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Systematics and unity of Jaspers' boundary situations

The four concrete boundary situations are undoubtedly among the best-known and most central themes of Jaspers' existential philosophy. They form what Jaspers calls a 'systematic,' which means that their totality presupposes a principle of unity and internal articulation. Jaspers makes it clear that the unity of the systematics of concrete boundary situations can be traced back to the structure of 'being-in-situation' and that this in turn can be traced back to the third of the conceptual determinations of existence, 'historicity' (*Geschichtlichkeit*). The present analysis of the systematics of boundary situations takes its starting point in clarifying the terms 'being-in-situation' and 'historicity.' It shows how the existential structure of historicity is immanent to each of the four concrete boundary situations and constitutes their common denominator. However, the question of the systematisation of boundary situations is not mentioned in Jaspers' text. The fact that they constitute a systematics seems to indicate that the four boundary situations considered in "Existential Elucidation" are not to be regarded as a mere collection of arbitrarily chosen examples, the number of which could be increased *ad libitum*. Therefore, there must be a deeper reason why precisely four concrete boundary situations are mentioned. As will be shown in the third section of this paper, this reason lies in the connection between the concrete boundary situations and the four spheres of mundane realities presented in "World Orientation". In turn, the structure of the systematics of fundamental boundary situations is relevant to the four existential relations to transcendence, which are presented in the third volume of "Philosophy, Metaphysics". This itinerary intends to work out the structure of the systematics of boundary situations anticipated in the four spheres of reality and present in the four existential relations to transcendence, which run through and connect the three fundamental moments of Jaspers' main work. The systematic unity of Jaspers' philosophy of existence resonates reflexively in the unity of the systematics of boundary situations, i. e., in the historicity of existence as being-in-situation on the one hand and radical openness to transcendence on the other.

In this study, extensive reference is made to Ricœur's interpretation of Jaspers' philosophy. Ricœur's work does, in fact, offer a sharp and profound analysis of Jaspers' thought, but it has not yet received the attention it deserves.

Ricœur devoted his first two monographic studies to the reconstruction of Jaspers' philosophy of existence: "Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence" (Dufr-

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enne & Ricœur 1947) and "Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers. Philosophie du mystère et philosophie du paradoxe" (Ricœur 1947). Of particular relevance for this paper are the sections on boundary situations (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 173–194; Ricœur 1947: 122–156) and on existential relations to transcendence (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 270–285; Ricœur 1947: 256–261; 323–349). On the Ricœurian interpretation of Jaspers' existential philosophy, see my two contributions: Basile 2018/19 and Basile 2024. The present study is to be regarded as their continuation.

Ricœur's main merit is perhaps that he made it clear that, for Jaspers, the philosophy of existence cannot be separated from the philosophy of transcendence. This insight proves to be particularly fruitful when applied to the elucidation of the historicity of existence and concrete boundary situations, for it shows that Jaspers' notion of the boundary expresses not only the finitude and, as it were, the wretchedness of the human condition, but also and above all the radical openness of existence to a beyond the boundary, to its origin and its ultimate end. The deepest meaning of boundary situations lies precisely in the revelation of this openness of existence to transcendence.

1 Being-in-situation, i.e. the first boundary situation

For Jaspers, the notion of historicity constitutes one of the three fundamental existential concepts alongside freedom and communication. More precisely, it corresponds to the determination of the *An-sich-Sein* (*being-in-itself*) of existence. In fact, the first boundary situation is precisely being-in-situation, which in turn is nothing other than the historicity of existence (PhEII: 183–184).

The structure of being-in-situation is so relevant that Jaspers addresses it at the beginning of his work "Philosophy". When I ask what being is, I realise that I, who ask this question, am neither at the beginning nor at the end. I am asking an absolute question, namely that of being, from a relative perspective, namely that of my own situation. A first consequence of this is that being-in-situation excludes any timeless, abstract, total knowledge. Knowledge about being is always bound to the temporal, concrete, subjective, and partial condition of existing. At the same time, Jaspers states that the situation has "historical depth" (*geschichtliche Tiefe*, PhEI: 44). The situation is "the historically conveyed, momentarily complete appearance of being" (PhEI: 44). The consequences of being-in-situation therefore concern not only knowledge but also existence as a unity of being and appearance, more precisely as being that has appearance in the empirical world: "This unity of mine with my phenomenal existence is my historicity; to

be aware of it is a historic consciousness" (PhEII: 106). Existence is being-in-situation, i. e. the embodiment of being in a determined empirical situation.

Ricœur juxtaposes Jaspers' notions of boundary situations and historicity with the theme of incarnation in Gabriel Marcel's philosophy, to which they lend greater breadth and philosophical density (Ricœur 1947: 122; for Ricœur's exposition of the notion of incarnation in Gabriel Marcel's thought, see Ricœur 1947: 97–122).

To illustrate the relationship between situation and historicity in Jaspers, Ricœur traces three moments that lead from "the undergone situation" (*la situation subie*) to historicity through the "transfigured situation" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 175–183). These three moments correspond respectively to the three transitions from existence in the empirical world to consciousness in general, from the empirical situation to possible existence, and from possible existence to actual existence (Ricœur 1947: 123–132). It is thus a matter of considering the situation in relation to each of the three fundamental areas of existence: world orientation, existential elucidation, and metaphysical transcendence.

The most basic form of situation is the empirical situation. There are three degrees of the empirical situation: the topographical context, the environment that can be changed by means of technique, and the objectifying view of history (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 175 f.; Ricœur 1947: 125 f.).

In "Karl Jaspers", Ricœur considers only the first two degrees of the empirical situation. Ricœur addresses the objectifying view of history as an empirical situation only in "Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers".

The consciousness that orients itself in the world realises that it initially finds itself in a topographical context, i. e. in a universal environment that is common to humans, living organisms and things. At a higher degree, empirical consciousness perceives the living environment, and thus its own situation, as changeable by means of technique. Finally, the third degree of empirical situations is that which understands the past, and even the present, as the objects of objectifying historical knowledge. The world is thus grasped in one of three ways: as a bundle of objective determinations offered to scientific knowledge, as changeable by technique, or as historical facticity. In each case, consciousness orients itself in the world by assuming the role of the pure spectator who observes its own situation from a distance by constituting itself as consciousness in general. In doing so, however, it discovers the limits inherent in each degree of the empirical situation. As my own, my situation is unique and irreplaceable. Therefore, it can never become an object of universal scientific knowledge that applies equally to every other individual. In other words, *my* situation is opaque to scientific knowledge. Moreover, every situation can be changed by technique. What is radically unchangeable, however, is my being-in-situation. After all, my personal history,

which I alone experience uniquely, can never be the object of an objectifying, scientific, historical *(historisches*) consciousness. It is given only to a historical (*geschichtliches*) consciousness in the existential sense.

