

RONNY MIRON

THE GUILT WHICH WE ARE: AN ONTOLOGICAL  
APPROACH TO JASPERS' IDEA OF GUILT

ABSTRACT

This paper suggests a phenomenological reading of Karl Jaspers' writings regarding the issue of guilt. This reading aims to extricate from them an ontological understanding of guilt, at the centre of which stand the various appearances of guilt and not the subjective awareness of its experience. The discussed ontology of guilt does not exist in Jaspers' thinking in its entirety, but rather is only implicitly interwoven in his ideas – some of them referring to the issue of guilt, but spread over his writings in a elementary and not systematic manner, while others, no less central to the phenomenology of guilt, are not exposed by him as referring to the idea of guilt, but according to the suggested interpretation are relevant to the ontology of guilt (for example, the idea of historicity). Although the suggested phenomenological-ontological reading contains a certain reconstruction of Jaspers' ideas, the reconstruction itself serves only as a means for a thematic crystallization of a possible ontology of guilt based upon his thinking but not realized by him as he rejected the very idea of ontology from the outset.

INTRODUCTION

This article offers a phenomenological reading of Jaspers' writings with a view to extricating his ontological approach to guilt. First, it is necessary to explain the methodology and the way Jaspers' writings will be read and interpreted here. This will provide background for the specific phenomenological reading of Jaspers' approach. The article will then expose and explicate three different manifestations of guilt that appear in Jaspers' thought.

The ontology of guilt discussed below is not treated explicitly in Jaspers' writings, but is implicit in his philosophy. Some of his ideas refer directly to the issue of guilt, but they are undeveloped and scattered among his writings. There are also other ideas which the proposed interpretation shows are relevant to guilt and will refer to them as its manifestations. I contend that

Jaspers' thought expresses notions of guilt, but he identifies only some of them with guilt, and he does not explain the transitions between the various manifestations of guilt. The proposed phenomenological-ontological reading partially reconstructs Jaspers' ideas, but the reconstruction is not the purpose of this article. It is only a means of formulating thematically the phenomenology of guilt derivable from his thought, which was not realized by Jaspers himself.

Readers familiar with Jaspers' writings deserve an explanation regarding the nature of the proposed project, since Jaspers is known in the history of philosophy as one of the existentialist thinkers who explicitly confronted the issue of guilt. Jaspers does indeed discuss it in various contexts, as I shall now demonstrate.

In *Psychology of World Views*, guilt is discussed in the context of the perception of subjectivity. It appears there as an *organon* for the formation of a world view which itself was not constituted in relation to the reality external to the individual. In Jaspers' mature existentialist philosophy, guilt is presented as a human experience which, when dealt with, helps formulate self-understanding.

Guilt is also presented elsewhere as a "boundary situation" (*Grenzsituation*), along with other extreme forms of human experience, such as death, chance and suffering. In this context, Jaspers proposes a distinction between "avoidable guilt" and "inevitable guilt". The former can be avoided by adopting a normative moral code of behavior. Inevitable guilt, the main subject of his discussion, relates to the foundations of human existence, and as such cannot be avoided.<sup>1</sup> The issue of guilt as one of the boundary situations goes beyond the limits of Jaspers' philosophy of Existenz. It is related to his conception of Being. This is not restricted to immanent human existence, but recognizes the independent existence of a transcendent Being towards which the inevitable guilt is directed.<sup>2</sup> In any case, even in his philosophy of Existenz, Jaspers does not grant real and concrete reality any weight or significance with regard to guilt.

The issue of guilt, then, although continuously discussed in Jaspers' writings, does not touch upon the connection between its various aspects. Moreover, from a phenomenological viewpoint, Jaspers' references to guilt raise a problem, since they do not confront the basic fact that guilt is the individual's way of relating to the other, to the norms and moral approaches acceptable in society and to events in concrete reality.

