



The Eternity of Every Present Time

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Abstract: Starting from the Encompassing as it is defined in *Von der Wahrheit*, I propose to analyse the polarity between positive (Being-in-itself) and negative (finitude) as an attempt to recast the ontological difference. This cannot be defined as the opposition between eternal and temporary but is to be interpreted as a disequation between the part and the whole. Thus, considering every entity of the Encompassing (*das Umgreifende*), one cannot say that there was a time when the Encompassing was not and a time when it will no longer exist (unless one admits that the Encompassing is lacking in something). The isolating point of view of scientific thinking separates entity from the Encompassing and thinks about it as exposed to nothing. Following the law of Being, existence shows the eternity of every present-time in the eternal and clarifies the becoming as the simple manifestation of truth and not as the fall of finite into nothing.

Introduction

Jaspers' philosophy is an effort to grasp the truth of Being in the midst of "nihilism pushed to extremes." The avoidance of relinquishing nihilism is an exhortation in an attempt to grasp the Encompassing and the origin of humankind. Although Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are the essential starting point of this quest, neither of them provided a definitive answer to nihilism since their truth cannot be successfully communicated and is unable to rejoin men together.¹

What we need is an inquest about entities and their relationship with Being-in-itself to clarify where is the starting point of Jaspers' metaphysical concept (as it is traced in his *Logik*) and to understand his philosophy not as a form of humanism but an effort to find undeniable truth. For this purpose, it is necessary to release Jaspers from such interpretations that conceive his thought as a philosophy of mediation between the positiveness of transcendence and the negativeness of finitude.² Thus, I focus on Karl Jaspers' metaphysics

¹ Kierkegaard and Nietzsche represent milestones in Western philosophical thought. They mark a point of no return since, as Jaspers explains in *Vernunft und Existenz*, their thought creates a new cultural climate to overcome the belief that it is impossible to philosophize due to the fact that philosophy concerns individual singularity and uncommunicable content.

Jaspers' attempt is to find a new way for philosophical communication (without communication there is no philosophy) and to rediscover Being without reducing it to an object.

² See also L. Pareyson, *La filosofia dell'esistenza e Carlo Jaspers*, Loffredo, Napoli 1940. Pareyson's critique on Jaspers is most interesting and profound. For Pareyson, Jaspers is an author

with the intent to give an original interpretation aimed to demonstrate that entities could not be considered as negative (Jaspers thinks it as *Momente in seiner Ganzheit enthielte*³), and also to clarify why Jaspers attempted to find eternity in the becoming world. For this purpose I analyze the consequences drawn in his book *Von der Wahrheit* and later reconsider the philosophy of existence as a preparatory study for finding an eternal logical structure in the Encompassing.

The Encompassing

Literally, the Encompassing is what grasps (*greift*), circumscribes (*um*) and binds, and includes (*um-greift*) all entities without being included by anything else. In "the comprehensiveness of its determinations," Jaspers' Being is different from Parmenides' Being (that leaves determinations out of itself), and closely resembles the *περιχώρον* of Anaximander (that contains everything in itself).

The essential properties of Being are positiveness and concreteness. I mention positiveness because Being is what originally removes the denial of itself; otherwise Being could paradoxically be and not be at the same time. Consequently we can grasp Being only in its original and constituent opposition to Nothing. This opposition cannot be denied because, since while denial wants to persist as denial, it has forcedly to affirm opposition. Moreover, the *ἔλεγχος* is not only the impossibility to deny the opposition (which represents in turn an opposition), but it is to be considered as the foundation of every word that aims at being significant (including the word that wants to be the denial of the opposition). In order to be so, the negative is to be determined in relation to everything else and also in its own terms. Hence, it presupposes and is based on what it denies. Claiming that "the positive is the negative" (which is the same as stating "Being is Nothing") means to accept "positive" and "negative" as synonyms. In such

a case that positive and negative are taken as synonyms, there is no opposition. On the other hand, aiming at denying the opposition, it is necessary to consider their meanings as different in order to consider—later—the identity of opposites. So denial could not be a denial without being a negation of itself. It is a state of their own insignificance. What looks like a contradiction, is not so. The identity of opposites, as it is conceived, is not conceived as negative but as positive. The identity of opposites is not really assumed as such identity of opposites, but as a positive meaning. Similarly, if we consider Being as opposed to nothing, the latter is not simply considered as nothing, but assumes a positive meaning. Indeed it means that the denial of the opposition implies *simpliciter* what it denies: every opposition is always the opposite of what it wants to be.⁴

