

Ciphers and Existence — Karl Jaspers between West and East —

The paper tries to grasp and acquire Karl Jaspers's philosophical-mental horizons mainly with the terminological and methodological instruments of the musical – primarily symphonic – thematisation. Namely those typically jaspersian tensions and impulses, which in their connections to the Encompassing and to Existence are apparently far from them – turning back (and forth) to the oriental and western metaphysics of Sound and Light. While the “philosophical problems” elevated into **themes**, now start to interweave into spectacle (spectaculum) and – along this – they open up as ciphers. Concomitantly they do not send us – western thinkers – beyond the World, but contrarily, they attach us to the communicative responsibility towards the world, to ourselves respectively to others.

Every philosophy is in the same time personal. Therefore every approach to philosophy must also be in the same time personal. Generally, this is not what actually happens. Methodology becomes a technique or an algorithm, the body of philosophy a list of concepts, and the philosopher a bust. Thus meditation either becomes a **profession** (which means subsistence), or we close it up into ourselves as a noble, but fairly useless part of our existence. The title-words of “rethinking”, “actualization”, which usually guide this process, should not lead us astray. Starting them anew usually means merely continuing them. Naturally, that is not completely uninteresting either.

Karl Jaspers knew that this must also be done, and that it is not a minor matter. Yet, he warns that it is not enough. We are facing a fissure which is impossible to cease or fill: we live in the tension of tradition and the thinking of the present. However, to think over this tension, fissure, or crack is one thing, but to think through it is another. But what can the thought lean on if it stands at the same time in front of depth and distance, and if – being human as it is – it has no wings?

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On seeing and hearing, of course. Jaspers therefore thinks in **images**. That is what he seeks and then sends away all over, listening to their remanded noises. Because, in his opinion, making philosophy also means **the ability** to see and hear. And we must also know how to do this. His thoughts cannot be approached in the usual ways, because they cannot be reached thus. But in the lack of tradition we avoid them. It is the achievement of this ambivalence which should be attempted here.

In the spirit of the traditions of European philosophy Jaspers develops his worldview in a **pattern**. But this pattern for him is rather an aid and necessity for communication which is always overflowed by the actual flood of thoughts. This philosophical pattern is certainly not some kind of scheme or table, but a world tableau formed during the operation of central generative principle(s). This principle for Jaspers is the **fissure of subject and object**. According to this we (as subjects) always direct ourselves to some kind of object, which is **different** from ourselves.

This difference and the unavoidable fissure it creates have a decisive role from the point of view of the first question of philosophy, namely “What is existence?”. The “entirety” of existence naturally cannot be only an object, nor only a subject; while we ourselves are incapable – stepping out from the object-subject fissure – of examining both together at the same time. Proceeding along this line of thought we must say thus, that existence is always **more** than subject and object, but this “more” **shows itself** in the fissure of the object and subject (*Subjekt-Objekt Spaltung*). This is what Jaspers calls the **Encompassing** (*das Umgreifende*). Everything which becomes an object because of the subject, becomes one by leaving the Encompassing and it relates thus to the subject, but also to other objects.

In the fissure of the subject and object we move thus towards the Encompassing. In this movement the fissure of the subject and object becomes an **image** which shows and expresses that which in fact can never be an object. Because important differences and nuances can be derived from our subject-nature which influences our direction to a certain

object-sphere. This is how the fissure, the crack of the subject and object offers a view on the different **modes** of the Encompassing. As a **factually living being** (*lebendiges Dasein*), our impressions are realized as being present and make us realized in our **environmental world**. The preparation of this environmental world is personal and cannot be generalized, but it is characteristic. We turn towards objects defined as **meaning**, about which we develop a knowledge which should be strict and generally valid (that is, scientifically true, etc.).

This is how “consciousness in general” (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*), as well as the fissure of the world of objects is born. But the World is not a concrete object which can be examined, but an idea elaborated by the spirit in order to integrate our generally valid, but limited and dispersed knowledge about the given objects. The idea shows thus the fissure of the World and the Spirit. However, this fissure only shows the mysterious lights and calls of **transcendence** shine through, to which we are striving as **existence**, changing this relationship necessarily into **ciphers**.

