and grace run a parallel course in Jaspers’ thought.

After suffering and death, the third boundary situation is guilt. The moral wrong lies in the will and action of the human beings and the metaphysical wrong in the ground of one’s being. In other words, one is

guilty through the very fact of being finite. To accept oneself thus is to choose to be guilty. Thus guilt lies at the root of freedom.

This confusion between guilt and finitude is supposed to be one of the serious problems of existentialist philosophy. Christianity does not regard guilt as one of the constituents of existence. Thus finitude appears as an ontological concept and guilt as an ethical concept. It is the Christian belief that the death of Jesus on the cross is an atonement of the sins of mankind which is confirmed by faith.

So far as Jaspers is concerned he is opposed to the Christian concept which covers up guilt. According to him, no one can atone for the other’s sins and no one is answerable for it. He is opposed to redemption of which man in his faith is certain and goes on sinning shamefacedly because of this faith. Jaspers’ concept of guilt is certainly distinct from Christian sense of sin. It does not envisage any forgiveness, nor does one emerge as a

happy well-integrated and innocent being.\textsuperscript{1} Guilt, in the Jasperian sense, leads to foundering, but to achieve authenticity one must insist on recognizing the full amount of wrong that has been done. The only purity one can have in this world is to take up guilt and responsibility with an active conscience.

Agreed that guilt cannot be eradicated but it can certainly be condoned by that most wonderful act of communication which is called good will. Forgiveness is a matter of understanding between two human beings. It is born of love and it clears all malice leaving only the good will to prevail. Thus guilt is counter-poised by good will.

The fourth boundary situation is struggle. According to Jaspers to exist and to struggle are one and the same thing. No matter how passively one resists and whatever peaceful and fair means one uses in this respect, the struggle always comes to an end in the subsistence of one participant and the deprivation of another, the office and rank of one and the unemployment

\textsuperscript{1} Ricoeur P : Relation of philosophy to Religion in The philosophy of Jaspers ed. by Schilpp p : 633.
of the other. Hence a clash is bound to take place between the legitimate claims of two persons.

There are some people who are more active than others. They aspire to grow and develop more rapidly. They struggle in a harmonious way using peaceful measures or express themselves in an open antagonism using all sorts of ingenious means, fraud treachery perjury. But, says Jaspers, "If the use of force does not end with the destruction of one side it will buttress a social relationship in which the victor has gained power and the vanquished preferring to stay alive has taken it upon himself to serve and to be ruled."

Moreover, the practical affairs of everyday life imperil life and health. It is asserted that population increases so enormously that however abundantly we enlarge our food supply scarcity will always be there. The vast disparities among human beings cannot be defined so that a distribution of tasks and labour according to these differences, is not feasible.

Indisputably every individual faces marginal situations where the

determining element is not order but violent force. And one unscrupulously puts the other on the altar in order to establish his own solidarity.

Besides, a correct organization of human existence would not do even if it were guided by a thorough insight. A penetrating gaze into the heart of the matter will show up more intricacies. They yield nothing but the instinct for power, desire, dominance, and the exercise of force open or concealed. Hence an accurate rational arrangement is only provisional and of limited value.

Jaspers was not certainly oblivious of the fact that existence no doubt depends on struggle, force or power but it depends on cooperation, compromise and understanding as well. In the first instance we depend on our parents' ministration. We owe to them guidance and training. To be sure we see in everyday life place for all-peace, agreement, harmony - any way they are necessary for existence itself. Furthermore, freedom, justice, love, friendship and fidelity are valuable words for us. Agreed that waste, disintegration, chaos and anarchy are abundantly found in life, but life is also not wanting in coherence, cohesion and harmony

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either. Struggle, on the empirical level, is perhaps not a new concept.
But struggle for the achievement of one’s authentic existence which is
termed as loving struggle is a unique concept of Jaspers. Jaspers has
juxtaposed struggle for material expansion with struggle which is waged
for our noble self. In other words, this violent struggle for survival is
superseded by a striving which is for a much higher purpose, that is, for
the elevation of one’s self. The spirit belongs to the same category. There
is much enthusiasm on both sides. But whereas the struggle for physical
survival involves selfishness, meanness, brutality and egoism, the loving
struggle is characterized by generosity, tenderness, concern and care. The
ethical dimension of Jasper’s thought lies here.