In each of these three cases, the attempt to distance oneself from one's situation comes up against three insurmountable limits of the empirical situation: intellectual opacity, irrevocability, and historicity of the situation.

Consciousness in general is a first form of transcendence of the empirical situation, but as a structure of objective knowledge, it remains immanent to orientation in the world. Intellectual opacity, i. e. the failure of consciousness in general to appropriate its own situation by reducing it to an object of knowledge, indicates that transcending the boundaries of the empirical situation is possible only through a transition to possible existence. Possible existence, however, is not yet lived existence, but only the stage of philosophical reflection as 'elucidation'. As Ricœur notes, "[…] to think is not yet to exist; I am not yet what I know in philosophy" – "[…] penser n'est pas exister ; je ne suis pas encore ce que je sais en philosophie" (Ricœur 1947: 124) This is why, before delving into the transition from empirical situation to possible existence, Ricœur examines the transition from possible existence to realised existence, i. e. the transition to the transfigured situation (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947).

It has already been said that, for Jaspers, everything in my situation is always liable to change. What cannot change, however, is *my own* being-in-situation. Always being in a certain situation – being a certain gender, a certain age, having this or that eye colour, etc. – is first and foremost perceived as an "undergone situation" – "situation subie" (Dufrenne & Ricœur: 175), that is, as a restriction, obstacle, limitation in relation to the representation of the ideal human. However, as Ricœur notes, Jaspers states that the limit of my being-in-situation can also be assumed by my freedom. In this case, to the extent that the limit of my situation becomes mine, and I adopt it as if I had always wanted it, I have the possibility of becoming authentically myself. The narrowness of the limit is transfigured into the depth of existence: "Once definition (*Bestimmtheit*), which seemed to be nothing but resistance and confinement (*Enge*), is understood as a boundary situation, it becomes the impenetrable depth of phenomenal Existenz itself" (PhEII: 187). Ricœur speaks of a "conversion from narrowness toward depth under the sign of freedom" – "conversion de l'étroitesse en profondeur sous le signe de la liberté" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 177).

Ricœur illustrates this point by recalling two examples. The first is one's relationship to one's parents (PhEII: 189 – 190; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 177– 178). Since one does not choose one's parents, and even their meeting seems to be the result of countless random combinations, the relationship to one's own birth is characterised by the narrowness of a situation undergone. But the moment I accept them

as my parents, I enter an absolute and exclusive relationship of genuine filial piety and intimate communication with them. The second is chance, which seems to dominate my life, e. g. in chance encounters that seem to turn me in a puppet in the grip of blind circumstances. Chance can, however, be assumed and transfigured by freedom. By giving up cultivating the illusory pleasure of a happier existence in another body or another historical era, I can finally embrace *my* destiny as my own existence (PhEII: 190 – 191; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 178).

Ricœur notes that Jaspers' notion of a transfigured situation differs as much from Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit* as from Sartre's philosophy of freedom (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 176 – 177). Ricœur's brief insights on this point are worth exploring. They suggest that the juxtaposition of Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit* with the Jaspersian situation is superficial. Certainly, 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*) is part of the first ontological character of *Befindlichkeit* (Heidegger 1927/2010: 135 – 136). *Befindlichkeit* remains, however, a fundamental structure of Being-in-the-world – "It is a fundamental existential mode of the *equiprimordial disclosedness* of world, Dasein-with and existence because this disclosure itself is essentially being-in-the-world" (Heidegger 1927/2010: 133) – that is, essentially immanent to the world itself. – "*In attunement* (Befindlichkeit) *lies existentially a disclosive submission* (Angewiesenheit) *to world out of which things that matter to us* (Angehendes) *can be encountered*" (Heidegger 1927/2010: 134). While the passivity of the situation undergone for Jaspers is irrecusable and its transcendence supposes transcending the world, the only transcendence possible for the Heideggerian Dasein is not transcendence of the world but transcendence in the world: "We name *world* that *toward which* Dasein as such transcends, and shall now determine transcendence; as belonging to this structure, the concept of world may be called *transcendental*" (Heidegger 1928/2009: 109). This transcendence is entirely subsumed in freedom as the absolute origin of the foundation – "Freedom as transcendence, however, is not only a unique 'kind' of ground, but the *origin of ground in general. Freedom is freedom for ground*" (Heidegger 1928/2009: 127) –, in which the finitude of Dasein is revealed – "The essence of the finitude of Dasein is, however, unveiled in *transcendence as freedom for ground*" (Heidegger 1928/2009: 135).

Sartre's conception of situation differs from both Heidegger's and Jaspers' – see the introductory pages of the chapter "Freedom and facticity: the situation" in Sartre 1943/1992 (619 – 629). According to Sartre, the concept corresponding to Jaspers' 'undergone situation' is used as a common-sense argument against freedom. We are, in fact, powerless in the face of the conditions of chance. We cannot in any way escape the social class or nation into which we are born, nor the diseases we inherit or the determinism of nature. Sartre notes, however, that this objection is merely apparent. Instead, he continues, the rock that is impossible for me to move can become useful if I decide to climb on it to observe the land-

scape. In other words, the situation that seems to limit my freedom shows its limiting character only in relation to the ends that my own freedom imposes on my action. As is commonly known, for Sartre we are "condemned to freedom" (Sartre 1943/1992: 623), in the sense that freedom is original and coincides with the very fact of existing. Freedom cannot be the result of a choice, since to choose we must already be free. Therefore, the factuality of a situation can be neither the cause, the reason, nor the necessary condition of freedom: "The given in no way enters into the constitution of freedom since freedom is interiorized as the internal negation of the given" (Sartre 1943/1992: 626).

Jaspers replaces Heidegger's and Sartre's conceptions of the situation with an argument he lends from Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel's philosophy. Jaspers claims that the transition from the world to freedom takes place as the overcoming of a double illusion concerning both knowledge and action (Ricœur 1947: 126 – 129). As long as it remains immersed in world orientation, *Dasein* represents itself as a limitation with respect to an imaginary universal: "The universal delimited by my existence in a definite situation is purely imaginary […]" (PhEII: 185). That is, I first think the abstract universal of man in general, from which I then try to derive my concrete individuality. In this way, I construct my singularity through an infinity of abstract determinations derived from the human being as a whole, and come to interpret my situation as a diminution of the human being as a whole, conceived in terms of general characteristics (age, gender, health, family background, profession, etc.). However, to think of the individual in contrast to the general notion is to make the concrete being irrational in opposition to the rationality of the universal idea. From Hegel's point of view, the negative moment constituted by the irrational of concrete singularity can be absorbed into the concept. For the same reason, the individual is thought of as part of a whole, situated within a total order that embraces economic planning as well as social and political hierarchy. Kierkegaard contrasts this view with the radical irreducibility of the singularity of individual existence to the generality of a concept and the totality of a system. At the very moment in which I become aware of this irreducibility of my situation, I think of myself as not being identical to it. Similarly, Jaspers contrasts the idea of a caesura and laceration of *Dasein* to Heidegger's idea of transcendence into the world from within Being-in-the-world: "[…] in comprehending it [= my situation] as a possibility that might as well have been different – rather than as a possibly self-based positivity – I stand outside it, as it were" (PhEII: 185).