An answer to these problems appears to be provided in *The Question of Guilt*, where Jaspers presents the range of manifestations of guilt in the context of historical reality with a reference, albeit minimal, to the criminal and moral aspect of guilt. Furthermore, in addition to his reference to the real German

context, Jaspers refers in this work to the subjective and metaphysical aspects that had appeared in his earlier works. Thus, one cannot conclude from the perception of guilt arising from *The Question of Guilt* that Jaspers changed his approach or that he thought that dealing with concrete reality was incompatible with discussing these aspects. In *The Question of Guilt*, he refers to the guilt of the Germans as individuals and as members of the German nation, but also presents guilt as "the guilt of our humanity", an indisputable datum of human culture.<sup>3</sup> However, it seems that the difficulty in formulating a thematic concept of guilt containing the spectrum of components of guilt scattered in Jaspers' writings is most tangible in this work. The lack of coherent integration between them is particularly prominent at the point where he collects all of them together. The relation between the guilt experienced by an individual and the guilt experienced by the member of a collective is unclear, as is the connection between these two experiences and the metaphysical dimensions of guilt.

In this article I would like to present the three main dimensions where human beings experience guilt – the individual, the collective and the metaphysical. Each of these dimensions in Jaspers' perception of guilt acquires its full significance only within a complete phenomenological explanation drawn from Jaspers' entire oeuvre.

Guilt as the individual's experience may be understood in terms of the explanation of the perception of subjective particularity that Jaspers dealt with in all his writings, while guilt as an experience of the collective is elucidated using aspects of a comprehensive view of Jaspers' philosophy of Existenz. This is a framework in which his perception of subjectivity matured and where various expressions of the individual's transcendence of his individuality are revealed. The deeper significance of the metaphysical manifestation of experiencing guilt, where it appears as a boundary situation, will become clear in the context of Jaspers' perception of Being, with the notion of a transcendent Being as a horizon of Existenz.

This explanation anchors the three manifestations of guilt in Jaspers' entire work. Furthermore, the proposed interpretation will seek to examine the relation between the three manifestations of guilt from a genetic phenomenological viewpoint, and thus the discussion will go beyond the framework of Jaspers' thinking.

To begin with the first manifestation, the individual's experience of guilt has an evident and immediate nature grounded in the world of real life. The guilt is first and foremost that of the individual but it does not constitute an experience closed within its own boundaries. Elucidating the individual's experience of guilt, which leads one beyond one's own boundaries, will reveal the



second manifestation, the collective horizon contained in it. This complements the discussion of the individual dimensions of guilt.

So far as the ontology of guilt is concerned, the first circle, encompassing the individual's experience, exists within the collective social being that surrounds it. This determines what guilt is, and accordingly marks the boundaries between guilty and not guilty. It also determines the field within which the addressees of the guilt – other humans – are located. The social framework shows that guilt is not just a category through which individuals refer to themselves, and which reveals them as beings yearning for self-understanding in existence. It is also a category that mediates between the individual and others. However, even the collective experience cannot contain itself, and its elucidation leads to the third, most encompassing, circle of the experience of guilt, the metaphysical manifestation.

As in any phenomenological explication, completing the movement gives new significance to the previous manifestations of guilt. The different dimensions of guilt can indeed appear in human experience independently of each other, but the ontology of guilt deriving from them all reveals that they are different stages in dealing with guilt as a basic datum of human existence. Thus, the three stages of the phenomenology of guilt should all be seen as existing in the ontological space of inevitable guilt. This means that it is found in the manifestations of existence that are not the result of the individual's mental constitution but rather the datum into which the individual is thrown. At the same time, the unavoidable nature of this guilt is not revealed all at once – neither in existence nor in the philosophical explication – in each of its manifestations. Instead, the inevitability of guilt is gradually revealed as the experience of guilt deepens. At the more mature metaphysical stage of experience, when guilt appears as a boundary situation, the inevitability of guilt reaches the peak of its clarity.

That each of the three stages can appear independently shows that the experience of guilt is, by its very nature, inexhaustible. The ontology of guilt connects and elucidates the various stages, thereby making the human experience of guilt significant. The process of phenomenological explication is reflexive in nature. On the one hand it serves as a mirror for the experience of guilt, gradually revealing both the various stages and the dynamic leading from one stage to the next. On the other hand it extricates guilt's inevitability already present implicitly in the first manifestation.

Following this explanation of the nature of the phenomenological reading of Jaspers' thought, let us now examine in detail each of the three manifestations of guilt derivable from his writings.

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL GUILT

Guilt anchored in the individual's subjective experience is presented as the first manifestation in *The Question of Guilt*. The individual nature of guilt is clearly expressed in the following words, bearing the signs of a personal confession:

We Germans differ greatly in the kind and degree of our participation in, or resistance to, National-Socialism. Everyone must reflect on his own internal conduct, and seek his own peculiar rebirth in this German crisis.

