



**From the World to Subjectivity**  
**Expression and World in Jaspers' *General Psychopathology***

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**Abstract:** The essay reviews Karl Jaspers' use of the concepts "corporeality" and "world" in his *General Psychopathology*, and how these concepts evolve on a philosophical and psychological level. Both concepts offer a way to solve Jaspers' theorem on the incomprehensibility of psychotic disorders. The analysis starts with objective manifestations of the psyche to address the possibility of understanding one's inner world. Jaspers links phenomenology to psychopathology and the essay will show that comprehension of inner psychotic states does not originate from empathy. Instead, Jaspers' concept of *verstehen*, which he ultimately considers unreliable from a psychiatric point of view, gains recognition in the field of existential knowledge by recognizing in philosophy the ability to access subjectivity; an ability that remains inaccessible to the sciences.

**Keywords:** Jaspers, Karl; *General Psychopathology*; world; corporeality; *verstehen*; form; worldview; reality.

In 2013, the numerous centennial celebrations for the publication of the first edition of Karl Jaspers' *General Psychopathology* have shown the modernity and importance of Jaspers.<sup>1</sup> Jaspers tackles the topic of physical expression and psychic dimension in Chapter IV of Part One which is dedicated to individual psychic phenomena.<sup>2</sup> This chapter, which

goes by the name of Meaningful Objective Phenomena (*sinnhafte objective Tatbestände*), does not aim to single out mere manifestations of objectivity (a prerogative of Somatopsychology), but objective facts to which meaning is attributed. Jaspers clarifies the nature of expressive phenomena in the introduction of this chapter, they are

always *objective*, insofar as they can be perceived by the senses, and manifest themselves as matter of fact,

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this essay is, "Comprendere i fatti. Corporeità e mondo nella psicopatologia jaspersiana," *Studi Jaspersiani* 2 (2014), 103-128.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology*, transl. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. [Henceforth cited as *GP*] See also Kurt Kolle, "Grundsätzliches zur psychiatrischen Körperbauforschung," *Klinische Wochenschrift* 14 (1926), 595-7. Kolle brings attention to research about the body

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and compares Jaspers' thesis in relation to the 1921 work of Ernst Kretschmer, *Körperbau und Charakter*. Based on the results of his experiments, Kolle criticizes Kretschmer's theory of wanting to uniform the bond between physical constitution and mental pathology and instead accepts Jaspers' relative and critical stance as scientifically sound.

which can be photographed or recorded. On the other hand, they are always *subjective* since actual perception of them does not make them expressive; this comes only when there has been understanding of their meaning [*Sinn*] and importance [*Bedeutung*]. [GP 254]

Thus, these facts refer to a type of evidence that is neither objective, nor quantitative, nor empathic. Instead, they are based on the instant comprehension that evokes our ability to perceive form; shapes that are not only determined by a subjective element, but acquire meaning when put in an intersubjective context. In this case, we are faced with a deduction via analogy; "we do not see ourselves in the other person but the other person or his meaning as existing in their own right" (GP 254). In order to understand these forms, from which the inner life of the patient shows through, the psychopathologist must therefore entrust himself to an innate sensitivity towards forms that each of us feels to possess upon seeing a gesture, a posture of the body or a characteristic of the written word, irrespective of our education. Jaspers continues, that we make use of a universal symbolism (*universale Symbolik*), "we are seeing quite directly everyone's person and movements of adaptation, not as mere mathematical quantities nor as sensory qualities, but as something living, carriers of mood and significance" (GP 255). We are therefore presented with an equally intuitive and immediate non-empathic understanding which stimulates our capacity to perceive ourselves as subjectivity manifested into this world. A form of understanding which can be defined as "quasi-transcendental." Unfortunately, Jaspers does not elaborate this form of understanding any further because he considers it to be scientifically unreliable from a methodological point of view. Nonetheless, we will see that Jaspers does not abandon this form of understanding entirely, casting it into philosophical space.