The transcending philosophical thinking – says Jaspers – is the method to meditate on the subject-object fissure in such a way that, perfecting the fissure in our mind, we make that what encompasses it able to be illuminated.

By these forms of subject-object fissure we see more closely the Encompassing, as we have shed light on its several modes: factual existence, consciousness in general, the spirit, and existence. But existence as such reveals itself in the completeness and “image-like” totality of the subject-object fissure, and the pertinent answer can only be given by reviewing the modes of the Encompassing.

Jaspers in his characteristic “method” leads the problems through the different modes of the Encompassing, examining how these problems are raised (if at all) on the “levels” of factual existence, consciousness in general, the spirit, and existence. But the explicit, actual examination of the problems largely entangles the unperturbed advancement (seemingly) suggested by the pattern. Therefore the researchers dealing with Jaspers understand the pattern itself in various ways, so

that some only know three modes of the Encompassing, while others derive it from one mode (transcendence); yet others (as also myself) find four modes... But we feel still, that we could go on counting... but without ever getting closer to the lively, intellectually enriching atmosphere of Jaspersian thinking.

All analyzers of Jaspers emphasize the logical and linguistic difficulties of the conceptual seizure of his thoughts. The purposeful contradictoriness of his sentences, the lack of positive definitions, the great number of negative references, the multiple meanings of his expressions, etc. all pile up as barriers which are impossible to overcome without the dangers of simplification or inexpressiveness. Indeed: among his sentences and thoughts we find ourselves at the same time on a narrow blind path and a broad boulevard. Even with the expense of building new ways, we have to find our own path between and inside these barriers.

In the pattern in which he puts forth his worldview, Jaspers' concepts are in a constant movement, drifting and flowing, and a constant change of accent. The rhythm of fine, opposed nuances fragments, colors, and abstracts the ideas almost to the level of musicality. Therefore it is only possible to grasp, perceive, and react to it only by some kind of **listening enlightenment**. All this will probably be better understandable if we try to grasp the **pattern itself** as a system of images in movement and reorganization. In this, the images follow each other not only as a kaleidoscope, but from behind their transgression, called back in time. But they are born not in a plain and spatial placement to be determined (and which will change again), but circled by its own previous images and relations, resonating and moving by the tension of the spiritual atmosphere of faith and effort. This sometimes receives an illuminated shape, which is however changed again, because it is an impulse which, radiating, offers a new light, new "energy", new image, self-image and sonority to the spectacle which embraces, defines us. Because this is not a vision but a spectacle, which is given birth, voice, and movement by the force of philosophy.

This is how the Encompassing becomes sometimes One, "then" six, or three, four, seven or again one; this is how the

faith becomes Jesus, Job, then image, cipher, and transcendence. "Consciousness in general" sometimes receives the shape of Descartes, Kant, or Galilei, and "after that" all there is left of them is the trial of an unbelievable power, completed as an experiment. Still, it is these images through which the spectacle, lighted through, **speaks** and **transforms**. Because we cannot accept Jesus' redemption, Job's certainty, Descartes' night's sleep, Galilei's gesture of revocation, Kant's recoil as a relief. What is more, it is their spirit which – beside all the light of their conviction – radiates the sounds of uninterrupted **questioning**.

It is obvious thus that in Jaspers' case we are speaking about something different than a methodology understood in the usual sense, which would guide us, by a finite number of steps, leading on a determined path, all the way to answering the questions. Naturally the need for a methodological "training", the requirement of being able to operate with concepts, categories, or criticism is alive here as well. Still, the existential, philosophical, and cultural openness, which develops mobile relationships with questions searching time, history, or the present, is more important. But the relationships identified as such do not end up in the field of a merely technical problem management, but they accompany them to the "borderlines" of the questions.

Questions become thus not so much problems but rather **themes**. The Theme is a living-forming, searching-concealing problem, inviting self-formulation. Such themes of Jaspers are the "cipher", the "border-situation", the "categorical requirement", the "man", "philosophy", the "Encompassing", etc. The themes and variations gain a special articulation, but also an echo-like cohesion in this world of the thought. Therefore we can say that for Jaspers only the problems are bordered, and the theme as an element of thought is not. It is exactly the meaning of theme-treatment that **not even** on the borders of the problems can we find some kind of Archimedes' point from where we could look around with an objectual accuracy on both sides of the border.