The second illusion that can mark the empirical situation is regarding freedom as "the conquest of resistance, the termination of confinement, the expanse of a resistless existence" (PhII: 186). This illusion is the chimera of a freedom that dominates matter and is in perfect accordance with every spiritual reality. Jaspers observes that what we control and know are, in reality, only finite events and sys-

tems. The causality of all events, however, remains boundless and therefore impossible to submit to finite freedom. Dependence on natural conditions and the will of others constitute inescapable obstacles and resistance to which our freedom never ceases to bump up against.

The failure of objectifying reason to overcome every obstacle and resistance through thought and action leads to conversion. What was perceived as mere 'obstacle' (*Schranke*) in the empirical situation becomes boundary (*Grenze*) (PhEII: 177–178), i. e. the possibility of transcending mere empirical existence: "The word *boundary* implies that there is something else, but it indicates at the same time that this other thing is not for an existing consciousness" (PhEII: 178–179). The reference to Kant's critical project is evident. Indeed, in the "Transcendental Doctrine of Method", Kant specifies that the task of the critique of reason is to demonstrate "not merely *limits* but rather the determinate *boundaries* of [*reason*]" (Kant 1781/1998: A 761/B 789). Kant is referring to the fact that, in metaphysics, scepticism is right to reject the boundless claims of philosophical dogmatism. For Kant, however, it is wrong to invoke sceptical arguments to exclude any use of pure reason beyond the boundaries of possible experience, since this implies to make empirical knowledge the limit rather than the boundary of reason, whereas reason is, by its natural inclination, inclined to transcend that boundary. Jaspers' philosophy of existence is intended to be, like Kant's philosophy, a philosophy of the boundary, which has transcending as its fundamental method. Kant's transcendental philosophy explores the conditions for the transition from the domain of theoretical reason to that of practical reason. For Jaspers, the concept of situation reveals the boundary that enables the transition from the realm of world-orientation to the realm of existential elucidation. In this sense, the transition from the situation undergone to the situation assumed, i. e. the experience of the situation no longer as a mere obstacle but as a boundary, signifies a transcending towards existence: "The boundary situation belongs to Existenz, just as the situations belong to the consciousness that stays immanent. […] To experience boundary situations is the same as Existenz" (PhEII: 179).

The limit separates and connects situation and existence. This means that existence, though transcending the situation, remains connected to it. This conjunction of empirical being and possible existence precisely designates historical being, in which "the empirical order becomes the *appearance* of the *being* I am" – "[…] l'ordre empirique devient l'apparence de l'être que je suis" (Ricœur 1947: 129). This unity is paradoxical and cannot be communicated. It can only be explored through the analysis of its various harmonics. Ricœur highlights four of these harmonics. There is nothing random about the number. Instead, it anticipates, on the one hand, the four limit situations and, on the other, the four attitudes of existence before transcendence.

The first figure of historicity is the unity of existence and *Dasein* (PhEII: 107). That is, the theory of existence is the attempt to grasp the union of body and soul, which the theories of intellect inevitably represent as an insuperable dualism and a paradoxical concept. As Descartes says, it does not seem

> that the human mind is capable of conceiving very distinctly, and at the same time, the distinction between the soul and the body and their union, since to do so it is necessary to conceive them as one single thing and at the same time to conceive them as two, which is contradictory (Descartes 1643, Letter to Elizabeth of June 28, [AT 3: 693]; cf. Elisabeth of Bohemia & Descartes 1596–1650/2007: 70).

Secondly, historicity is the union of freedom and necessity (PhEII: 109 f.), which, Ricœur notes, lies in the interval opened by Kant between the empirical self and the intelligible self, overcoming the antinomy of determinism and freedom (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 180). Thirdly, historicity is "the union of time and eternity" (PhEII: 110 f.). In other words, it is *Geschichtlichkeit* as opposed to *Historie:* the latter is the spectacle of history that is offered to objectifying historical knowledge; the former is the history that historical consciousness makes and lives. Freedom is eternal insofar as it consists in an act at the boundary of the world, while time is the phenomenon of eternity: "Historicity is precisely eternity living in time, or history penetrated by eternity" – "L'historicité est précisément l'éternité vivante dans le temps, ou l'histoire pénétrée d'éternité" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 180). For Jaspers, it is the unity of the fluidity of the Bergsonian notion of duration and the irruption of Kierkegaard's notion of the authentic instant, i. e. the instant of decision, as opposed to the instant conceived as the temporal atom, which has no connection to either the past or the future. Finally, historicity is the character of the concrete as opposed to the intemporal, the abstract and the universal. It is in this sense properly historical: the action that does not allow itself to be fixed in a system of ends or a universal maxim (PhEII: 111–114).

2 The concrete boundary situations

Previous analyses have pointed out that historicity has two characteristic features. Historicity presupposes, on the one hand, the failure of objectifying reasons to derive the meaning of existence, and on the other, the paradoxical character of the historical being. In addition to the fundamental boundary situation, Jaspers recognises four concrete boundary situations:

> While the first boundary situation makes men aware of the historicity in all existential existence, *particular boundary situations* – death, suffering, struggle, guilt – affect each individual as general ones within his specific historicity of the moment (PhEII: 184).

Jaspers already deals with boundary situations in his "Psychologie der Weltanschauungen" (PW: 235–263). There are, however, some differences from the version in "Existential Elucidation". In "Psychologie der Weltanschauungen," the fundamental boundary situation is not historicity but suffering. Four individual boundary situations are then listed: struggle, death, chance and guilt. In "Existential Elucidation", suffering will become one of the four concrete boundary situations, replacing chance. Struggle, death and guilt are present in both lists, but in different positions.

Ricœur notes that the latter two boundary situations arise despite ourselves, while the former two proceed from our activity (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 183 f.; Ricœur 1947: 132–134). All four particular boundary situations highlight lesions in our empirical being and represent four respective modes of the failure that wrest us from the oblivion of the radically historical condition, indulging in that "noble form of Pascalian amusement" (Ricœur 1947: 133) which is world orientation. At the same time, each of the concrete boundary situations leads to a paradox. This means that historicity delineates itself in each of the boundary situations.