### Forms and World

In the 1913 edition of *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* there is no specific discourse of the Meaningful Objective Phenomena; they are absorbed into the section dedicated to Objective Psychopathology,<sup>3</sup> in other words, such phenomena are not within the sphere of inner being. The bibliographical references do not demonstrate any particular interest on behalf of Jaspers

<sup>3</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Allgemeine Psychopathologie. Ein Leitfaden für Studierende, Ärzte und Psychologen*, Heidelberg: Springer 1913, 132-144.

for research carried out on this subject. Most of his attention is directed toward graphology, as attested by specialized magazine publications like *Graphologische Monatshefte*,<sup>4</sup> and studies by Ludwig Klages.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1946 edition of *GP*, the scenery has changed. Jaspers accosts the section on Meaningful Objective Phenomena to phenomenology, in the part pertaining to inner psychic life, shifting the angle of the observation. "We have a psychological need [*Drang*] to give things *objectivity and meaning*" (GP 252). They are neither an insignificant exterior manifestation, nor the result of a voluntary and rational expressions, a telltale sign of a consciousness dimension; they represent the halfway point, manifested by psychic nature and frame of mind. Moreover, Jaspers adds some introductory pages to the 1946 edition that explain the importance of this area of research, and the necessity of circumscribing an *ad hoc* observation and comprehension method for the latter. In this case, it must be founded on "an inward appropriation" of contents (GP 251). The increase in interest can be seen by the considerable increase in bibliographical references. Over the years, Jaspers had gone more in-depth on the topic, having clearly recognized its importance.

This part is articulated in three levels: (i) Levels of form, i.e. levels of vital plenitude manifested in expressions (expression psychology); (ii) The form of the world, its configuration or *Gestalt*, relative to the way in which an individual lives (world view psychology / *Weltpsychologie*); (iii) The *total consciousness of a single mind*, dealing with forms of mind objectification and its understanding; therefore, the way in which "the individual *objectifies this content* for himself in speech, productive work and ideas which form a world of the mind" (GP 251).

Since we are dealing with form, the first methodological point that needs clarification is the distinction between meaningful and non-meaningful forms. In other words: "which phenomena are expressions of real psychic life, which are merely conditioned by change somatic events? And which are only an expression in the sense that a branch has a form, the cloud has a shape, and water has a flow"

<sup>4</sup> The journal was produced by Deutsche Graphologische Gesellschaft, first published in 1897 and discontinued in 1908 with the publication of volume XII.

<sup>5</sup> See Ludwig Klages, *Die Probleme der Graphologie. Entwurf einer Psychodiagnostik*, Leipzig: Johann Barth, 1910.

(GP 256)? A principle must be found which allows us to distinguish the objective facts that express a spiritual dimension, "the soul of things," from those which are merely objective.

To Jaspers, we are clearly in the realm of spiritual science. In fact, he is not interested in drawing a connection between corporal phenomena and the psychic (fear and pupil dilation), but rather carrying out an act of comprehension by examining the expression of the psyche through a corporal fact (the cheerfulness of a smile).

### The Soul of Forms

In order to reach a scientifically reliable awareness of these phenomena, Jaspers firstly discerns from content, namely the identification of form "of all the confusion of the phenomena" (GP 255). But how to interpret the shapes one they have been identified? Here Jaspers will already begin to consider the issue of dualism: on one side, we can follow the path of mathematization, reducing the forms to rational and quantitative calculations; alternatively, the other side deals with staying close to the real forms, along the lines of Goethean morphology. "Morphology,"<sup>6</sup> Jaspers