Seeing beyond is only ensured by the projected light sent out from **within** the border for an invited encounter. At the same time, this "sheaf of light" circles and flutters the

problem itself as a constant experiment. This is how it becomes theme and image at the same time.

It is not chance, but the inner drift, the atmosphere and the structure of Jaspers' thoughts which makes me speak about it with the help of certain concepts of musical composition. The theme – as a living-forming problem – is itself an “element of articulation” which is capable of sustaining a whole, self-supporting part of the movement of thought. This is where the sensation which fills us on reading Jaspers' works comes from, that in any single chapter his **entire** conception is condensed and unfolded at the same time. As if the single chapters would be the parts of a multi-thematic, or several one-theme symphonies, both at the same time. However, the theme is also able to go through evolution or transformation.

Just like in music, Jaspers' themes also have energetic surpluses exceeding inner necessities, which abstracting and condensing the temporality of the whole, ensure the stresses of its transformation. When problems are turned into themes by the power of thought, then these radiate around their energies from their inner sources: the movement of the themes arrives at a light and sound of its own. Therefore sentences like “What is transcendence?”, “What am I?”, “What is actual existence?” – despite their interrogatory form – are not questions. They are not questions which are **answered** by a given knowledge. They are “only” themes, which are brought to life by an existential way of thinking, and carried on further on an inner, growingly flashing course, where they are illuminated again as an effort, being certain of their authenticity. The answer given to them is not a piece of knowledge but a **conviction and a co-respondence**.

The self-grounding, unconditionally Encompassing tends – says Jaspers – to take on the form of an object before our eyes, although this form is foreign to it. So it must collapse, must crumble by itself. Following this there will be nothing else left than the clarity of the mere conviction of the presence of the Encompassing. **But any theme must be led that far.** Problems are general, but the theme is **personal**, as it is our task to bring it to life. This is to what the philosophy born from historical traditions and the motivations of the

present, the “enlightening thinking” (*erhellende Denken*) is a great help.

What Jaspers calls “erhellende Denken” must be more closely examined. The expression itself clearly indicates that it is a kind of thinking which wishes to behave **as light**. But – as Gadamer also says – to shine is to shed light upon something, and thus to appear on that what the beams fall onto. It pertains to the ontological structure of the light that it is reflexive. That is, it can only become visible if it enlightens something. Thinking which behaves by the analogy of light obviously refers to the field of the intelligible, and this, similarly to Plato or Aristotle, is not the light of the Sun, but of the **nous**. Enlightening thinking is indeed the effort, action of existence by which it explores the “ciphers of transcendence”.

The determined dynamism of existence is that in which the products of tradition stand out, speak and become certain as the ciphers of transcendence. During their reading or listening – in the presence of the Encompassing – **new** ciphers are born. But thinking itself, as the enlightener – similar to light – is also reflexive. Consequently it is also the enlightening of its self, and not only the light of the nous, which enlightens the field of the intelligible. Speculation as **speculum** (mirror, mirroring) in enlightening thinking means that it is at the same time the “source of light” and the “mirror”. Thus the “reading” of the ciphers is not only their enlightening, nor is it an enlightenment (to which existence arrives externally), but – as thinking – it searches-awaits the lights of the ciphers with and in the lights of its own efforts, “inner actions”. And in the shine of this **encounter** it enlightens **itself** in the origins of its convictions.

The reading and hearing of the ciphers gives birth to newer ciphers in enlightening thinking. Ciphers – which are thus the historical offsprings of enlightening thinking conceived in the presence of the Encompassing – have their **own** light. Just like the Beautiful for Plato, the ciphers also have the nature of shining out for existence. Thus the “shining efforts” of existence searching for its origins in its historical present meet the shining lights of the ciphers. This encounter is the glare. The speculum becomes **spectaculum** (spectacle).