The first concrete boundary situation is death (PhEII 193–201; PW: 245–255; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 184–187; Ricœur 1947: 134–139). For gaining knowledge, death is accessible only in general, as an 'objective fact' (*objektives Faktum*) (PhEII: 193 f.). Knowing that I too must die, because all multicellular beings die, in no way means becoming aware of my death as a singular, concrete event of my existence. The death I can experience is always the death of others, while my own death is not an object of direct experience for me. However, my own death may be anticipated by the loss of a loved one, my own suffering, or the irreversible decline of my faculties, if the trauma caused by these events causes me to embrace the prospect of the ultimate end of my empirical existence in all its radicality. This means, for Jaspers, renouncing all the seductions of the 'unrestricted will to live' (*'der unbeschränkte Lebenswille'*) (PhEII: 196), for which death is only an eventuality to be either avoided by all means or to be concealed from myself by all forms of Pascal's 'divertissement.' Philosophy itself has highly contributed to masking the radical meaning of death by forging supposed proofs of the immortality of the soul and encouraging the illusory representation that death is the transition to another quasi-empirical mode of life (PhEII: 197).

Ricœur extends this Jaspersian reflection with some considerations of his own (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 187–188; Ricœur 1947: 136–139). Precisely by ac-

cepting the possibility of the nullification of my empirical existence, my death begins to be transcended. Realising that death is nullification induces one to, in fact, discriminate the futile from the essential

> [...] tout ce qui tirait son importance du souci temporel et de buts finis est frappé de ruine et dès maintenant rongé par l'angoisse de mourir; par contre, tout ce qui tirait sa valeur de l'inconditionnalité et lui donnait seulement une expression passagère et fragile garde son sens [...] (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 185).

If at the end of this sorting there were nothing left, if one came to the conclusion that life is absolutely void, the thought of death would lead to absolute despair and an attitude of renunciation. However, Jaspers' philosophy leaves no room for nihilism. Authentic existence discovers, in the face of death, an even deeper anxiety, which is that of losing its authenticity. It is the anxiety of the 'second death' in the Christian tradition, which eclipses the fear of physical death.

Ricœur attributes this notion to St. Paul (Ricœur 1947: 138). In fact, the expression 'second death' ('ὁ δεύτερος θάνατος') recurs in Revelation (Rev. 2:11; 20:6). It receives the existential poignancy alluded to by Ricœur in the "Laudes creaturarum" of St. Francis of Assisi (see also the paragraph "Twofold Death" in PhEII: 199–200).

In death as boundary situation, there is an openness to transcendence unknown to Heidegger's 'being-for-death'. For Heidegger, death is the supreme possibility because it concludes the totality of human reality. As a result, existence is a being-for-death embraced lucidly and courageously. For Jaspers, however, death is only a particular situation and not the supreme possibility of existence. In this sense, Jaspers is much closer to Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 185–186).

In sacrifice, i. e. in heroic death and the death of the beloved, Ricœur sees two examples for the opening of death to transcendence in Jaspers (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 186–187; PhEII: 194–195; 200–201). The hero who offers his life for a reason he believes in is moved neither by self-hatred nor by disgust with life. On the contrary, in death, he finds peace and fulfillment. What Ricœur suggests is that death as a heroic sacrifice is transcended by freedom. In the loss of a loved one, there is communication that can transcend death. Indeed, due to the absence of communication, the loneliness created by death is not comparable to absolute loneliness. It is not loneliness that is present in the silence of communication, but a secret relation to the missing loved one : "[...] the object of true love remains existentially present [...]" (PhEII: 194). The loyalty to the beloved creates a certainty which cannot be accessed by knowledge: "What death destroys is phenomenal; it is not being itself" (PhEII: 195).

Death is open to transcendence but never cancelled. This tension results in the paradox of the historicity of existence. Without transcendence, death would be the end, pure and simple, and existence would be entirely dominated by the anxiety of losing life. In contrast, transcendence, understood as enfranchisement from death, would become the symbol of escapism, inability to live, and self-hatred. Ricœur sums up the paradox of historicity with the double formula: "To love life without losing oneself in it, to love death without taking refuge in it […]" – "Aimer la vie sans se perdre en elle, aimer la mort sans se réfugier en elle […]" (Ricœur 1947: 138–139).

Regarding Jaspers' notion of suffering (PhEII: 201–204; PW: 235–242), Ricœur notes similar dimensions of failure and paradox (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 187–188; Ricœur 1947: 139). On the one hand, suppressing suffering is the goal of medical knowledge and political action, a goal that remains an unattainable utopia. On the other hand, the concept of suffering as a boundary situation presupposes that it is a structural condition of existence, because if all forms of suffering were finally defeated, authentic existence would be at rest.

Jaspers states, "If existence were nothing but happiness, possible Existenz would stay dormant" (PhEII: 203). Ricœur comments, in this regard, that suffering as a situation-limit arises from: "[…] l'assurance que la souffrance […] n'est pas un accident externe, mais un itinéraire intérieure" (Ricœur 1947: 139).

Existence lies beyond two opposite extremes: the utopia of a world without suffering and resignation. Embracing suffering as a boundary situation means, instead, believing that happiness cannot be achieved once and for all, but must be welcomed as a free and precarious gift. As in the case of heroic death, one then discovers that there can be a vocation in suffering for the sake of others and the world.

Jaspers' reflection on struggle stems from the observation that the world in which we live is pervaded by violence (PhEII 204–215; PW: 243–245; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 188–189; Ricœur 1947: 139–141). Ricœur notes that struggle always occurs between individuals, groups, and states over things, power, and honours. There is no way to escape the struggle. Extreme pacifism involves renouncing action by sacrificing those close to me and those who need my help against violence. The idea of 'perpetual peace' is itself a utopia. Nonetheless, it is legitimate to develop plans and techniques that would achieve it, provided one remembers that "the human condition allows only impure compromises between force and right, themselves won and maintained by force" – "[…] la condition humaine ne permet que des compromis impurs entre la force et le droit, eux-mêmes conquis et maintenus par la force […]" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 189).

Accepting struggle as a boundary situation opens the possibility of rising from the violent struggle for mere physical existence to the violence-free struggle for

authentic existence, which Jaspers calls "loving struggle" ("*Kampf in der Liebe*") (PhEII: 212). In loving struggle, I do not try to win over the other person. Instead, I constantly question all my certainties and everything I believe I possess in any form. Loving struggle thus involves fighting as much against the other as against oneself. Indeed, "authentic love is as terribly demanding as it is humbly welcoming" – "[…] l'amour authentique est aussi terriblement exigeant qu'il est humblement accueillant […]" (Ricœur 1947: 140). And in this, one must grasp the paradoxical dimension of the combat between existences.