<sup>6</sup> Goethe himself gives a definition of his idea of form (*Gestalt*): "The Germans have a word for the complex of existence presented by a physical organism: *Gestalt* [structured form]. With this expression they exclude what is changeable and assume that an interrelated whole is identified, defined, and fixed in character. But if we look at all these *Gestalten*, especially the organic ones, we will discover that nothing in them is permanent, nothing is at rest or defined—everything is in a flux of continual motion. This is why German frequently and fittingly makes use of the word *Bildung* [formation] to describe the end product and what is in process of production as well. Thus in setting forth a morphology we should not speak of *Gestalt*, or if we use the term we should at least do so only in reference to the idea, the concept, or to an empirical element held fast for a mere moment of time. When something has acquired a form it metamorphoses immediately to a new one. If we wish to arrive at some living perception of nature we ourselves must remain as quick and flexible as nature and follow the example she gives." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "The Purpose Set Forth (From *On Morphology*)," in *Scientific Studies*, ed. and transl. by Douglas Miller, New York: Suhrkamp Publishers 1988, pp. 63-4. Form, rather than being a stable element, indicates a continuous transformation by virtue of a metamorphic ability in which an inner

explains, "is not deductive but tries to lead us towards a pure apperception through a process of dynamic and structured seeing" (GP 255). The genesis of forms and their infinite transformations can be observed, but without the presumption of grasping their essence because they have the characteristic of the infinite, so "they are shapes that live," nature must therefore be preserved. Jaspers continues, "What we see in this way, is the totality of basic characteristics belonging to the spatial phenomena of our environment" (GP 256). This clear vision is connected to a feeling, so that the sense and meaning of shapes is their soul, and something is manifested internally.

How can we perceive the mental force that pervades it? In this case we are also presented with a dichotomy: "Either we mistranslate this quality into a rational meaning," the *signatura rerum*, which Jaspers considers the path that leads to superstition and illusory knowledge, or "we can stay close to the '*soul of things*.'... No interpretations are made but we open our senses to living experience, to the perception of the inward element in things" (GP 256). This is the physiognomic vision that does not know but sees.

This vision of the inward life of things...forms the substance of our union with the world. This union may be of unlimited depth; it comes as a gift with every step we take and cannot be methodically developed; it remains bound up with everything that reveals itself to a receptive attitude and an unfeigned preparedness to accept. [It is therefore] embedded in superstition and delusion. [GP 256]

This uneven ground is the backdrop, Jaspers concludes, to the understanding of expression; albeit not a mythical-natural comprehension. "Psychic expression as we understand it in men is something *empirically real*" (GP 256), there is always the risk of it fooling us.

The knowledge of physiognomy can contribute to understanding, but its limit is the absence of the principles that make up the link between soul and body in a methodologically stable way. Its search for causes yields only deductions via analogy: impressions based on the immediate. However, at the same time one cannot neglect that

from an early age the physical frame plays a part in shaping a person's self-awareness and general behaviour. All through one's life, what one feels about oneself and one's appearance is continually being

strength is produced; the latter is already a potential element of the initial phases of the formation process.



supplemented by such items as whether one is small or tall, strong or weak or sickly, whether one is in any sense beautiful or ugly, even though originally this had nothing to do with one's psyche. The individual models himself according to his body and with its help and in its company there is psychic growth, so that body-form and psychic life become reciprocal even if at first they were apart. [GP 259]

Jaspers means to say that the physiological method, stunted often by erroneous stereotypes and causing the loss of form on one hand and content on the other, is nonetheless based on an aspect which is significant to us: our sense of form, our ability to react to form, even though we cannot assign a demonstrative empirical implementation to the ensuing figures. "They create for us rather an 'atmosphere' without which we would be the poorer when we come to study our psychiatric realities" (GP 265).