I talk about concreteness because the Encompassing differs from the usual abstract idea of Being which is used to separate entities from Being (this is the case of Parmenides' Being). Consequently, in order to avoid the abstract thought of Being it is necessary to conceive Being in its union with entities and, similarly, entities as constitutive of Being. As a matter of fact, conceiving entities without Being, is like considering them as nothing, or rather, we could also say that what is could not merely be. Letting entities at the mercy of nothing is like admitting that Being does not oppose itself to negative. Thus, Encompassing is not the whole without its entities, but includes everything,⁵ as Jaspers states, *das Wahre ist das Ganze* (P 182).

Human and the Basic Philosophical Undertaking

There is a difference in the concept of Being and the concept of entity. Any entity is a partial manifestation of truth and must not be mistaken for Truth, as Jaspers elaborates when he refers to "the basic philosophical undertaking" (*die philosophische Grundoperation*). This undertaking consists in "thinking beyond" (*über-hinaus-denken*) individual entities to see the foundation from

continually pressed in mediation between positive and negative. For this reason, he sees Jaspers as witness of philosophy's weakening, and Jaspers' philosophy as evidence of the crisis of philosophy as well as a philosophy of the crisis. For Nicola Abbagnano, Jaspers' philosophy is destined to wreck; for Noberto Bobbio it is a philosophy of crisis; for Enzo Paci, a particular romantic decadence; for Jeanne Hersch, Jaspers unmasks philosophical illusions, for Gabriel Marcel and Mikel Dufrenne, his philosophy is paradoxical and his Truth ineffable.

³ Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie*, Berlin: Springer Verlag 1932 (1948), p. 42. [Henceforth cited as P]

⁴ For more in-depth understanding and for a great and rigorous philosophy based on the positivity of Being, see also the thought of Emanuele Severino, in particular, *La struttura originaria*, Brescia: La Scuola, 1958; *Essenza del nichilismo*, Saggi, Brescia: Paideia, 1972; *Destino della necessità. Katà tò chreòn*, Milano: Adelphi, 1980.

⁵ See also the introduction to the Italian translation of *Von der Wahrheit* by Umberto Galimberti, *Sulla verità*, Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1970.

which they stem, since in order to be meaningful, every entity ("A") needs to be distinguished from "the totality of what the entity A is not" ("not-A"). The comprehension of "A" is made possible through its opposition with "not-A," and this operation allows consciousness to grasp the Whole. Thus, every particular entity – with its arising – announces the Encompassing;⁶ we must think beyond the visible and as such definable horizon, *hin zum Umgreifenden, in dem wir sind, und das wir selber sind.*⁷ On page 1 of *VW* Jaspers states:

Wir leben nicht unmittelbar im Sein, daher wird Wahrheit nicht unser fertiger Besitz. Wir leben im Zeitdasein: Wahrheit ist unser Weg.

The entire meaning of *VW* is revealed in these two sentences. The first states that we can conceive the Whole only formally because we are unable to grasp the whole Being (A and not-A); the second states that our existence belongs to finitude and as a result the relations between each entity and the Whole are not knowable. For that reason, the Whole is present only in the partial sequence of events. Given our temporary nature, as spectators of Being, what comes to us appears in time and exposes us to the risk of losing the truth beyond partial manifestations.

Jaspers proposes to break through time (*Durchbruch*): *die Vollendung ist als Ewigkeit in der Zeit, erfüllt als ewige Gegenwart die Wahrheit des Seins* (*VW* 906). Consequently, *dies unmittelbar zu Gott sein ist für den historischen Betrachter als solchen nicht sichtbar* (*P* 406). In other words, through basic philosophical undertaking man sees reality beyond time (where the Encompassing shows itself). When this happens, man comes to realize that truth manifests itself in every lived hour. Recovering the truth of Being and its thought means to recover timeless thought (*zeitloses Denken*) that breaks the becoming of reality (exposed to nothing), discovering the eternity of the Encompassing. Going towards the Encompassing means to transcend every particular horizon and to recognize the Encompassing in the transparency of entities: *aus der Immanenz als der Vielfachheit des Sein heraus, das Transzendieren der Versuch einer Vergewisserung eigentlichen als des einen und einzigen Seins* (*P* 705).