Like struggle, guilt differs from death and suffering because it is not the result of an action suffered by an external accident.

The notion of guilt is thematised by Jaspers not only in regard to the four particular boundary situations (PhEII: 215 ff), but also in several sections of the second and third volumes of "Philosophie": in relation to character (PhEII: 32; 44), communication (PhEII: 55 – 56), ill-will (PhEII 150 – 153), transcendence (PhEII: 42; 171 – 174), good conscience (PhEII: 237), defiance (*Trotz*) (PhEIII: 64 – 65), and the passion of the night (PhEIII: 97 – 98).

On the other hand, unlike struggle, guilt does not presuppose the presence of another existence. Guilt proceeds entirely from me. Whatever I do, and despite my intentions, it is not possible for me to prevent my actions from harming or injuring anyone: "[…] guilt is in the secrecy of our acts, in the confusion and impurity of our motives, in the choice that excludes a thousand possible ones and consecrates my limitedness […]" – "[…] la faute est dans le secret de nos actes, dans la confusion et l'impureté des motifs, dans le choix qui exclut mille possibles et consacre mon étroitesse […]" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 190). The root of guilt lies, then, in the necessity of realising myself in the world as a finite freedom, in this concrete existence and not in another. Assuming this character, *Sosein*, constitutes me in this particular way and not in another: "Character is the first given that limits me, situates me and condemns me to be guilty in all my operations" (Ricœur 1947: 143). It is in this sense, for Ricœur, one must understand Jaspers, when he says: "I may even hold myself guilty of being that way" (PhEII: 33). To access existence, I must assume the givenness of my condition. This means assuming my character as if I had chosen it. But since my character is at the root of my sin, assuming my character means taking on my own guilt. My beginning is prior to my freedom. However, by making my origin my own, I make myself guilty: "[…] guilt is unlimited and inevitable. However, it is this guilt that I take upon myself, just as I take upon myself the origin *which I* cannot will, but *from the bosom of which* I will […]" – "[…] la faute est illimitée et inévitable. C'est cela pourtant que je prends sur moi, exactement comme je prends sur moi l'origine que je ne peux vouloir, mais du sain de laquelle je veux […]" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 191).

Ricœur points out that this conception of guilt is not to be confused with what Jaspers calls 'ill will' (*der böse Wille*) (PhEII: 150–153; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 192–193) and does not, properly speaking, constitute guilt. Ill will is not an experience, nor can it even be said to be real. Rather, it is an arbitrary construction, comparable to an unverifiable hypothesis, such as Descartes' evil genius. It represents the will that, with all the lucidity of authentic existence, in an absolute way, knowingly rejects possible existence, choosing nothingness. It corresponds to the mythical figure of the devil. I represent it to myself as "my dangerous other self" (PhEII: 152) at the very moment when I become aware that I am a good will. It is the thought that reminds me of the danger of falling back into evil the moment I delude myself that I have defeated it for good.

The Jaspersian notion of guilt radically transforms the Christian conception of original sin, according to which the fall occurs from an initial state of innocence. In the biblical and Christian sense, guilt is not coextensive with being, and being is not coextensive with historicity. The fall of the first parents marks the beginning of history, though history is not the beginning of being (on Ricœur's interpretation of the biblical account of the fall see Ricœur 1967: 232–278). Jaspers, by contrast, is part of a line of thought that assigns to guilt not the moral meaning of decay but the ontological meaning of the limitation of existence. This strand, which began with Kierkegaard, reaches its fullest expression with Heidegger.

In an ontological view of guilt, ethical nuance is lost, that is, the double certainty revealed by remorse: "that a value has been violated and that I could have acted and been otherwise" – "[La faute] n'est plus, à proprement parler, ce que révèle le remords, c'est-à-dire la double assurance qu'une valeur a été violée et que j'aurais pu agir et être autrement [...]" (Ricœur 1947: 144). In return, one becomes aware of the inability of freedom to fully realise oneself and, in this sense, to be radically inadequate, existentially flawed. The consequence of this *felix culpa* is the discovery of my openness to transcendence. A passage from Jaspers summarises this point with great clarity:

> Real freedom is never complete freedom. In its most radical realization I confront its most abysmal deficiency: I am really free, but neither fully nor even close to possibly becoming fully free. It is in this very failure of the realization, this failure of which I am guilty by being free, that relates me to my transcendence (PhEII: 173).

At the end of this analysis, one can derive the twofold significance of boundary situations for Jaspers' philosophy – "The two meanings of the limit-situation are thus brought together: it is the limit of knowledge and action, and the appeal to the Transcendent that limits the world and existence" – "Les deux sens de la situation-limite sont ainsi réunis: elle est la limite du savoir et de l'action, et l'appel

à la Transcendance qui limite le monde et l'existence" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 188). It highlights, first, that it is a philosophy of failure. The world orientation showed the failure of logic (due to insuperable antinomies) and of physics (due to the observation that nothing subsists indefinitely). *Existenzerhellung* shows that even existence does not have its own foundation in itself.

Ricœur emphasises that, for Jaspers, the precarious character of my reality, that is, my historicity, must be extended to the totality of empirical being. To recognise the historicity of the world is precisely to affirm that it is not the absolute, but an appearance in which, nevertheless, transcendence is revealed as the all-other of the world and of freedom (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 193–194).

Failure has a first positive function, in that it is the humiliation necessary for learning the truth of man's non-self-sufficiency: "Failure protects man from the fundamental illusion, inherent in carnal individuation, that he can realize his earthly career" – "[…] l'échec protège l'homme de l'illusion fondamentale, inhérente à l'individuation charnelle, de pouvoir réussir sa carrière terrestre […]" (Ricœur 1947: 149). Therefore, it is precisely through failure that the only path to redemption passes: "I can want neither to die, nor to suffer, nor to fight, nor to sin, although being and grace abound only among these ruins" – "[…] je ne peux vouloir ni mourir, ni souffrir, ni combattre, ni pécher, bien que l'être et la grâce n'abondent que parmi ces ruines" (Ricœur 1947: 149). The lesson to be drawn from the boundary situations is that absolute freedom is nonsense, and that freedom is not realised without the limits it encounters in its opposite. "Finally, absolute freedom is a contradiction in terms. Without an antithesis, freedom becomes empty" (PhEII: 170), i. e. without necessity. The inevitability of this paradox is the second salient feature of boundary situations. Accepting boundary situations means accepting myself as I am, recognising the necessity of my being this way and not otherwise. It is the paradox of freedom and predestination (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 285). Absolute freedom would not properly make sense if it were to consist in the arbitrary choice between what I am, myself, and the identity of another.