Of course, there is something actually sensory in any spectacle. The spectacle which starts to glare in the light of the spirit, the nous, is naturally different: a new cipher. But it is exactly the reflexivity of thinking supported and sharpened by the reflexivity and ontological structure of the light which Jaspers calls “Existenzerhellung”: existence is that which, enlightening the ciphers of transcendence, enlightens its own self. It becomes certain in its origins and roots, in the historical presence of its essence. This is what is achieved in the **decisions** rooted in the tension of the relations and efforts of transcendence with its ciphers. Enlightening thinking is thus different from the enlightened mystical consciousness or spirit, because this does not search **as light** but lives the experience of light. Even if it senses it “inside”, it is not the source.

Philosophy, the enlightening thinking helps to transform the generality of “problems” into themes which are rooted in our personal origins and which should be taken to the end. Therefore Jaspers may interpret the great metaphysics, arts and ethical actions of history as the enciphered descriptions and pioneers of existence and transcendence, which were elaborated, chosen, and decided by the beings for the enlightenment of themselves and existence in the presence of the Encompassing.

However, ciphers are not given, but alive. Their life is a history initiated by tradition, the beginnings, and the tensions of the present. Ciphers therefore cannot be acquired from tradition by learning and rehearsing them. In our historical present the experience of tradition in most cases proves insufficient. Ciphers therefore must be understood in an existential way: their light, their sound must be seen and heard as fulfilled in our present.

But what is it that Jaspers calls a “cipher”? The cipher is a metaphysical symbol: the non-objectified language of transcendence. Apart from other symbols, ciphers cannot be interpreted from the point of view of their meaning. There is nothing behind them to which we can point as being ciphered by some conception or other. Nevertheless, this is the language that transcendence speaks. Its words must be understood and its voice must be heard in this way too.

Only existence is able to hear the voice of transcendence. It is only existence which raises at least to the level of sensing: through the crack of the subject-object fissure it is the voice of something encompassing it which is heard. This voice is thus a **reference**. So, when Jaspers says that transcendence speaks to us in the language of ciphers, this means that, on the one hand, it **talks** in this way, while on the other hand, that all this is connected to the essence of the sound rather than that of language.

The essence of the sound is not that it is sounding, nor is it that it is expressing something. The metaphysical meaning of the sound is that it is an **index**, a reference, what is more, an existential reference. The essence of the sound, as Aristotle emphasizes it when meditating on the soul, is that it is a **multi-factorial act** which arrives to us by a certain medium. Sound is thus the reference, the index of the **dynamics** of existence. This is why Bergson attaches it so closely to **time**.

The language of ciphers speaks thus first to existence, and it speaks by showing that in its historical present – as an appeal (*Appel*) – the dynamic of the Encompassing exists. Still, the ciphers are not some kind of waves which transcendence keeps emanating, but for the “reception” and formation, articulation of which only existence is prepared. Jaspers tries to better explain it in connection with the example of Kant and the Old Testament. Kant considers that the most essential element of the Bible is the commandment which forbids people to make images or doubles to God. Still – says Jaspers – the Old Testament itself is full with descriptions of God which depict him as good, or furious, or law-maker. That is, the Old Testament forbids and cultivates the creation of images for God at the same time. However, this is not a contradiction that the Bible carelessly fell into, but an unavoidable tension which goes with the man’s “finite” essence, existence. It is about man being able to think of transcendence only in images. These images are ciphers in which, on the one hand, transcendence did not hide and reveal itself by itself (that is, these are not **riddles** offered to be solved); on the other hand these are not born from existence, with which it would take

around its inner secrets, shown circled by interdictions, as secrets (**mask**).

The cipher is born and receives image and sound in the permanently active tension, which is shown on the level of the fissure of subject and object, the modes of existence. Transcendence only exists for existence, and only as a cipher. For the mystic in the decisive moment of the **unio mystica** transcendence turns into immanence. However, this incommunicable experience, not so much personal than individually valid, does not belong to philosophy. Such ciphers, as – beside the already mentioned ones – “Nature”, “unsuccessfulness” or “fall” etc. only become ciphers, language, by the efforts of existence, which should be read and listened to in the ever newer actions of enlightening and inviting thinking, and in the presence of the Encompassing. Therefore the inner rules of the language which speaks but does not utter, do not offer a clearly explicable, formal meaning, but the images of which are not projections, well, that is a cipher-language based on the metaphysical meaning of light and sound.