⁶ To think of a limited meaning is akin to thinking how its limitation can be overcome; thus, Jaspers concludes that the Encompassing itself announces limiting and founding entities.

⁷ Karl Jaspers, *Von der Wahrheit*, Munich: R. Piper 1947, p. 38. [Henceforth cited as *VW*]. When entities are separated from the whole, science gets the chance to interrogate and manipulate them, but loses the chance to grasp the meaning of their being.

Der Gedanke als solcher zeigt uns nicht einen neuen Gegenstand. Er ist im Sinn gewohnten Weltwissens leer, aber durch seine Form öffnet er die schlechthin universale Möglichkeit des Seienden.

Durch den Gedanken werden wir erweckt, daß wir hören lernen auf das, was eigentlich ist. Er macht uns fähig, die Ursprünge zu vernehmen. [*VW* 39]

For Jaspers, reflecting upon Being's entities without thinking of Being is an illegitimate absolutization, because determinations are true only in their relationship with the Encompassing. The experienced Being manifests itself as soon as it appears. However, non-manifesting entities are just that and must not be considered as non-existing. Saying that the entities may be untied from the Encompassing means to lose the sense of those entities (since it is either rescued by Encompassing or is nothing) and, at the same time, the sense of the Encompassing itself (if one admits a region or time in which Being does not impose its eternity, one admits that Being is no longer Being but an entity among others). The thought of an entity—first as part of Being and then as separate from Being—leads to nihilism, as it claims that Being may be both Being and not-Being. Jaspers' critique to nihilism is not a form of humanism, but the evocation of the sense of Being in its original and essential opposition to nothing: the manifestation of Being cannot be considered the entity's separation from Being, but it is to be considered as a partial manifestation of Being in the world. In fact,

Denn wenn sein und Tun des Menschen gegen die Gottheit nicht selber göttlich sein könnte, so wäre dieses tun haltlos, sogar unmöglich, es sei denn, dass in irgendeinem Sinne die Gottheit selbst es ist, die darin wirkt oder zulässt. [*P* 738]

In this respect, Jaspers offers two definitions of truth; the first one is formal, *Wahrheit ist erstens das Offenbarwerden eines Anderen*, the second one is concrete, *Wahrheit ist zweitens ... das Selbstsein* (*VW* 458).

In the formal definition, the other is the part of Being that does not belong to the horizon of presence and that expands the horizon of truth, manifesting itself. The gradual manifestation of the Encompassing is then a gradual decrease of the disequation that exists between what appears and what is truth.⁸

⁸ Das Offenbarwerden der Transzendenz ist gebunden an ihre Erscheinung im Dasein, in der das Sein zerrissen bleibt und nur auf dem Boden der Geschichtlichkeit der als vielfache sich begegnenden Existenz als das Eine gesucht und ergriffen werden kann. [*P* 42]

In the concrete definition, Being is characterized by the essential power to remove its own negation; therefore it establishes itself as an incontrovertible base. As events of Being appear in the horizon of presence, such negation is gradually removed. It would not be sufficient to say that *das Sein ist offenbar*, since such claim would only be fideistic (nonsense in a philosophical question about truth). Being is known because it is the positive *simpliciter*, or what has the power to remove self-denial. For this reason, Jaspers speaks of *Sein* in terms of *Wahrsein*, or better, that Being opens the horizon of truth through its manifestation here and now. When Jaspers conceives that Being has the property to rule against nothing, he can state: *omne ens est verum, omnes ens est unum, omne ens est bonum* (VW 459-460). That fundamental truth is the manifestation of Being means it is not an invention that belongs to someone or to sometime, but it has always been in the world as well as in human thought.⁹ Although immutable, truth historicizes itself in its opposition to not-Being. As a manifestation of truth, each *ens* is *verum*. Establishing itself against not-Being, Being reaffirms its self-identity and the unity of the positive. Conscience conceives the opposition of Being and not-Being in order to express the difference between the two terms. In fact, saying that "Being is Being" or that "Being is not not-Being" makes no difference, since both statements are abstract moments of the concrete horizon of consciousness. Concretely, the only thing that imposes and manifests itself is Being. The Whole does not cease to exist because our consciousness makes distinctions between entities. The possibility to isolate particular entities as if they were independent from the rest is just a belief. For this reason, *omne ens est unum*. For Jaspers, Being manifests itself out of necessity, because "it must be." In its opposition to Nothing is perpetual and does not allow any break. Everything that happens could not avoid happening; otherwise, as I will explore in the next section, it would be possible to think that what is could be nothing. In this sense, *omne ens est bonum*.