Thus, Ricœur highlights the paradoxical nature of Jaspers' notion of freedom, which points to the dual relationship of existence to transcendence. On the one hand, freedom, since it cannot be the origin of itself, must have a foundation other than itself: "[…] what I make of myself, I alone cannot make of myself" (PhEII: 174) – "[…] ich kann nicht, was ich aus mir bin, nur durch mich sein […]" (PhII: 199). On the other hand, since the choice of myself is necessary, it is made "from the bosom of the Unique" ("*du sein de l'Unique*") (Ricœur 1947: 258). In the former case, one could speak of a kind of argument *a contingentia*; in the latter of a kind of ontological argument. Both arguments converge toward transcendence, grasped in the first case as origin and in the second as absolute.

This paradox highlights the tendency of freedom to annul itself in transcendence: "This antinomy expresses the transcendent union of the sense of freedom and the sense of necessity" (PhII: 174). Thus conceived, transcendence "is less the supreme You in which freedom is realized than the All-other in which it is abolished" (Ricœur 1947: 260). The paradox of freedom is to be, at the same time, a desire for arising and for annihilation.

3 The systematic order of concrete boundary situations

Jaspers highlights the importance of historicity for the "Systematics of Boundary Situations" (PhEII: 183). Indeed, as noted, it constitutes the unity and, so to speak, the common root of the four concrete boundary situations. What neither Jaspers nor Ricœur explain, however, is why the concrete boundary situations under consideration are exactly four. To claim that it is just a random aggregate of four exemplary cases and that the list could be extended at will is not a satisfactory answer, as it would not explain why the four situations considered form a systematics. It is clear that, for Jaspers, the concept of 'systematics' is an alternative to the idea of a system in Hegel's sense; however, it still expresses an instance of relative order and coherence.

The path of the world orientation leads to the dissolution of the representation of the world as a totality, overcoming all totalising visions proposed by scholastic or Hegelian systems. There is no absolutised totality of mechanical, organic, or other concepts. A system of totality is succeeded only by a systematics, i. e. relative categorial and methodological orders (PhEI: 133). For Ricœur, the antithesis to which Jaspers' philosophy of existence arrives, implies the overcoming of both the principle of contradiction and the Hegelian conciliation, opening the way "to an ontology of torn being [...] which excludes the system and allows for an ordered and coherent systematics" – "à une ontologie de l'être déchiré, [...] qui exclut le système et permet une systématique ordonnée et cohérente" (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 347). One cannot philosophise except in a systematic way. But the result of philosophising can never be a total and final system (PhEI: 278 – 280). What philosophising produces is never anything other than systematics, i. e. a partial, provisional, and relative order, destined to be overcome:

> There is no confusing the work of philosophy with philosophizing as the lucidity of Existenz; as a thought structure, even a substantial system can never be more than a function. Our systematics thus remains unable to become a system (PhEI: 283).

In Jaspers' text, some clues seem to point, albeit implicitly, toward this principle of order. Since the representation of the world as a totality is impossible, the constitution of a system of the whole is also impossible. Instead, in the *World Orientation*, a mere 'systematics' which consists of "relative categorial and methodological orders" (PhEI: 133) takes over. For this very reason, there is not a science of situations, but a plurality of sciences: "What we call a situation is not just a reality governed by natural laws. It is a *sense related reality*—neither psychological nor physical, but both in one. [...] This reality is not an object of one special science but of many" (PhEII: 177). Thus, situations are methodically investigated by biology, by economics, and by history (PhEII: 177). In this passage, the reference to the four domains of the human condition – physical, biological, psychic, and spiritual — is evident. Any situation can be grasped from any of these points of view, each of which corresponds to a precise boundary and transition from one region of being to another.

To understand the systematic order of the four concrete boundary situations, it is necessary to return to the four domains of the human condition that Jaspers first establishes in the appendix of "Psychologie der Weltanschauungen" devoted to the doctrine of Kantian ideas (PW: 423 – 441). Reinterpreting Kant's thoughts, Jaspers concludes that there are three ideas corresponding to the totality of the domains of experience: the mechanism, the organism, and the soul. Everything spatio-temporal can only be subsumed under the idea of the mechanism. However, the world of nature in its totality cannot be reduced to a mechanism. The organism is the idea of life (PW: 428). Finally, the soul is the totality of experience, centred on the subject (PW: 430). Three spheres of experience correspond to these three ideas: the totality of mechanistic experience, i. e. the world, in which neither the soul nor the organism is contemplated; the totality of life, i. e. biological experience, which does not include the soul; and the totality of the soul's intelligible experience, i. e. personality. Regarding personality, two ideas are given: the idea of personality as the domain of experience, i. e. as the totality of relations intelligible to the intellect, and personality as the idea of individual, concrete personality. The first is known theoretically, only in relation to the totality of experience, that is, the macrocosm. The second is known only practically, metaphysically, without objectification (PW: 433). With this classification of ideas, Jaspers is evidently referring, respectively, to the representation of nature as the object of transcendental philosophy and teleological judgment in the "Third Critique", as well as to the dual determination of the subject as empirical (the object of objective knowledge), on the one hand, and as transcendental-metaphysical, on the other.

This classification of Kantian ideas underlies the classification of the four spheres of world realities introduced in "World Orientation". Indeed, the world, far from being reducible to a totality, is composed of "four original worlds"

(PhEI: 136). These four worlds are sharply separated in such a way that no transition from one to the other is possible. They are connected with each other only insofar as "they form a series in which each one presupposes the one before" (PhEI: 136).

Jaspers adds:

> And the reality of each subsequent world is established by the preceding one: life by unorganic matter and its laws, the soul by life, the mind by the soul. No later sphere exists without he one before, but the earlier ones exist without the ones that follow (PhEI: 138).

The four domains in question thus correspond to inorganic nature, life as organism, soul as lived experience, and spirit as thinking consciousness applied to objects (PhEI: 136–137).

Although Jaspers does not state this explicitly, it seems clear that the four spheres of reality in the world each correspond to a specific situation and that each of them is therefore connected to a specific boundary situation. The two passive boundary situations, death and suffering, refer quite clearly to the domain of inorganic and organic matter respectively. Our body is composed of molecules that belong to the domain of inorganic matter and, at the moment of death, it returns to inert matter, as the admonition '*Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris*' reminds us. By contrast, if we suffer, it is precisely because the body we are endowed with is an organism. Although, there may be a merely psychological dimension to suffering. Suffering is overwhelmingly physical suffering, determined by the fact that we have a sentient apparatus. Generally, psychological suffering is inseparable from physical suffering or manifests through some form of somatisation.