Loving struggle does not aim at achieving superiority power or victory
over the other. Both win or lose together. Defeat lies in avoiding the
situations of crisis which demands the exercise of one’s freedom and that
of the other. The use of force including intellectual superiority or the
power of suggestion puts the loving struggle to an end.¹ It is so because

the other person is not an enemy to be vanquished with force or deceit. It flourishes in total non-violence. Jaspers is worth quoting here, “If the technical arsenals of the combatants differ, if one is more knowledgeable or more intelligent than the other, has a better memory, or is less prone to fatigue, both will equalize the level by handicapping themselves.”

Loving struggle requires each participant to be strict to himself. It intensifies and highlights the differences between one existence and another instead of alleviating and concealing them. It is a friendly emulation in the pursuit of a common goal carried on by a common consent in which each individual pours out his whole wealth before the other, or as Jaspers puts is “All cards are shown”.

Allen illustrates this point by citing the example of two scientists working on the same problem. Neither of them wishes to excel the other, but only to find a solution. One freely passes on his discoveries to the
other, while openly criticizing his fellow’s work. Generosity and helpfullness is evident in their attitude to each other, and if a solution is to be found it will belong to both.¹

The ardent striving is suspicious of all sentimentality, pity and complacency.² It is not to be understood as a contest in which one is over-indulgent, uncritical and compensates for his fellows infirmities. In this relationship one respects and coaxes his counter-part, but also questions and challenges him. As the development of the self takes place in a complementary way both Existenzes share each other’s support and favour as well as censure and resistance.³

Loving struggle happens to be a war of ideals. There is collision in the sphere of religion and morality. There is bound to be a clash between atheism and religious beliefs. As far as morality is concerned it is just possible that two persons may have different criteria for evaluating the

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same action. Furthermore, any one prizing generosity as the highest value in life struggles with his money-minded counter-part. There is certainly a conflict between an honest and a corrupt person.

There is as a matter of fact, a whole net work of relationships in which this struggle is manifested. The strength of the struggle varies in the different situations. We meet as master and servant, as teacher and pupil, as father and son etc. In all these cases the distribution of power is very disproportionate. There is therefore apparently less tension in these cases. It is more glaring in the case of two partners, two brothers, husband and wife etc.

Jaspers has high-lighted the nature of man with perfect acumen. But what he proposes is to spurn the baser self for the cultivation of his noble self. The energy of the man of enterprise is diverted to the highspirited man for the growth of finer feelings and for engendering such a state when all pride, ambition and envy are set aside and man emerges as a self-composed, self sustained and harmonious being. This form of existence is in close consonance to the Sufi way of life. The two fold
pillar of Islam can be taken as a combination of the stand points of the
fallen and the unfallen man, and the Sufi is ready to move from one to
the other.¹ The perfect balance of the primordial soul depends on the
harmonious union of the inner and outer segments of human personality.

Every form of mysticism begins with a search for the primordial state
since this state means human perfection which is the only basis for the
spiritual ascent. What distinguishes Islamic mysticism from other forms
of mysticism is that it proposes an ideal to man.²

According to Islam perfection is a synthesis of the Qualities of
Majesty and beauty and Sufism advocates embracing of these Divine
qualities. This amounts to stripping the soul of the limitations of the
fallen man, the habits and prejudices which have become second nature
to him and appropriating the characteristics of man's primordial nature
which was made in the image of God.³.

¹ Lings M : What is Sufism p : 76.
² Lings M : What is Sufism p : 56.
³ Lings M : p : 18.
As far as an image of the primordial man is concerned, the seal of Solomon with its triangles seems to point in opposite directions the pull of the outer world is balanced by the pull of the heart. It is significant to note that the Prophet of Islam represents the harmonious resolution of the opposites. The prophet called the war against the soul as the 'Greater holy war'. The former implies fighting against the rebellious elements of the soul.

The sufi aims both at the purity of heart and purity of action. Moreover, Sufism implies denying the soul physical pleasures. It may be added that Sufism teaches man how to purify one's self, improve one's morals and build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain spiritual bliss.

As far as the method of the Sufis is concerned it aims at the mortification of self and liberation from baser passions. The sufi term fana (extinction) and Baqa (subsistence) refer to the self as being annihilated and this enables it to subsist. Jaspers comes very close to the ideal of Sufism

when he assumes that man in his authenticity is God Himself.