Sofern wir die Transzendenz denken als das Umgreifende, nennen wir sie das Sein. Es ist das Sein, das bestehend, unwandelbar, täuschungslos ist. Aber es ist als dieses ruhige, dieses freilassende Sein nur für das abstrakte transzendierende Denken. [VW111]

⁹ It is immediately known that something appears phenomenologically and it is also immediate that it is impossible to deny that something appears.

Nothing escapes these three implications, and, therefore, we can sum up by saying that Truth is the Encompassing *simpliciter*. Everything that happens is the Encompassing; if not, appearance itself could not be possible and manifestation would not occur. For this reason, the world is the theatre where eternity reveals itself to men.

Die Erscheinung ist nicht Schein

Alles Weltsein, von dem wir wissen, ist allerdings ein Sein, wie es für den Menschen erscheint oder—solange es ihm noch unbekannt ist—erscheinen kann. Der denkende Mensch ist die Mitte, auf die sich alles bezieht... Aber die Erscheinung ist nicht Schein. In ihr kündigt sich vielmehr das Sein an. [VW 86]

According to Jaspers, Being is the ground that supports and contains the entities of the world (also that particular entity that is man with his consciousness). The *Erscheinung* of an entity is described as a transcendental value of Being, as its constitutive character that leads us to distinguish it from mere *Schein*; if *Erscheinung* is the announcement of Being in its manifestation, *Schein* is the interpretation that depicts the world as a separate reality and is not constitutive of Being. This is Jaspers' overcoming of modern gnoseology (moreover, even *Schein* appears and with it also its relationship with *Erscheinung*): *die Erscheinung ist nicht Schein*.¹⁰ More precisely: everything

¹⁰ Much is written on Jaspers' Kantianism, and Jaspers himself has always said that we need to start from Kant. However, confusing his thought with a contemporary Kantianism means to subtract the peculiarities of Jaspers. With Jaspers, the content of consciousness is Being in itself and not its reduced shape. The interpretation of Jaspers as a Kantian, conceive that the words "no being known is the being" are the implicit admission of the Kantianism of Jaspers. This is not right because the deep meaning of the speech is to clarify that thinking entities without thinking Being—as the consciousness-in-general does—is a take-off of the possibility to think the Encompassing. If an analysis of Jaspers would stop at what intersubjective consciousness is able to investigate, it would reduce Being to the sum of entities in the world. Instead, Jaspers is looking for what is beyond the subject-object split and the Kantian "I think" could be a great idea, for Jaspers, if it was developed in a transcendental sense and if it did not work like the consciousness-as-such (which organizes the world in its categories). With Jaspers, we have a fine kind of idealism in which the positive is not just Being, but Being in its manifestations, where appearance is not a product of consciousness, but is constitutive of consciousness. The depth of the Encompassing penetrates all the ways of Being and also the Being-that-we-are.

that is, appears. Such appearance appears, so it is not only the appearance of things but it is also the appearance of things appearing, which is the appearance of itself. Human thought is not an alien reality that is added to the manifestation of Being, but it is Being itself in its manifestation. This appearance gives a triplicity to consciousness: the appearance of appearance of what appears. It is the form in which all that appears is appearing: Jaspers calls it *Selbstgegenwart der Transzendenz* (P 49). Once set the original truthfulness of consciousness, Jaspers can say:

Was in der Welt sich auseinander entwickelt, ist ein partikulares Geschehen, das ich im Gegenständlich-gewordensein erforsche, nie irgendein ganzes Geschehen einer Wirklichkeit. [VW 89]

If we reduced Being to what appears in the world, becoming would be its constitutive feature. Becoming reality seems a fact but cannot be an indubitable truth; alas it is not "a constituent fact of reality considered in its totality," but only the point of view of consciousness-as-such. Consciousness that separates entities from what gives them positiveness, moreover exposes them to nothing and agrees that entities could be or not be. The world itself can be questioned, because what appears to the conscience-as-such could not be a real fact. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the philosophy of Jaspers. Indeed, we can read in his *Philosophie* that *jedes Dasein als Erscheinung der Existenz zugleich ewig zu sein, ist Selbstgewissheit* (P 407). The nihilistic becoming that seems indisputable to empirical consciousness, is not a fact for existential consciousness, the eternity of every entity and of every manifestation is clear:

Dasein wird transparent, wo ursprüngliches Selbstsein ist und einen Augenblick in ihn die Unruhe sich aufhebt: die Zeit steht still, die Erinnerung hebt auf zum Sein; das Wissen von dem, was war, wird ewige Gegenwart des Gewesen. Das ist nicht mehr Dasein und nicht in ihm als solchen zu finden, sondern das Transzendieren des Dasein zum Sein, das im Dasein sich erscheint. [P 33]

Not admitting the eternity of entities means to expose the Encompassing to a nihilistic and irreconcilable contradiction: *das transparenzlose Dasein ist ohne Befriedigung in sich* (P 794). But,

was eben noch Leben oder Tod bedeutete, ist sogleich danach wie nichts, aber in anderer Gestalt bleibt diese unbezwingliche Realität die ständige Gegenwart. [VW 90]

The reality of empirical consciousness is not the truth. The will to power of conscience-as-such wants entities to be isolated from eternal Being, and knowable and available by virtue of isolation. Once the separation of world and transcendence occurs, the world appears as a sum of entities that are available for the will to power. On the contrary: entities remain in another form. If the Encompassing is what circumscribes everything saving it from nothing, the mere disappearance means simply that the entity is no more in the world. Empirical consciousness believes that entities are available, but the separation of Being and entity is only an illusion. Their form is the permanent presence because, beyond the scenario in which things show themselves in sequence of events, there is only the eternal present where all entities are preserved:

die Tiefe des Seins offenbart sich, wo die Polarität zwischen Weite und Gegenwärtigkeit sich schliesst: im grenzlosen Raum, in der Altoffenheit, in der Bodenlosigkeit kommt ursprünglich zur Erscheinung in unvertretbarer Geschichtlichkeit die ewige Gegenwart. [VW 176]

When consciousness-as-such separates Encompassing and world, it seems that every entity in the world is not destined to nothing. Actually, every entity that appears (or not) is meant to be destined to eternity in a place where time does not rule. Time is the moment of temporality and timelessness, *die Vertiefung des faktischen Augenblicks zur ewigen Gegenwart* (P 404). Once beyond a single entity, only the eternal remains: the world is the truth in its partial appearance. Forgetting the source means getting persuaded that entity is nothing, or, as Jaspers states it, *das Umgreifende des Weltsein ist der Abgrund der Fülle, aus dem die unendlich reiche Erscheinung der Welt hervorgeht* (VW 90). Considered as something different from positive attitude of Being, entities are destined to become nothing and humans are destined to fall into nihilism. The world can be deceptive if we pay attention only to the knowledge of individual phenomena losing what is concealed behind. In contrast, God does not deceive: he is more lucid than the world.¹¹ His law wants him eternal and opposed to Nothing; it is immediate, undeniable, and must be extended to all its manifestations

¹¹ Gott ist heller als die Welt, denn wie Welt täuscht uns durch Erkennbarkeit, in der sie gerade nie die Welt ist, sondern eine Erscheinung, ein Gesicht, das sie uns gleichsam vorhält, um sich dahinter zu verbergen (VW 90).

in order to avoid the nihilistic drift. *Die Wahrheit gibt es doch – so denken wir, als ob es selbstverständlich sei.*¹²

Man loses God because knowledge of the world does not reveal its foundation. As such, man conceives entities as not bound to Being and to considers them as the nihilistic Becoming. If the Transcendence-in-itself is not directly knowable, it is true that Transcendence speaks through the whole Being. Everything in the world is, and as such, it cannot not be: it is the language of transcendence with its truth. Truth is in every manifestation of Being and cannot cease to be truth. Otherwise, it reduces Being to nothing. In this sense, humankind cannot leave the path of truth because all the manifesting entities are the truth. Thinking of abandoning the truth of Being means thinking that what is could be not.