The relationship between combat and the 'animal' stage seems more complex to establish. In this case, it helps to refer to Kant's thought, which, as we have seen, is the matrix of Jaspers' thought. For Kant, the human being is a 'rational animal' in whom reason conflicts with nature. Where the will allows itself to be dominated by nature, human behaviour is determined by the feelings of pleasure and aversions provoked by external realities. When human behaviour is determined by these two opposing feelings, human psychology seems to be reduced to a mere mechanics of the passions. The will uses reason instrumentally to achieve the ends dictated to it by nature: to achieve pleasure and to avoid punishment. It is in this state of nature that man lives in conflict with his fellow human beings (Kant 1784/2007). Love of freedom would lead men to live in isolation if they could. However, for their own survival, men must agree to live in society with their fellow men, giving up a certain measure of their freedom. The famous image of "unsociable sociability" (Kant 1784/2007: 111; AA 8: 20) aptly expresses the state

of latent conflict in which mankind lives, guided by nature toward the rule of law, where only it can begin to develop as a moral being. Where, in man as *animal rationale*, animality prevails over reason, man lives, for Kant, in the Hobbesian state of nature, i. e. in a state of latent conflict against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). Jaspers' notion of possible existence entails accepting this condition of permanent and inevitable conflict, sublimating it in communication, where the dimension of combat positively characterises every relationship of friendship or love.

The stage of spiritual life, Jaspers argues, is associated with consciousness oriented toward abstract theoretical knowledge of objects, and thus with the necessity and universality of this knowledge. Opposed to it, and as its overcoming, is the freedom and individuality of possible existence. Only in this stage does it make sense to speak of guilt. The stage of objectifying consciousness is a kind of state of innocence that must be overcome in order to access possible existence marked, inevitably, as we have seen, by the guilt of existing.

4 Existential relations to transcendence

Jaspers exposes the existential relations to transcendence in the following order: *Trotz und Hingabe*, *Abfall und Aufstieg*, *Das Gesetz des Tages und die Leidenschaft der Nacht* and *Der Reichtum des Vielen und das Eine* (PhIII: 68–127, PhEIII: 61–112). In Dufrenne & Ricœur (1947), the authors follow the same sequence (Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 271–284). In his 1947 work, Ricœur opts for another arrangement: divine proximity and distance, fall and elevation, challenge and abandonment, daily law and nocturnal passion (Ricœur 1947: 324–349). This order highlights the crescendo of tension within the antinomies, moving from the laceration of being to paradox, then to guilt, and culminating in failure (Ricœur 1947: 347). It is the order adopted by Ricœur and followed here.

The four boundary situations are rooted in the world in that, through them, existence transcends the four domains of reality, which are incapable of embracing the totality of being. Similarly, they characterise the relation of existence to transcendence, giving rise to the secondary paradoxes that constitute the existential attitudes before transcendence and the four unsurmountable antinomies that remain for us to consider.

Let us begin with an exposition of the antinomy of the many and the One, which Ricœur also designates as the antinomy of divine proximity and distance (PhEIII: 102–112; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 280–284; Ricœur 1947: 324–330). Metaphysics seek the unconditioned One *beyond* the concept of unity accessible to the exploration of the world, that is, the concept of the unity of mathematics (the nu-

merical unity as distinct from the multiplicity it generates), logic (the totality of a set of objects, instruments, organisms, or works of art, limited in turn by other external totalities) and psychology (the unity underlying the plurality of personalities) (PhEIII: 102). The transcendent One is grasped, in contrast, *from the bosom of* the existential One:

> The One is not the one world; it is not the one truth for all; it is not what unites all men; and it is not the one spirit in which we understand each other. To make metaphysical sense of the validity of the One in logic and world orientation, and then of our transcending in these unities, takes the One of Existenz (PhEIII: 106).

Every presentiment of my unity refers me back to transcendence. This happens when I identify with my destiny rather than scatter myself in the illusion of alternative identities; when I gather myself inwardly, dedicating myself to a great endeavour from which the unity of spirit shines forth; when I make a choice by abandoning the indecision that scatters me. I cannot access the unity of my existence without having the certainty of transcendent unity at the same time. At this stage, the feeling of God's closeness arises: "He is the *near* God to whom I entrust myself like the sheep or the child" – "Il est le Dieu *proche* en qui je me confie comme la brebis et l'enfant" (Ricœur 1947: 326). But it is precisely the feeling of utmost proximity that also generates the feeling of absolute distance. I cannot, in fact, ignore that even my enemy has his God. "When I act against others, strengthened by my vision of the One, it would be *hubris* to take my God for the only one. [...] Even in combat it will see the other's link with God. God is my enemy's as well as mine" (PhEIII: 106). Again, I cannot ignore that God, as such, is also foreign and inaccessible to me. There is no doubt that biblical monotheism, as well as the concept of the single deity in Greek philosophy, represent the overcoming of primitive forms of polytheism and, in that sense, they are symbols of transcendence toward the One. But the manifold wants its share (PhEIII: 109–110). For this reason, Christian theology developed the concept of the Trinity and the idea that becoming enters into the divine unity without affecting the eternal nature of God. The antinomy of the One and the manifold is reflected in the absurdity of these representations.

God is my personal God in whom I find refuge: "Everything is indifferent before his eternity. He is the ultimate consolation" – "[...] tout est indifférent auprès de son éternité. Il est l'ultime consolation" (Ricœur 1947: 329). However, the One is inexpressible and inaccessible to invocation through prayer. There is no point in addressing him in the second person singular. The point is that divinity manifests in the figures of religious language but remains hidden in the One. The conse-

quence of the distant deity hiding his face is the desolation of man abandoned to his doubts and worries (PhEIII: 127).

Fall and ascension constitute the second antinomy (PhEIII: 74–90; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 274–276; Ricœur 1947: 330–336). This dual movement seems to be, at first glance, entirely immanent to existence. In fact, it seems to express the normal alternation of ups and downs that every temporal being experiences. However, as Ricœur observes, this twofold movement has its full meaning only in relation to a transcendence from which one either departs or to which one approaches: "When I fall, I glimpse the abyss of my absolute non-being. When I grow, I partake of the peace of being" – "Quand je tombe, j'entrevois l'abîme du non-être absolu; quand je grandis, j'ai part à la paix de l'être" (Ricœur 1947: 331). This dual movement manifests a direction, an end, and a totality toward which my existence transcends itself. Without this totality of being, it would make no sense to speak of fall and ascension. The totality of my existence can only be found in transcendence: "Transcendence, my only possible support, includes for me my own entirety as well. In existence I am the *will to become whole*; I could *be whole* in transcendence only" (PhEIII: 79).