Another great difference between individuals concerns the starting time of this inner metamorphosis . . . we Germans cannot be reduced to a common denominator. We must keep an open mind in approaching each other from essentially different starting points. (GG, 104).

The basic premise regarding the distinctiveness of individuals leads inevitably to the recognition in principle of the range of attitudes towards the Nazi regime that typified German society. Jaspers states that: "In this kind of talking none is the other's judge; everyone is both defendant and judge at the same time" (GG, 14). Moreover, the individual is not only the addressee of the guilt, he is also its deliverer: "the guilt question is more than a question put to us by others, it is one we put to ourselves" (GG, 28). So, guilt has a framework of self-reference with the range of emotional and mental skills involved in the formulation of self-consciousness. Indeed, a demand from an external source – other people, the state laws or general moral norms – affects the individual and the formation of his personality.

However, the arena in which people deal with guilt is limited by the boundaries of the individual's self-reference. Thus, reference to the external dimensions relating to guilt is delayed at the individual stage in favor of the experience (*Erfahrung*) of guilt with its particular aspects. Some of these cannot be communicated and objectivized, since the faults that awaken guilt appear to the individual as aimed at him specifically. At the individual stage, guilt does not appear as a general human experience or as connected to a concrete historical reality but only as tangential to it, and independent of general criteria or standards.

Further study shows that the perception of individuality guiding Jaspers' approach to the individual experience of guilt is drawn from the concept of the subject developed in the early stages of his thought. The recognition that the individual's world is particular and mostly inaccessible to formal knowledge and objective thought as such began to develop already in his early writings dealing with psychopathology. In this spirit, he argued that the human being's individuality places a boundary (*Grenze*) that cannot be crossed or overcome using the objective criteria taken from the conceptual system of



science (AP1, 1–2). Therefore, the possible contribution of psychopathology to the understanding of people suffering from mental diseases was essentially limited.

This approach continued to develop in *The Psychology of World Views* (1919), dealing with the description and elucidation of individual experiences through which people formulate their self-perception. In this context, Jaspers argued that the infinite variety, reflected in the experiences of people in reality and in the ways they perceive themselves, does not allow the philosopher to achieve by mere observation an exhaustive and complete understanding of the person's individual Being. In this spirit, he declared:

We are not searching for the frequent or the average . . . We are searching for the specific patterns even if they are rather rare. Our area is . . . the material that comes into being when we see what we notice in the historical experience, in the living internal [experience] and in the [one] present in the peculiar (*Eigentümliche*), in itself unique, even if this only seems and is built as typical. (PW, 14).

Jaspers' interest in the particular aspects of subjectivity reached its full development in the philosophy of Existenz, at whose heart was the requirement "to be from the source of my selfhood" (Ph 2, 6).<sup>4</sup> He argued that the constant gap between people's Being and the contexts in which they participate (Ph 2, 32) greatly restricts the ability to discuss it using objective tools and justifies the perception of an individual as a Being whose particular elements dominate it. As he phrased it:

If I want to know what I am, then my objective existence presents itself, in the thinking moves I experience, as a scheme of my Being. I perceive myself inside it, but I experience that I am not completely identical with it: what that becomes an object cannot obtain absolute identity with me myself, since in my expansion I must lose myself in this scheme. (Ph 2, 32).<sup>5</sup>

This brief review of the perception of selfhood in Jaspers' writings clearly shows the dominance of his interest in the particular aspects of selfhood compared with its objective dimensions. The perception of subjectivity as a particular Being is essential to the understanding of the stage of the individual experience of guilt in Jaspers' thought, where the extent of its detachment from the surrounding reaches its maximum. Here this perception explains the lack of communication typical of the appearance of guilt at this stage and of its view of guilt as a type of self-reference. In other words, the individual notes in this context not only the field where the guilt appears, but also the context where it has meaning and significance. The objective or formal viewpoint, whose boundaries are determined mainly by the collective, is marginalized due to its inaccessibility to the individual's subjective Being.