Understanding the language of ciphers by the metaphysical meaning of light and sound leads involuntarily to the ancient idea of sounding light and bright sound. The connection of light and sound is a very old and widespread mythological idea in the creation of the world. The Vedic god Pradjapati was born from a loud breath, and he himself is nothing else than a song of laudation. The **Kathaka Upanishad** describes Athman uttering the basic creating word AUM (or OM) as an immense light. The body of the first men is transparent; it is made up of light and sound. Their life, their existence is a bright and sounding floatation. It is the veil of Maya which – by matter – weakens the sound of light. The sound can only penetrate through it in shreds. This is why later mankind cannot see the bright sound. This state of floatation, in which the world’s essence of sound and light can again be perceived, may only be reached by enormous efforts. For the Greeks, Apollo is the god of light and music. The same tradition lives on in the teaching of Christianity about the **verbum creans**, when God spoke first at the creation of light.

But what can the significance of all these be in the understanding of Jaspers’ philosophy, as any kind of concrete mysti-

cal or mythological explanation stands far from him? It is evidently the specificity and structure of the relation, the connection with existence is what connects Jaspers’ “theory” of ciphers, his ideas about the enlightening thinking, as well as the essence of making philosophy to these ancient basic concepts. Jaspers always emphasizes that philosophy and making philosophy mobilizes the man and existence as a whole. For him, philosophy is an “action of thinking”, an “inner action”, inner fulfillment, etc. It is thus something which urges the **entirety** of the abilities and sensibilities of the thinker to operate with the greatest possible effort. The thinking internal action activates all the kinds of openness and sensitivity. And this is exactly what is heard, enlightened, out of every myth of the creation – the self-origination of historical mankind – understanding these as the ciphers beyond the concrete contents of the transcendent. However, this is not some kind of “new interpretation” of myths which would make us better understand their origins, inner content, or concrete types. Understood as ciphers, myths are not fixed, on the contrary, they are floating.

Floatation (*die Schwebe*) is one of the most important and most difficult “concepts” of Jaspers’ line of thought to analyze. It is so because it is not a feeling or an impression that Bergson for instance analyzes when inquiring about the state generated by the succession of mere diversities while listening to music. Floatation is a transcendental (in the Kantian meaning of the term) existential spiritual situation, which philosophy creates in the form of complete willingness, determination and readiness, or availability. It is a transcendental skill because it shows that the encounter of transcendence and existence happens **in the world**; and that philosophy is nothing else than being **in-between** the origin and the purpose. “Transcending thinking”, philosophizing, as Jaspers does and explains, leads to a dead end in the opinion of many. The fact that no meaning is fixed, offers such a secure theoretical shelter where Jaspers can always draw back, without ever exposing himself to the danger of being weighed in contradictions.

In this perspective thus his thinking appears as impossible to be discussed, since the convictions born in this floating thinking may claim to be a personal spiritual experience of

such a kind that even their discussion may be hindered by serious barriers. There is a difference however between information and communication. Information is the **sharing** of an “independently” completed experience with others. The partners are informed about each other’s news or experiences. Communication is not merely a contact with a community perceived as audience, but it is the **communion** of existences searching-inquiring by the specific encounters and identities of our traditions in a historical present. So, what Jaspers calls communication refers to this more original community, and not some kind of competence to which we arrive by information. It is the community of questions, problems, themes, the unavoidable situations of historical existence, etc. in which this communication happens and an authentic contact may take place. Wittgenstein’s formulation is of a similar sense, when saying in the often misunderstood introduction of the **Tractatus** that his book is not a manual, but it speaks to those who also struggle with the immeasurable difficulties of such questions.

A serious, authentic communication can only take place in a common atmosphere created by the efforts connected to identical questions. It is because of this that the impossibility to discuss Jaspers’ thoughts refers to an external impossibility of discussion. But nothing is possible to be discussed externally. The efforts, completed one by one, and rooted in the age, in tradition, and in personal fate are the prerequisites for the circumstances of an authentic communication. Communication always contains the common existential experience of thoughts, sensations, and situations. But every man is a possible existence. This is a chance which cannot be given up until the last moment of individual being.