### Psychology of Worldviews

After having faced the first level of objectification, the level found in expressive psychology, Jaspers moves on to the more refined, but also more controversial, analysis of man that "lives in his own world," where the soul is manifested in conscious forms of behavior, in community activities, etc. In the 1913 edition of *Allgemeine Psychopathologie*, this section exists but it is not classified as world view psychology; the title contains only a reference to the different attitudes that the subject can adopt with respect to the world: behavior, actions, life conduct. Conversely, this section of the 1946 edition was so well-structured that Jaspers, in order to define its field of interest, quotes a long passage from Goethe's supplementary notes to the second fragment of Johann C. Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, dedicated to "Physiognomy in general."<sup>7</sup> It deals with Goethe's reference to a vaster physiognomy that incorporates the external expressions of interiority, like a science that knows the inner through the external. In the previous pages, Jaspers had criticized the attempt made by physiognomy to use the external as a starting point for grasping the internal; now, by applying this formula to a much broader physiognomy (a worldview-psychology), the perspective changes. The question

<sup>7</sup> Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*, Vol. IV, Leipzig and Winterthur: Weidmanns Erben & Reich and Heinrich Steiner & Compagnie 1775-1778, here Vol. I (1775), p. 15.

now arises: what must be understood as external? But also, as Lavater wanted, unconscious gestures, the nude figure that indicates the inner strength of man, in addition to his social status, his habits, all that he possesses, his clothes, everything modifies him, everything hides him. Once again, it is obvious that no solid theory can be formulated, even though

we need not despair...he is not only affected by all that envelops him; he too takes effect on all this and so on himself and, as he is modified, so he modifies all that is around him. Clothes and furniture help us to deduce a man's character. Nature forms man, man naturally transforms himself. Set in the vast universe, he builds his own small world within it, makes his own fences and walls, and furnishes everything after his own image.<sup>8</sup>

For Jaspers, similarly to the Goethian interpretation of the environment as an extension of the inner dimension of subjectivity, the world surrounding the subject is not only its own expression, but also its reason for existence. Indeed, this very "organic, comprehensive view of human beings and of the way in which they behave in their own world" (GP 275) constitutes the background from which to initiate and carry out specific analyses.<sup>9</sup> The method is therefore to understand the personal formative environment, life conduct and action; the sum of these details can give rise to a definition and comprehension of the patient's world, namely, "a conception of what he actually experiences as his reality" (GP 275).

In the 1913 edition of *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* these considerations are summarily articulated. The whole chapter has the more general objective of amplifying the comprehension of expressive manifestations that were misconceived up to then, i.e. to find a way to access a vision of the soul. The 1946 edition has a different approach. The amount of space dedicated to this topic has tripled and an entirely new part has been introduced: the ability of man to transform his world, taking action thereto.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cited in GP 275. Eduard von der Hellen, *Goethes Anteil an Lavaters Physiognomischen Fragmente*, Frankfurt am Main: Rütten & Loening 1888, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> On the relationship between background and figure see Edgar Rubin, *Visuell wahrgenommene Figuren*, Copenhagen: Gyldendals, 1921. Despite not being quoted by Jaspers, this is a coeval work.

<sup>10</sup> The interest in the action and retroaction between

This change in *GP* is not only to be interpreted as an extension of the field of analysis, but rather as a transformation of the entire consideration of subjectivity in general—thus, also the abnormal. The task now becomes recognizing the importance of relationship between world and subjectivity structure. Jaspers considers the presence of reality similar to the effect we feel of a collision, modifying us, where we will, in turn, act as modifier, and act by modifying it. It is the "hardness of reality" (*das Harte des Realen*) that points toward a "leap into existential philosophy and the authentic dimension of being, self and liberty";<sup>11</sup> this element is not yet found in the first editions of the psychopathology vision or in the *Psychology of Worldviews*. But is this change of perspective the premise to an epistemological turn?

It is possible to state that the approach to the philosophy of existence seems to determine a higher recognition of objectivity and its resistance to the subject; this would also separate Jaspers from a theoretical perspective (in line with the accusation made by Heidegger to the *Psychology of Worldviews*<sup>12</sup>) and recognize the praxis dimension as a founding element of subjectivity. In fact, Jaspers clarifies this point in the 1946 edition by introducing the paragraph

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man and environment collocates Jaspers within the realm philosophical anthropology of his time. See the theoretical psychology of Erwin Straus, the philosophical-anthropological interpretation of Hans Kunz, the existential analysis of Alfred Storch and Ludwig Binswanger, and also the medical anthropology of Viktor Emil von Gebattel, *Prolegomena einer medizinischen Anthropologie*, Berlin: Springer, Berlin 1954. Furthermore, Viktor Emil von Gebattel, *Imago hominis : Beiträge zu einer personalen Anthropologie*, Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1968. Jaspers refers to von Gebattel's "Die Welt der Zwangskranken," *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie* 99 (1938), 10-74.