The totality of my becoming is directly related to the question of death. It is not at the moment of my death that I am an accomplished totality, because, once I reach the end of life, with no future, I no longer am. As a result, the totality of my being must be considered hidden in every moment of my existence. Jaspers is inclined to think that this totality is neither realised nor realisable in time; nonetheless, it expresses the sense of being hidden within myself. For Jaspers, immortality is the revealing myth of this total being that I am in transcendence.

For Jaspers, the genie and the devil are respectively the bringer of clarity and the one who drives me to ruin. They are, therefore, the mythical figures of rise and fall.

The soul is, in fact, the figure of the very fullness of existence, as opposed to the vital instinct, which is greedy for sensible life. The fall and rise refer to the contrast between my militant existence in empirical time and my triumphant existence in eternity, hidden in God.

The third paradox is that of defiance and surrender (PhEIII: 63–74; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 271–274; Ricœur 1947: 337–342). Boundary situations destroy the illusions in which naive consciousness indulges. The consequence of this realisation is the attitude of revolt that denounces the injustice of a life marked by suffering, death, struggle, and sin. It is the attitude of protest embodied by the figure of Job. But defiance is also an expression of the freedom of knowledge and self-determination, the willingness to question the divine: "It is the Promethean moment of freedom" — "Le défi, c'est le moment prométhéen de la liberté" (Ricœur 1947: 338). Challenge is already rebellion against the divine and therefore still a

relationship with God. This means that man's revolt against God is already an announcement of a return to him, a confident surrender to him: "Trusting in the deity to which truthfulness makes him yield, Job lives in the assurance that this deity will justify him with the deity he defies" (PhEIII: 66). Without the moment of revolt, abandonment runs the risk of being illusory, a gesture born of weakness. Without abandonment, the challenge that obliterates God falls into nihilism: "This is why the tension remains unresolved. Surrender will keep springing from defiance; trust will not put an end to the asking of questions" (PhEIII: 70).

The antithesis of diurnal law and nocturnal passion (PhEIII: 90; Dufrenne & Ricœur 1947: 276–280; Ricœur 1947: 342–349) harks back to the most radical and irreconcilable dualisms, vividly represented by the opposition of light/darkness, order/chaos, and being/nothingness. Ricœur observes that it is in this respect that Jaspers reaches his furthest distance from the Christian tradition, returning instead to the symbolism of German Romanticism. In the symbolism of night, the demonic power of Goethe's Faust is evoked — "Voici maintenant le cortège de Dionysos et d'Eros, voici les 'dérèglements' chantés par la Saison en Enfer, voici la 'mort d'amour' et la 'magie de l'extrême' des solitaires, voici l'ivresse des grands créateurs, Vinci et Michel-Ange" (Ricœur 1947: 342). To Ricœur's observation, one can add that the law of the day evokes the light of Enlightenment reason, the clear and distinct ideas of modern rationalism, and the myth of historical progress. Above all, the law of the day is fidelity to the One:

> The *diurnal law* regulates our existence, demands clarity, consistency, and loyalty, binds us to reason and to the idea, to the One and to ourselves. It demands realization in the world, construction in time, the perfection of existence along a way that is infinite (PhEIII: 90).

The passion of night is the exact opposite: "No tasks, no goals speak for it; it is the urge to ruin myself in the world to gain perfection in the depth of worldlessness" (PhEIII: 91). It is an attraction to death, regarded not as a limitation but as the soul's friend and refuge. It is an acceptance of the dark forces from which I come, a return to the origins: the womb, the earth, the race, to eros as the passion of lawless unity (as opposed to sex as a language of communication). It is the path of destruction that, nevertheless, also leads to a form of transcendence: being in nothingness.

Finally, guilt seems to belong as much to the law of the day as to the passion of the night (PhEIII: 97–98). Guilt, as boundary situation, is co-extensive with choice: to choose is to make oneself guilty of unrealised possibilities. But renouncing realisation is also guilt. Existence cannot escape guilt. If I realise myself by obeying the law of the day, I refuse to surrender to death. If I surrender myself to the passion of the night, I deny myself the love that builds and embraces life.

> If I shrink from every irrevocable fixation, from every professional, marital, contractual bond, I prevent my own realization; eventually, what might have been an origin in me will trickle off into the void as I remain a merely possible Existenz. […] I am guilty if I *avoid reality*. But then, each time, there is the deeper guilt of *rejecting the other possibility*. The self-abandonment of yielding to passion is the road to perdition, and he who takes it denies himself to constructive, life-embracing love. Yet in building he denies himself to the surrender to death. Existenz as such is guilt-conscious (PhEIII: 97–98).

However, Jaspers suggests an asymmetry between the law of the day and the passion of the night. The guilt of the former is linked to the boundary of the situation, while the latter is inherently imbued with guilt: "In diurnal law, guilt lies at the boundary where something else is revealed: the radical question raised by the rejected possibility. And passion involves guilt as an original part of it […]" (PhEIII: 98). The fourth of the antinomies of the relation to transcendence differs from the others in that one of the two terms seems to prevail over the other.

For Ricœur, the meaning of this original and ultimate guilt lies in the laceration between the ego and the depths of being, between existence and transcendence. This laceration is not merely methodological, nor merely a contradiction in terms. It does not concern knowledge; rather, it is constitutive of being and thus ontological. At the same time, it points to the possibility of a certain reconciliation in the doctrine of figures (Ricœur 1947: 248–249). Ricœur does not go beyond this reference to figures and, having not taken note of "Von der Wahrheit", seems not to grasp that the radical laceration between existence and transcendence refers back to the doctrine of the encompassing.

At the end of these analyses, the systematics of boundary situations appears as a key notion for understanding the unity and articulation of Jaspers' entire philosophy of existence. The unity of the systematics of boundary situations is grounded in the historicity of being. This historicity is situated, on the one hand, at the boundary between world orientation and existential elucidation, insofar as it expresses the laceration of being, impossible to be contained in the world and called to transcend itself in possible existence. On the other hand, historicity is situated at the boundary between existence and transcendence, insofar as existence is incapable of constituting itself as absolute freedom but, instead, is always a response to a vocation. The plurality of the four concrete boundary situations reflects the systematics of the four realms of reality, which constitute a hierarchy of levels of being immanent in every empirical situation in the world. The systematics of the concrete boundary situations, in turn, is reflected in the plurality of existential relations to transcendence and, consequently, in the systematics of the figures of transcendence. Not only the systematics of the four concrete boundary situations, but the entire project of Jaspers' philosophy

of existence, finds its centre and encompassing concept in the notion of the historicity of being as being-in-the-situation.

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