The thinker intends thus his words to be heard by everybody. But the thoughts exposed like this are merely **invitations**. The invitation is naturally an authentic existential, thinker’s act. Jaspers himself frequently practiced it. Not only in his writings circulated in many copies, but also when committed to radio waves in the form of lectures. However, the invitation is merely the **search** for communication. It is an identical existential level which is necessary for an authentic communication.

Thus, ciphers are alive, and their life is in the history forming from the existential tensions of the present and the beginnings. There are countless ciphers, and from their authentic reading in the presence of the Encompassing yet others are formed. The Gods of Jacob, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, or Luther are all ciphers. It would be thus a mistake to identify the Encompassing with something “determined”. In the usual sense Jaspers’s Encompassing is an empty term, because it does not yield a new knowledge which would make a previous one more accurate, but it “merely” changes our consciousness about existence and ourselves. The transformation of problems into themes and their follow-up reaches not only their boundaries, but their **roots** as well. Near the boundary the theme looks around.

Thus philosophizing, although not moving backwards, always sees its roots **in front of** itself, as a presence. Thus the enlightening thinking returns; however, not in a phenomenological circle which closes up thus, but, re-creating and re-living its themes in the new light, it finds new themes. Despite their movement, Jaspers’ themes do not have a solution, are not relaxed. Their meaning is exactly that they are uttered as a spectacle, and their authentic silence is identical with their perfecting **retake**: deepening for elevation in their roots, and in this elevation deciding ourselves.

It pertains to the nature of man that, waving-floatating every cipher (*in die Schwebe halten*) and transgressing them with a final effort, he attempts to exceed the obsessive fissure of the subject and object. This tendency, represented by Parmenides, Plotinos, Meister Eckhart and others, which is always present in the West, but seems to have been perfected only in the East, signals that basic philosophical-existential struggle to try to gain certainty in transcendence by raising above any ciphers. The **Borobudur temple** in Java is the architectural representation of this road. It pictures that elevation which, from the expressive-sensory forms of the human world to Buddha’s cipher and beyond, reaches to the point where everything calms down and becomes silent even as a reference and, finding its way into the pure “geometrical” form, and the emptiness of the wonderful distances and

heights of the sky, arrives beyond the cipher. But to what extent is this still thinking? – asks Jaspers.

In the kind of thinking Jaspers speaks about we think about something – be it even a cipher. Asian philosophers however, Nagardjuna and other Buddhist sources, use thinking for the annihilation of thinking, for stepping beyond the world also. The absorbing exercises of meditation which they practice do not mean a valid path for Western thinkers. Primarily it is not a “technical” impossibility, it is about the fact that the basic question for us is **whether or not we want the world**. It is not a recoil in front of the barriers of a road which otherwise has a lot to offer. After all it is about an existential tendency which is an element of our nature and can also be found in our own traditions. But in the ciphers the world becomes the theme of an existential decision.

None of the Buddhist sects wants the world – emphasizes Jaspers. It is an indifferent burden for them. We, on the contrary, **want** the world, want to live in the world, and do not want to deny the world. We cannot decide whether they found the truth there in the East, because those wise men, just like the mystics, are also only able to symbolically present what they had experienced. Thus in their lectures they were also blocked at the level of ciphers. However, we can decide whether we want, we accept the world and with/within it our existence as a thinker. Jaspers does not want to exceed these ciphers, to leave the world, to give up the seriousness of life and practice.

There are several ways to be a “Western” thinker. Thus, several types of Europe-centrism grows out as a product of the West. The tradition-guarding turn to the past often happens under the sign of the West. The profuse crisis of our culture and civilization, the rootless critical consciousness pours, as if on a conveyor belt, the easily made spiritual products of our Westernness. However, there is hardly any thinker who accepts and accomplishes his Westernness in the form and on the basis of an existential decision. Jaspers is not a Western thinker merely because of his birth and education, but because of an existential decision. This decision is born however in heights where the encounter with the Eastern spirituality is

also achieved. Jaspers is not constrained by his Westernness, he does not want to get rid of it and become Eastern in his spirit. But for a decision made at this level it is necessary to keep the ciphers floatating, not going beyond them. This is how a thinker’s action becomes the source of an authentic **personal commitment**.