<sup>11</sup> Kurt Salamun, *Karl Jaspers*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2006, p. 101.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers' "Psychologie der Weltanschauungen"* (1919-21). The Heideggerian text, left unpublished for a long time, will be published only after Jaspers' death in Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken* [1967], Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 1978, pp. 1-44. Here Heidegger criticizes how Jaspers perceives life, connecting it to a rather idealistic dimension.

on the transformation of the world, making use of the Goethean definition nearly word for word: "Every creature and hence every man lives in a world which surrounds him (*Umwelt*), that is, the world which the subject apperceives and makes his own, which becomes active in him and on which, he in his turn, acts" (*GP* 280).

In my opinion, it is clear that this is the point where this wider physiognomy exits the plane of psychopathology and heads towards the philosophical. In fact, given that no scientifically reliable knowledge is recognized, it will not lead us to the understanding of the patient's subjectivity but, rather, might be a way to approximate a theory of existence. At this point, the questions change, namely to understand whether the abnormal world is the result of a pathology or simply one of the possible worlds, beyond healthy and ill; whether abnormal is only the way in which sick subjects can inhabit it; and whether Jaspers also considers the clash with the world a constituent element of subjectivity?

Jaspers then adds that "the objective mind is substantially valid and cannot fall sick. But the individual can fall sick in the way in which he partakes in it and reproduces it" (*GP* 287). This does not mean, however, that a world produced by a sick man is itself sick.

### Existence, World, Decision

As we have already mentioned, Jaspers' interest in the world matures during his shift towards philosophy of existence, demonstrating a greater need of understanding man—therefore, also the ailing man, beginning from his actions and not only his representations. The Jaspersian project of forming a non-contemplative conscience is the effect of seeing subjectivity no more as merely representational. The issue regarding the resistance to the world was obviously quite relevant at the time, given its centrality in the work of Edmund Husserl and Heidegger, but also in Heinrich Rickert's *Zustandslehre*; we can trace it back even further to Wilhelm Dilthey, one of Jaspers' major theoretical references. Dilthey underlines how, by resisting the pressure from the outside world against which our intentions and external actions battle in vain, we express the independent reality from which these actions originate.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Wilhelm Dilthey, "Die Typen der Weltanschauung und ihre Ausbildung in den metaphysischen Systemen [1911]," in *Gesammelte Schriften, Volume 8: Weltanschauungslehre*, ed. Bernhard Groethuysen,

Jaspers' interest in this idea of resistance against reality is decisive in defining subjectivity, as for the identification of its practical dimension; these then warrant the introduction of this chapter in later drafts of *GP*, where subjectivity finds its expression not only in the act of thinking and representing, but also in acting; this result is obtained under the influence of his philosophical cogitation.

In fact, pathological subjectivity seems unable to carry out a mediation with the resistance to the world; it therefore transforms the latter into a mere object of consciousness whose characteristics are non-subjugated by time and events, appearing only as a content of consciousness. The pathological version thus expresses disarray in the relationship with the world-that-resists, which can be translated on a philosophical level in a type of ethical infirmity: the inability to act in an ethical sphere. The curtailment of objectivity to subjectivity, as Jaspers properly elucidates in his *Philosophy*,<sup>14</sup> leads to the loss of the world and, with it, norms and their compelling value. For this reason, an authentic clarification of existence requires a appropriation of the sense of objectivity in all its truth. This very passage, of a practical nature, is disregarded for some mental illnesses.