However, it is impossible to refer to the individual while suspending the external contexts in which he acts, since the individual's own experience takes

place within a concrete field. The individual is always this particular individual, located in a particular environment and place, connected to a specific history and to people with whom he shares a common existence. As one penetrates inwards to subjectivity, the spaces from which its surrounding subjectivity appears are projected.

Jaspers does not present the insufficiency of the experience of guilt at the individual stage explicitly. In practice, this insufficiency arises from his discussion of the four concepts of guilt in *The Question of Guilt*: criminal, political, moral and metaphysical.<sup>6</sup> The first three are attributed mainly to individuals, but the individual's viewpoint is not what determines the fact of guilt. Instead it is objective criteria independent of the individual that do this. Thus, criminal guilt applies to those who perform "acts capable of objective proof and violate unequivocal laws" (GG, 31). Political guilt "involve[s] the deeds of statesmen and of the citizenry of a state, result[s] in my having to bear the consequences of the deeds of the state whose power governs me . . . Everybody is co-responsible for the way he is governed" (GG, 31). Moral guilt relies on recognition of the individual's responsibility for what he does as an individual, or for what he avoids doing, an avoidance whose results are undesirable from his point of view (GG, 31–32).<sup>7</sup>

Apparently, the situation is different regarding metaphysical guilt, which is not determined by objective or formal criteria. Metaphysical guilt originates in the conscience the individual possesses as part of his Being. Moreover, the individual does not bear this guilt as an autarchic subject but as a human being. Metaphysical guilt originates in "a solidarity among men as human beings that makes each co-responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world" (GG, 32); "responsibility [that] is the willingness [of each individual] to take the guilt upon himself" (Ph 2, 248). Jaspers tried to make this argument concrete when he stated that this solidarity is breached "if I was present at the murder of others without risking my life to prevent it". If these things happened and I witnessed them, if I survived when someone else was murdered, then I hear a voice that tells me: "that if I live after such a thing has happened, it weighs upon me as indelible guilt" (GG, 32).

It seems that even if metaphysical guilt is an experience of individuals, and like the three other types it is self-referential, its meaning breaks through the boundaries of the individual's existence, and does not depend on any particular behavior, or its avoidance. Either way, in all forms of the individual's experience of guilt, he is revealed as insufficient in himself and thus forced to transcend the boundaries of his self-reference. This can be achieved through external objective judgement or through the individual's attempt to transcend the boundaries of self-reference. Since this transcending becomes inevitable



for him, it is revealed as a full expression of the individual experience of guilt.<sup>8</sup>

The perception of the individual as a particular Being, implemented in his approach towards guilt, continued to bother Jaspers throughout his works. It was only in his writings from the early nineteen-thirties onwards that he gradually became aware of its restrictive implications. The perception of the individual is restrictive not only as a starting point for clarifying other philosophical issues his thought was destined to address, but also for the individual's self-understanding. This awareness is clearly reflected in the following passage:

Pacing itself absolutely on itself alone is for Existenz the truth of its independence of the reality of time, but this turns into despair for it. If [Existenz] knows itself that by standing completely by itself it must sink into a vacuum. (Ph 3, 4).

Jaspers sought to solve the closedness that the individual's viewpoint forced on his perception of selfhood by expanding the perspective regarding selfhood. However, his handling of the possible harmful implications of the viewpoint anchored on the individual did not lead Jaspers to completely rejecting the centrality he had granted the individual in his approach. Rather, when discussing selfhood in the philosophy of Existenz and when turning to the issue of guilt, he located the problematic element, the particularity of the individual, whose over-emphasis had contributed to the formulation of the individual in his writings as a solipsistic Being.<sup>9</sup> The meaning of this insight in the current context is that the extreme particular perception of the individual imposes upon the experience of guilt a detachment that conceals its inevitability, or more precisely, creates a false appearance of guilt.

Jaspers' discussion of the individual's attempts to avoid guilt (GG, 74) he is indirectly aware of the ontological distortion entailed in the manifestation of guilt at the individual stage.<sup>10</sup> The discourse of escaping guilt raises ethical questions which are not the concern of the current ontological analysis of guilt. Jaspers describes the problem with the experience of guilt by referring to the individual's consciousness of the different types of guilt. In this way, he contributes indirectly to the discourse of escaping it, since consciousness can be changed, while guilt cannot. Nevertheless, the problematic of escaping guilt touches upon a significant point for its ontology, since it indicates that the individual manifestation of guilt can be distorted.