Thus we find that elucidation of Existenz can best be undertaken in relation to morality. The moral dilemma that concerns one as possible Existenz is whether to preserve one's identity, become firmly rooted to one's historical ground and thus gain authenticity, or to sacrifice one's integrity, refuse to make commitments, fail to remain loyal and true and ignore Existenz.

Existenz is constantly confronted by the choice of being and non-being. Consciousness of freedom is not a matter of inference but of experience, and arguments of freedom do not prove but rather affirm and assure.¹ Significantly it is the highest moral decision of the individual that matters, for morality is rooted not in eternal scale of values nor in the moral practices of a given society.² It is the instant of choice, of anxious venture and of responsibility that has the stamp of authenticity.³

The strong and self-reliant individual who is more than a creature of impulse is forced to make his own decision and he is guided by a conscience illumined by accurate knowledge of his situation. Jaspers, however, believes that when we trace conscience to its source, we come across a force that is beyond conscience. Paradoxically, it is when one is most free that one is most bound and dependent. Actions that one regards as spontaneous stem from a source which is beyond one's control and comprehension. Jaspers inquires whether this voice of conscience is the voice of God. This makes an appeal to one's empirical existence and Jaspers speaks of a basic core in man which may be invoked.

The conscientious individual maintains autonomy, honesty and veracity in view of the boundary situations as well. He makes use of discretion, faces the boundary situations courageously and repudiates mundane existence in favour of a genuine existence. He accepts death, agony and sin as permeable aspects of life. For moral growth each

1. Ibid : p : 176-77.

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individual existence struggles with his fellow being. It is an appeal an
awakening and a continued process. Each raises pressing questions and
makes demands but respect is implicit in the struggle and affirmation in
this critical questioning.¹ In this struggle for truth a basic solidarity is
pre-supposed. This in its turn refers to mutual solicitude and anxiety which
are the forms of struggle and are manifested in it.

What is here described is a precious and extremely rare experience
which Jaspers felt with his brother-in-law Ernst Mayer, with his student
friend Hannah Arendt and which is achieved fully with his wife Gertrude
Mayer.²

In conclusion one may hold that if we assess these situations honestly
we find that Jaspers does not give just a negative picture. Boundary
situation is both a shattering one and a liberating one³. Like Sartre who
says that “one is condemned to be free” one may say that one is
condemned to live and live thus-to face death, to be doomed to suffer and


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compelled to take upon oneself whatever guilt falls upon one as one's lot.

Boundary situations bring us to the edge of a precipice where one experiences nothingness or God. In other words it is in the boundary situations that we encounter Transcendence. According to Jaspers Transcendence cannot be defined by any predicate, objectified by any representation or achieved by any inference, although all categories are applied as means of saying that it is not a quality or quantity, not a relation or ground, not one or many, not being or nothingness. Jaspers says on the concluding page of his 'Philosophie' that it is enough that God is, no matter if we do not know His nature.

Jaspers however doubts whether the tragic perplexity of our existence can be answered by a leap of faith. It is not possible to unite the way of philosophical vision and the way of prayer and worship in a single life. Again we come to the boundary and take one path or the other.

3. Ibid : p : 188.
Those going one way or the other are revered each by the other but there is no final synthesis, no ultimate fusion, no one way that can clear all differences. Jaspers message is that whatever course we may take one must struggle and should strive vigorously and this effort brings its own reward.
APPENDIX : JASPERS AND THE GLOBAL SITUATION

It will not be presumptuous on my part if an overall assessment of Jaspers' thought is attempted. To begin with, Jaspers is not a popular philosopher. But greatness should not be weighed in terms of success or popularity. His style is intricate and his thought difficult to grasp. He has no following and no isms. According to Walter Kaufmann he didn't exercise any influence on German philosophers, and what is true of philosophical circles holds true of the whole Western canon. Jaspers drew little attention in Europe and was not appreciated in America either. In Japan, on the contrary, numerous monographs were published on Jaspers and according to Fumio Hashimoto many of his works were widely read by Japanese students. Hashimoto thinks, that Jaspers' thought is a genuine East-West interaction which touches the heart of the Orientals.