Truth Is Our Path

Jaspers lacks rigor when drawing his conclusions about the truth of every manifestation. If everything that is, is true, and if what is true is Being in its manifestations, then the truth manifests itself in very event that appears. This can also be said of the occurrence of what happens, because even this second occurrence is something that is. It means that also the occurrence of events is something that needs to happen with truth (just like with everything that happens). In other words, what is happening happens, or, the happening is, which is the same, so it cannot be not, that means "it cannot not happen" (you cannot say that happening will not happen). In conclusion, saying that whatever happens, happens with truth, means that everything that happens, happens by necessity. If we admit that what happens in truth could not happen, we would be in the contradictory situation of who believes that Truth could be untrue, or that what is can also not be. Jaspers

¹² P 454. Jaspers uses the term *selbstverständlich* because he is talking about an unmediated evidence. This is not the expression of a belief because it is immediately known that there is something (something that appears phenomenologically) and it is also immediate and obvious that this phenomenological immediacy is also logical (it is impossible to deny that something appears). Admitting the opposite would originate a situation where the affirmation of Being does not remove its own negation. Thus, even if, in *actu segnato*, someone denied this immediacy, in *actu exercito* it would be impossible to do it and, moreover, he would be in the position to affirm and deny, at the same time, the immediacy of Being. In other words, according to Jaspers – but it is possible to consider this argument as universally valid for the formulation of all the possible sentences – it is true (i.e. appears) that Being (i.e. the appearance of Being in the world), is.

sums up: *für uns ist diese Welt zwar die allein mögliche* (P 411) and for this reason, truth is our path and is *was uns verbindet*:

Eigentliche Freiheit ist nicht beliebig, sondern als eine Notwendigkeit, die in der Unendlichkeit des Grundes des Selbstseins verwurzelt ist zu sich kam, und den sie dann eigenes Dasein in der Folge ihres Wählens gelegt hat. [P 48]

Eternity and Human

Investigating the Being-that-we-ourselves-are (*das Umgreifende-das-wir-selbst-sind*), we have to include ourselves in the eternity of the Encompassing and we have to think the ontological difference not as the difference between transcendence of the eternal Being upon the finitude of the world, but as the transcendence of Being-in-itself upon its partial events. Man is originally the sight on Being.¹³ Starting from ourselves, as a glance over Being, the Encompassing appears in two perspectives: *das Sein selbst* that is Whole, in which and for which we are, or as *Umgreifendes-das-wir-selbst-sind*, where each shape of Being is presented. The ways of what-we-are, are fourfold: *Dasein* or empirical consciousness, consciousness-as-such or intellectual intersubjectivity (*Bewußtsein überhaupt*), spirit (*Geist*), and absolute consciousness or conscience of Being (*absolutes Bewußtsein*).¹⁴ Each of these ways is a special look on truth. Investigating the different sights of the conscience means to follow the trail of the particular sense of truth and outline the limits of partial sights. The ways of what-we-are does not correspond to an ontological distinction, but is just a different cognitive attitude. In virtue of referred state of consciousness, we refer

¹³ P 160. I have already stated that the fundamental question about Being (*die Grundfrage*) is possible precisely because the Being is the original content of consciousness: if we say that consciousness thinks something, we say that consciousness thinks something that is, i.e. think Being. Jaspers sums up the concept by saying that the Being is "what passes for first" (*Vorhergehende*).

¹⁴ I chose to not speak of existence but of absolute consciousness for two main reasons: first, because Jaspers' use of existence is not always unique, and second, to mark the difference between the reflections in *Existenzerhellung* and his speculations in *Logik*. Absolute consciousness is the certainty of existence not as the consciousness that the existence has of itself, but is the consciousness of the Encompassing. The concept existence must include and summarize all conscious states in a single movement toward the Encompassing. Absolute consciousness is able to interpret entities, that other conscious states have objectified, at the light of Truth without thinking them abandoned at the mercy of nothing.

to the surrounding world (empirical consciousness), to objects of scientific investigation (consciousness-as-such), or to transcendence (absolute consciousness). Absolute consciousness comes to a horizon where the object-subject relation does not persist anymore but we are in the relationship with transcendence, or better, transcendence is in relationship with itself.¹⁵ When conceiving the world as event, one is also sure of the eternity of the present. Beyond the typical subject-object split of consciousness-as-such, Being is considered a manifestation of eternal. If the eternal is always present, and the absolute consciousness assures what no man can deny without being self-contradictory, then our attitude towards death should be completely different, empirically or logically, death is an absurdity. In its existential meaning, every moment is a part of eternity. We can decide whether to conceive ourselves as merely abandoned to Nothing or regain consciousness of our Being and conceive ourselves as eternal. As Jaspers states, with the certainty of the eternity of every manifestation, the world does not fall into insignificance. If the absolute consciousness enlightens the truth showing that any partial manifestation is eternal, we re-discover us beyond the time *Unsterblichkeit ... ist als metaphysische Gewißheit nicht in der Zukunft als ein anderes Sein, sondern als schon in der Ewigkeit gegenwärtiges Sein* (P 753). In other words, we are eternal, parts of progressive manifestations of Being: *Existenz weiß keinen Tod*.¹⁶