Philosophy thus does not peak in statements which contain convictions, but in such a texture of ideas which **permeates a whole life**. The philosophy which is given, already linguistically formulated and crystallized is only memory, precondition, opportunity and support. These works of thinking are in fact only “half-truths” which have never been completed, and which only gain their value by completing those who do not only approach them as “systems of ideas”, but also accomplish them in their existence. Because philosophy is the greatest gift gods have ever offered to man: it is by this that man was offered **to his own self**, and can arrive at such a consciousness of his responsibility and freedom in which the necessity of communication already appears.

This is of course connected again to the essential and original musicality of philosophizing and philosophy. That is, to the fact that this musicality concerning philosophy means in a certain basic sense – mentioned already by Pythagoras – also a more original prevalence of music in thinking about our existence. Naturally, the words addressed to the (explicitly musical) hearing or the “listening soul” are not merely and primarily (musical) sounds, melodic fragments, or (musical) themes created by these... On the contrary, it is always the inviting and understanding wisdom of the possible experience of the **showing sound** and the hearing-listening seeing perfected in our presence and present.

If philosophy only listened and hearkened, or if it only “composed” for the understanding listening with sounds ... then this would naturally not be philosophy, but only music. But – beyond music – philosophy must not only be able to make heard, to listen, and to hear, but at the same time to look, to see, and to make seen. This – as we see and hear! – is one of the greatest difficulties of philosophy: to see and make seen that to which the sound always – but “only” – refers,

and hear and make heard that which “only” sounds – mostly unseen – around that what is seen.

Therefore, in that basic and original meaning of philosophy and philosophizing, which is probably only outlined in our age by the dialogue with Karl Jaspers, the essence of philosophy and philosophizing lies exactly in the skill, ability, and determination to essentially think over the original connection of Light and Sound. This is the way in which we humans, as beings amidst beings, liberally conduct our lives, existentially projecting – that is, making heard or seen – our entire lives as beings who feel and also think, with regard to our existential possibilities.

Despite his pedagogical inclinations built upon the urge for communication, Karl Jaspers was not the founder of a school. This is also understandable perhaps on the basis of those said above. His standpoint is a fairly uncomfortable one, equally for the individual, the power, the philosopher, and for God. Power can no longer expropriate us because the source of our freedom comes from higher regions; God can no longer lead us step by step because he has originally offered us to ourselves; and the individual does not possess his freedom together with his birth certificate but has to fight for it with the power, God, culture, himself, and his peers. And the philosopher does not have the task to make his environment fully comfortable.

That man is a goal in itself, that oppression is unworthy, that lying, cruelty, and hypocrisy are mean qualities, is something that one can learn by education or culture. Still: we accept oppression, we resign ourselves to being the toys of power, and see artful hypocrisy almost as our evident environment. It seems thus that the institutional transmittance of values by education, learning, and culture gives no sufficient reason and strength to transform the ideals thus acquired into the basis of a decision which would clearly guide us, pervading our whole life and essence, and would show us: who we are and what can we become.

So Jaspers did not found a school. This is so because approaching him is a personal, staggering intellectual and cultural experience which cannot be avoided. He became a

movement, a noise of breathing, an element of our air. Now, when it is not enough to inwardly reveal our traditions, when others’ shadowing memory stretches over our oblivion, Jaspers’ thirst for tradition is even more burning. It suggests that our traditions must be found in an authentic and critical culture, and on the basis of these we must fulfill our personal and indestructible existential accomplishments. This is how we can find and create values which can be validated and recognized in the permanent conjuncture of survival. The “fight fueled by love”, the “das liebende Kampf” can be enriching even here, in the conditions of a minority existence. Jaspers himself is the evidence that this is not “aufklärism” or utopia, but the accomplishing process of self-legitimizing systems of connections formed **behind** cultural achievements, beyond any *a priorism*, or institutional or legal assurances. This process must be personal and open, and not private and isolated. It must be fought for on all grounds.