Let us take, for example, the world of obsessional patients persecuted by the unknown, nonsensical representations to which they feel they must comply. Jaspers defines the relationship that these patients install with events. The obsessional patient generates thoughts which are "built into a system of meanings and his actions in to a system of ceremonial rituals" (*GP* 284), but each action leaves behind doubts that compel him to start all over again. Jaspers asserts, quoting von Gebattel:

The world has narrowed to an artificial uniformity, a rigid, strictly regulated unchangeability. The patient is always in action but nothing is achieved. "There is restless exertion without a break; he is always trying to cope with an enemy who is always behind him."... This world ceases to be a world as things undergo increasing derealisation...there is a loss of solidity, richness and form, and hence of reality; the world is no more. [*GP* 285]

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Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991, pp. 75-120.

<sup>14</sup> See Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie, Vol. II*, Berlin: Springer 1932, p. 403. [Henceforth cited as *P*]

This is why Jaspers, in the case of an obsessional patient, can reach the conclusion that they see "the whole world vanishing from him, with all his senses alive and intact to tell him so" (*GP* 286). What is obviously lost here is the ability of the subject to act and interact with the world.

When describing the world of the patients with flight-of-ideas – recalling Binswanger's analyses – Jaspers defines it as "ineffective business, a general flitting" (*GP* 286). It is as if the world, the *vita activa*, slipped through his fingers, leaving no foothold, with no impact. The problem is that these worlds do not communicate; the subject is walled in from his own world, shutting out the intersubjective dimension. Objectivity, being imperfect and incomplete, is denied on behalf of subjectivity that, on the other hand, is tied to absolute parameters and unobtainable objectives. Abnormal, Jaspers writes in *GP* of 1946, and thus a world that "divides people instead of bringing them together" (*GP* 282), a world in which the possibility of a shared objectification is subtracted; it is a world that withdraws and diminishes instead of expanding, a clueless world which shatters the strong foundations on which the soul should evolve. The asymmetry of the interpersonal relationship found in mental illness reaches its maximum limit, in this case the complex stratification of each identification process seems to flatten into an apathetic inner plane. Each reminiscence, each symptomatic analysis remains problematic and artificial. For the psychotherapist Carlo Pastore, this world produces an "*Erlebnis* of inaccessibility,<sup>15</sup> a distance in which the common ground of action is nullified.

If we negate the neutrality of our vision of the world, as Jaspers writes in *Philosophie*, existence will constantly take a stance, a trend, a means of deducting, every time, the sense from the situation (*P* 7-9).<sup>16</sup> It is

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<sup>15</sup> Carlo Pastore, "Il mondo del delirio. Note introduttive all'ipotesi della ricodificazione sensoriale dei processi noetici," *Comprendre* 19 (2001), 238-259.

<sup>16</sup> For this aspect see Csaba Olay, "Jaspers und Gadamer über Kommunikation und Dialog," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Karl-Jaspers-Gesellschaft* 24 (2011), 57-77, which underlines on page 62 how "existence has, for Jaspers the same meaning as self-being; this must not be perceived in a passive way, but rather as a form which has not been achieved by each human life. Therefore, existence indicates the task and choice of a decision, of being in a position of not losing oneself in a mere ontic modality of the masses." [Translation by the author.]



the very impossibility of sharing and communicating this strand (representing, in its own way the action of the subject) that blocks out any possibility of creating a relationship. The theme of resistance and world reality marks the stepping-stone from a theoretical plane of knowledge as representation to a concrete plane of knowledge as decision. That which is negated from causal knowledge can become effective (*wirklich*), thanks to the theme of resistance.<sup>17</sup> There is, therefore, another space for comprehension, another stretch for comprehension within the dimension of ethos: subjectivity manifests itself through human action.