The reasons for Jaspers' unpopularity in the West are multiple. Some critics think that it may only be a matter of arbitrariness on the part of (197)
the lovers of philosophy. Others regard it as historical accident of a few years that it is Heidegger and not Jaspers who is considered the founder of twentieth century existential philosophy. While these may be superficial reasons for his unpopularity, the genuine reason may be that he got separated from the idealist and rationalist tradition and also alienated himself from the Western stream of philosophizing which begins with Aristotle and Hegel and as Jaspers himself says ends up with Heidegger and Sartre. Jasper belongs to the tribe of exceptional figures of philosophy. Heraclitus, St. Augustine, Geordano Bruno, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. In the preceding pages I have pointed out that in spite of his obscurity and unpopularity Jaspers is a great philosopher from whom emanate valuable philosophical insights.

Jaspers' foremost contribution to existentialist philosophy is his concept of the boundary situation the kind of situation in which the motives and values that govern an individual's life are explicitly brought

philosopher as an active participant in the administration of a great university, devoted to the free pursuit of truth, as the husband of a Jewish wife whom he married in 1910, he was placed, from 1933 to 1945, in the second boundary situation of his life.

Germans under Hitler lived at a boundary and all of us do so indirectly. The total threat to freedom is with us all the time. Not only that, the total threat to life itself, in the nuclear age, has been likewise magnified.\(^1\)

Jaspers, in his book "The future of mankind", talks about the changed military situation. Both Russia and America, the two great world powers, with large stock of atom bombs can destroy each other's cities and industrial centres with prompt military action.\(^2\) Although America and Russia are spending huge amounts of money to produce nuclear weapons, for both are trying to achieve military superiority yet a world war is for the time being impossible to break out. It is so because if any

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1. Ibid p: 82-83.
of the big powers uses the atom bomb which is likely to produce an immediate retaliation both sides might be destroyed. Geographically speaking, Europe and America are in a more precarious position than Russia because their population is concentrated in big cities and they have dense industrial areas. Thus in view of the new armament techniques, world strategy has turned to global thinking and the whole world has become one battlefield. We can only surmise as to what is going on in the strategic brains of Russia and America.¹

It is a consequence of world strategic position that all military planning of small nations depends upon the great powers. Whether they take sides or practise neutrality the small countries fight only with their connivance and help and under their partial protection. Politics has a dual aspect: there are the two super-powers and the interests of the small nations depend on them. The latter aspire after status, independence, power and a chance to form new states.² Both great powers have their own ends to serve; they want to maintain and extend their area of

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¹ Jaspers: Future of mankind 60-61.
influence in the world. The present situation arises from the tension between the "impossibility" of an atomic world war and the danger which threatens the small nations that the impossible might happen. When the tension is heightened and the world war seems inevitable both super-powers call for a ceasefire.

In 1948 when Israelis defended their new state against attacks from all sides and was about to win the war, there was a threat of aerial bombardment by the British, it did not lead to peace which follows upon a victorious war but only to an armistice. In the Korean and Indonesian wars it was again an armistice and not the achievement of total or absolute peace. "Armistice" is the hall mark of this new politics.¹

Another situation which Jaspers' portrays is the free world versus totalitarianism. It is not enough to think in terms of world government: such a world government requires a world parliament, a world police, a world currency etc. This may ensure peace but may not prevent the most terrible kind of despotism.²

² Ibid p: 96.
Peace lies perhaps in the concept of confederation: confederation can be made effective with freedom of speech.\textsuperscript{1} Totalitarianism means coercion and terroristic subjection. In a totalitarian state one faces situations where imprisonment, deportation and execution by police action without public trial follow automatically. Thus all life is functionalized.\textsuperscript{2}

The free world encourages quick thinking, new scientific discoveries, and provides ample scope for free and spontaneous action in every field of life. It allows free discussion and competition and stimulates expression of the inherent potencies of the individuals.

The totalitarian world is weak internally and strong only externally. At home it can maintain its rule by terror, but externally it forms organizations with planned and directed totalitarian methods.

The free world is strong internally though weak on the external front. Its strength lies in the free consent and cooperation of its people. It is weak externally because the free states are not united and any attack from

\textsuperscript{1} Jaspers: Future of mankind p: 97.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid p: 105.
outside may discover the free world vulnerable because it is not united, armed and ready for war.¹

There is a demand all over the world to put an end to H-bomb tests. If totalitarianism succeeds, it will mean the termination of all life, and the H-Bomb test may result in the death of thousands of human beings from bone cancer or the birth of thousands of monsters. One has to choose the lesser evil.²

The weight of the argument is shifted to the side of totalitarianism when it is a question of the preservation of human life. In other words, if human life is not to be jeopardized nuclear war must be prevented though one may have to surrender to totalitarianism.