Beyond the potential for distortion entailed in individual guilt, its ontological representation encounters another basic difficulty. This stems from the fact that it is the very focusing on the individual's particular characteristics that

contributes to its concretization. This, in turn, inevitably locates it in the time and place common to the individual and to other people. This is a difficulty typical of the phenomenological discourse based on real human experiences, which requires a constant expansion of the perspective of reference to the human experience in order to achieve an appropriate understanding of it. Thus, the phenomenological explanation shows that one cannot reject the external contexts in which the individual operates.

The appropriate weight of the individual's subjective Being in the experience of guilt will be clarified below in the discussion of the next stages, where the individual aims beyond the boundaries of his personal view. Jaspers himself did not suggest an explanation for the transition from the individual stage of experiencing guilt to the next stage, collective guilt. However, his discussion of the possibilities for escaping guilt indirectly laid the infrastructure for this transition, since it was contained in dimensions objective and external to the individual existence, which turned out to be involved in the human experience of guilt. In this context, it is especially important that even when he was aiming to establish the centrality of the individual's personal Being, in the clarification of guilt and in his philosophy in general, Jaspers did not explicitly reject the relevance of objectivity for understanding the individual's Being. He only marginalized or suspended it, and thus did not prevent the possibility of breaking out of the solipsistic individuality that was formulated in his discussions of the issue of guilt and elsewhere in his writings.

#### THE COLLECTIVE STAGE—THE GROUP'S GUILT

Two aspects arising from the explication of the individual manifestation of guilt serve as the basic infrastructure, albeit mainly negative, for the second manifestation of guilt, the collective stage. These aspects are the suspension, rather than explicit rejection, of the objective aspects it entailed, and the potential for distortion entailed in the solipsistic manifestation of the individual that conceals the guilt's inevitability. The collective stage in Jaspers' ontology of guilt is basically an expanded observation of the individual experience of guilt and not a diminution or devaluation of this experience. More precisely, the collective stage is merely an explication of the context in which individual guilt manifests itself. It is clear that the character of an experience appearing in a context is different from its isolated representation as expressed in the individual stage of the experience of guilt.

It is not surprising that only in *The Question of Guilt*, a work written in connection with concrete reality, did Jaspers discuss the collective aspects entailed



in the experience of guilt. In the other contexts of his thought, which lack this connection, direct references to this dimension are not to be found. This is not to imply that the experience of individuals is not a real experience of guilt, or that the metaphysical aspects related to guilt are not part of this experience. However, it seems that the collective dimension of the experience of guilt appears especially in relation to a concrete historical situation.

Thus, when discussing the guilt of Germans for crimes committed during the Nazi period, he included expressions that indicated that the guilt under discussion was the guilt of those belonging to the German nation as a collective. In this spirit, he described himself as a German among Germans (GG, 11), "who feels concerned by everything growing from German roots" (GG, 79). Jaspers clarified that speaking about Germanness as a characteristic that turns Germans into a collective "is altogether different from making the nation absolute" (GG, 80), and added that "there is no such thing as a people as a whole . . . . One cannot make an individual out of a people. A people cannot perish heroically, cannot be criminal, cannot act morally or immorally; only its individuals can do so. A people as a whole can be neither guilty nor innocent" (GG, 41).

In this work, the collective appears as a continuation, expansion and development of the individual's selfhood, clarified as a Being existing in relation to the human reality surrounding it. As he puts it:

The self-analysis of a people in historical reflection and the personal self-analysis of the individual are two different things. But the first can happen only by the way of the second. When individuals accomplish jointly in communication may, if rare, become the spreading consciousness of many and then is called national consciousness. (GG, 102).

Not only do the individuals join together to form the collective, the individual also bears the collective within, thus "everyone, in his real being, is the German people" (GG, 80). Moreover, understanding the collectivity as a continuation and expansion of the individual's experience enables us to observe the collective experience of guilt as a modification of an individual experience, and thus as also limited within its own boundaries:

But even more important to us is how we analyze, judge and cleanse ourselves. Those changes from without no longer are our concern. On the other hand, they are the changes from within . . . . are the source of whatever self-respect is still possible for us. We must clarify the question of German guilt. This is our own business. (GG, 49).