### Psychopathology, World, Philosophy

Individual reality is wedged within the general reality relationship, which presents itself in a discordant and articulate manner and has developed according to the traditions of a culture and its teachings at a specific time. Certainly, the patient does not speak of the world he experiences directly, but through his actions and behavior it is possible to understand how he thinks about the possibility to act in it. Jaspers states that it is possible to glimpse a partial field of the patient's worldviews; a difficult task, given that the observer must step out of his or her own world. We cannot explain it through scientific knowledge but, rather, we can try to comprehend it. The concreteness of these worlds can be studied from a historical-spiritual or psychological-psychopathological point of view. The only downfall is that this approach must stop at a certain point. The limitations of this approach are underlined by Jaspers' critique. We can perceive this from the criticism made to the anthropo-existential line of thought in the psychology of his time which Jaspers defines as a genetic-constructive psychopathology of Binswanger, von Gebsattel, and Kunz. To go beyond the analysis of functions, acts and neuro-physiological constructions as von Gebsattel suggests is, in fact, surpassing all the possibilities of knowledge. But the result of this anthropo-existential psychology is a psychological physiognomy or, rather, a metaphysical physiognomy. Redirecting the knowledge of the totality of the human being to the vital process of becoming contaminates the philosophical categories with the biological, philosophy with science. If it is therefore true that such constructive

considerations can help the patient to better understand himself, leading to philosophical knowledge, then they cannot be used as the foundations of psychopathology.

We would also end up losing philosophy. In contrast to a later stage of phenomenological psychiatry, Jaspers does not fully embrace the idea of only one world, beyond health and sickness – finding abnormality only in the way the sick reside in it. Jaspers will posit this thesis without issuing a denial, although it is a given fact that, in the following years, he will sense that the impact with the world can be one of the places where a pathology can wedge its way through, making it possible to understand it from up close. If, as Jaspers himself recognizes, delusion "implies a transformation in our total awareness of reality" (*GP* 95) revealed when judging reality, then it is clear that a truncating element intervenes on the subject-object relationship; this is the very reason why the pathological world is not described as an error in the knowledge of reality, but as a mistake in evaluation, breaking the practical bond with the world. According to Jaspers, when a delusional experience is incomprehensibly produced in the original subject-reality relationship, one's judgment of reality is subsequently compromised. At the same time, it also has denied the sharing of the world:<sup>18</sup> that which is "irretrievably lost in untruth" (*GP* 411) is, in this sense, the real world.<sup>19</sup> Delusion also breaks the pact stating that everyone must conform to reality.

Therefore, for Jaspers the concept of world as an amplified physiognomic space (as mentioned by Goethe) is a place for acquiring knowledge of interiority – for both the healthy and sick. Nonetheless,

<sup>18</sup> With respect to the possibility of constructing a shared world of schizophrenics, Jaspers quotes von Bayer's work who analyzes the experience of patients that suffer from persecutory delusions (*GP* 282). See Walter Ritter von Bayer, "Über konformen Wahn," *Zeitschrift für Neurologie* 140 (1932), 398. However, this remains a problematic aspect for Jaspers; since the egocentric tendency of schizophrenic delusions makes the schizophrenic world more accessible to a healthy person rather than to another schizophrenic patient.

<sup>19</sup> The Jaspersian interpretation, by recognizing the incomprehensibility of psychic disease, is open to an organic view. Here Jaspers relates to Carl Wernicke, who describes some problems of the sick person as autochthonous ideas, "target-images" born from the earth, having nothing to do with external causes (*GP* 184).

<sup>17</sup> Karl Jaspers, *Vernunft und Widervernunft in unserer Zeit*, München: Piper, 1950.

this place of action and decision-making will abandon the psychopathological field to become that of philosophical knowledge. This is how Jaspers can affirm that the attempt in psychopathology to introduce a method which demonstrates the ontological correspondence between biological and mind-psychic symptoms in a pathological field, similar to the idea of

forming, since "the totality of human life and its ultimate origin cannot be the object of any scientific research" (*GP* 543). Comprehension in psychopathology offers redemption on a philosophical plane, in existential knowledge, where the same world deemed insufficient for science will acquire richness and value.