Philosophy cannot console us, but can lead to the "consciousness of what death can not deprive": *aus der Verzweiflung des Nichts führt heraus die existentielle Erfahrung: Der Tod ist nicht eigentlich*.¹⁷ Existence and consciousness-as-such isolate determinations and think them as Nothing. In this perspective nothing is saved from annihilation. Isolation of entities and Being conduces to the thought that everything is nothing: *dann ist das Sein nicht jenseits des Todes in der Zeit, sondern in der Gegenwärtigen Daseinstiefe als Ewigkeit* (P 754). Absolute consciousness knows, *was eben noch Leben oder Tod, ist sogleich danach wie nichts, aber in anderer Gestalt bleibt diese unbezwingliche Realität die ständige Gegenwart* (VW 90). "The fullness of life" and a space of

"shining truth" await us. What we have to do is to see that *die Vollendung ist als Ewigkeit in der Zeit, erfüllt als ewige Gegenwart die Wahrheit des Seins* (VW 906) because, in the fight against nihilism, man can find what is greater than him studying himself.

Humankind feels connected to vanishing of things but this vanishing is not a dissipation of Being. One can say that existence can grasp eternity, when it is just destined to return to the finitude of the world, and thus to perish. For this reason, the dichotomy between finitude and transcendence is unsolvable and causes anguish. The falsification of consciousness-as-such is absolutized and the original positiveness of entities is forgotten (exposing us to nihilism).

Die Gedanken, welche die ewige Gegenwart des schon am Ziele angekommenen Seins als das Umgreifende denken, geben die Ruhe dem Kontemplation im spannunglos werdenden Vertrauen. [P 757]

Existence leaves the circle of worldly tribulation and conceives the eternity of all that is manifesting in time: *daher fordert die Möglichkeit der Erfahrung eigentlichen Seins immanente Transzendenz*.¹⁸ Now, the cipher is *das ganz Gegenwärtige, absolut Geschichtliche, das als solches das "Wunder" ist*.¹⁹ The concern of Being and the will to power of consciousness-as-such are overtaken; the look is open to fate and to the progressive gift that is the *Unendlichkeit der Gegenwart* (infinity of the present, P 75). We are destined to the unending joy of being *welches erfüllt ist von einem Sein quer zur Zeit, die ewige Gegenwart im verschwindenden Fluß der Dinge*.²⁰

¹⁸ P 792. Empirical knowledge is a mere orientation without end and knowledge of consciousness-as-such, driven by a will to power, is an objectification that isolates entities from Being.

¹⁹ P 823. The Encompassing manifests itself in virtue of its own positivity. This positivity is transmitted to every entity and, for this reason, every entity could be a cipher. In other words, every entity could be read as cipher because it cannot lose his own positivity (similarly to the already mentioned differences between *Erscheinung* and *Schein*: everything that appears is the Encompassing here and now). Reading ciphers means to read every particular and singular entity as a manifestation of Being avoiding to conceive it as a mere object. The uniqueness and particularity of each cipher is possible by its uniqueness and its own special place in the Encompassing. Each entity takes its meaning by its own place and by its own connections with Being: Being is the Truth only in the comprehensiveness of all entities.

²⁰ Karl Jaspers, *Wahrheit und Bewahrung. Philosophieren für die Praxis*, Munich: R. Piper 1983, p. 15. [editor's transl: We are destined to the unending joy of being that is contented by existing across time, an infinite presence in the disappearing stream of events.]

¹⁵ Was im Augenblick existentieller Wirklichkeit heute und von jeher Selbstgegenwart der Transzendenz bedeutet, wird im Philosophieren als Metaphysik erinnert und ermöglicht. [P 49]

¹⁶ P 296. We can only mention the fact that the boundary-situations do not mark the demise of man, but falsifying conscience of truth. The hero's demise in tragedy involves the loss of will to power and a new ability to read the facts of the world from the perspective of the laws of being.

¹⁷ Karl Jaspers, *Kleine Schule des philosophischen Denkens*, Munich, Zurich: Piper 1965 (1997), p. 167.