From the humanistic point of view one must think in terms of human life and not of the destruction of man's potentialities. But there is another side to it and that is, man prefers death to slavery. He has risked his life for freedom and has come out with such out bursts, "Give me liberty or give me death".

Seen from a different perspective a totalitarian state would use the atom bomb over which it exercises some kind of control. It will use it in limited areas and without imperilling the life of men everywhere.

In all these arguments for and against totalitarianism and the threat of atom bomb, it must be kept in mind that both sides take into account the final risk that does not really exist. We can envisage neither total extinction of mankind by the super bombs nor complete suppression of freedom under totalitarian rule.

In the same book Jaspers views at all major problems-colonialism, nationalism, the united Nation and so on with immense clarity, honesty and complete lack of blind passion. Take for example colonialism. Europe upheld a common ethos, a sense of community in the biblical sense as well as a legal order. Outside Europe there were unclaimed lands which could be occupied by anyone who wished and dared to do so.

This colonialization was marked by the exercise of greed, ruthlessness

1. Ibid p: 166-7.
and tyranny inflicted on all the peoples on Earth. They were at peace in Europe, but outside Europe they fought battles without beginning or end. A significant feature of this colonial age was the fact that Europeans did not regard non-Europeans as human beings like themselves. They denied them all rights and they were subjected to an utmost degree of exploitation. No authority with political power could prevent Europeans from forcing these people to do their bidding or alternatively being killed. This colonial process extended over four centuries resulted in hatred of Europeans by all other nations.

It is a moot question why in Asia “nationalism” is a much stronger force than in Europe. “Nationalism” of the Asian nations is based on a real racial distinction between them and the Westerners. It is rooted in their culture because Indians, Chinese and Japanese are spiritually much closer to each other. Finally, the ideology of nationalism springs from a feeling of inferiority in the reluctant acquisition of Western technology and thought combined with feelings of superiority apropos their religious and philosophical way of life.

According to Jaspers one has to accept the fact that the age of colonialism has come to an end. Europe's rule of the world is almost ended, her world superiority shattered and is now a thing of the past and her future is seriously imperilled.¹ The technological Age, with its invention of the American atom bomb is really the collective endeavour of European immigrants from Germany, Italy and Hungary. It no longer rests in the hands of a few privileged nations.²

Agreed that colonial powers have had their own achievements - British in India, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Germans in the African colonies and in chinese Kiao chou but the fact remains that they were not motivated by the furtherance of the native peoples interests. Furthermore, to achieve world peace and to lessen the hatred which more than half the world bears towards the West, it is necessary to accept honestly that colonialism is bound to wither away.³

¹ Jaspers: Future of mankind p: 70.
² Ibid p: 72.
³ Jaspers: Future of mankind p: 77-78.
Taking up the issue of the United Nations shows Jaspers' deep interest and involvement in the relevant fact. He thinks that the principles mentioned in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter are fine. They relate to the preservation of human rights, maintenance of the dignity and worth of human beings, equality of men and women and of all nations whether they be large or small.

The charter takes into account certain recommendations and has less to do with the actions of the U.N.O. The Security council requires seven out of eleven votes and among the seven, five are in the hands of the permanent members-China, France, Russia, Great Britian and United States. in other words they alone enjoy the Veto power.¹

According to the charter any dispute is to be solved by negotiation, inquiry and mediation and if sanctions are put they will not involve the use of armed force.

Resolutions of the United Nations are unfortunately not always carried out. The resolution against Egyptian involvement in Israel's use

1. Ibid p: 142.
of the Suez Canal was not enforced by the U.N. On the otherhand when Americans came to the aid of the south Koreans, it was America’s decision which was upheld and legalized by the U.N.

The U.N. claims that it has respect for law and that it upholds the ideal of justice. But this is a piece of sheer propaganda and what they care about is world opinion. The U.N. merely toys with the concept of law and justice. The fact of the case is that undesirable facts are concealed, unwanted questions are ignored and harsh realities covered up cleverly and unashamedly

Thus in the pages of the “Future of Mankind” we find reflected the energy of Jaspers' philosophical thinking. Given concrete moral issue, or faced with the intellectual implications of a particular boundary situation, Jaspers integrity and the rigour and incisiveness of his power of argumentation as well as his precision and lucidity rightly evoke one’s admiration and respect.

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