Thus it transpires that just like the individual, the collective appears in the experience of guilt as a Being to be clarified and examined: "[in Germany] we have no common ground yet" (GG, 11), to the extent that "being German is to me . . . not a condition but a task" (GG, 80), "Common is the non-community"

(GG, 18); "now that we can talk freely again, we seem to each other as if we had come from different worlds" (GG, 19).

Jaspers' range of references to collectivity in *The Question of Guilt* indicates the cautious and gradual way in which the immediate experience of guilt anchored in the individual's Being is directed to the surrounding collective horizons. Jaspers wishes to preserve the individual's status within the boundaries of the collective. He also wants to ensure that the presence of individuality in the experience of collective guilt will not entail the failings threatening the standing of individuals in the face of guilt. In particular, individuals closing themselves off from other people and the world, thereby potentially distorting the authentic appearance of guilt as inevitable.

However, even in *The Question of Guilt*, the only context referring to the collective stage, Jaspers did not elucidate the transition between the individual stage and the collective stage of guilt. The basic question what makes a group of individuals into a collective is not answered in *The Question of Guilt*, nor in the other contexts where Jaspers refers to the issue of guilt.

Apart from collectivity providing the context for the manifestation of the individual's experience of guilt, it is not clear what unique quality of experiencing guilt is discovered at the collective stage, nor what is has that the individual's guilt does not. In my opinion, the answer to both these questions, essential for understanding the collective experience of guilt, is contained in Jaspers' original idea of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*). Jaspers himself did not link this idea to his perception of guilt, but it throws light on the notion of objectivity as an expansion of individuality. In this idea Jaspers rehabilitates the dimension of objectivity external to the individual and links it to his experience of existence. This concept completes Jaspers' effort, prior to the appearance of the idea of historicity, to re-examine the possible contribution of recognition of the world's reality and of formal knowledge to the development of the philosophical perception of selfhood. This had encountered difficulties due to the over-emphasis of its particular elements, which had led to the view of the individual as a solipsistic Being.<sup>11</sup> Historicity provides Jaspers' notion of collectivity with content, beyond the formal features of the common language mentioned in *The Question of Guilt* (GG, 79), and joins the subjective and objective dimensions, enriching the individual's manifestation in existence.

The idea of historicity was based on the classic Hegelian distinction between the two meanings of the word "history" (*Geschichte*) in German: history and story.<sup>12</sup> The former denotes the objective clarification of the details of an historical event, whose guiding principles serve as a basis for understanding history as a science. The latter, following the formation of the consciousness of the past by people and its use as a basis for self-understanding in the present, expresses



the subjective meaning of history. A person's understanding of himself as a historic Being combines reflection aimed at clarifying the data and objective circumstances of the past with the subjective meaning he grants them. Through these, the person perceives himself as existing in a concrete time and context, and as part of a continuity whose boundaries transcend the boundaries of his individual existence. So, in this context, the individual is manifested as a continuation of earlier forms of existence, and at the same time as a foundation for a future reality that will continue after him (Ph 2, 118–119). Jaspers expressed the connection between the objective and subjective dimensions when he wrote:

Here are originally connected in an inseparable way being and knowledge. . . . Without knowledge, meaning a clear perception and being inside it, there is no historic Being, and without a reality of historicity there is no knowledge. (Ph 2, 119).

However, the distinction between the objective and subjective dimensions of history was not intended to detach and separate them. Quite the opposite: through the concept of historicity, Jaspers sought to harness the mental skills involved in the formation of historical consciousness, mainly aimed at establishing the scientific nature of history as an area of knowledge, to the service of historic consciousness, to turn it into an integral part of self-consciousness. As he put it:

From this historic (*geschichtlich*) source, *the historical* also becomes for the first time really *historical*. Without it, it would only mean a particular event attributed to the existence of the present, evaluated positively or negatively. However, my theoretical knowledge from history becomes through the whole science of history a function of the possible Existenz, if its contents and images aim themselves at me, face me, demand from me or push me away from them, not only as distant patterns existing as closed within themselves or in other words: if it is acquired to the function of the eternal present of the things that exist within the philosophical-historic consciousness. (Ph 2, 119–120).

The idea of historicity, it transpires, contained the understanding that historical knowledge itself did not reflect a mere objective generality. The individual's reflexive turning to historical knowledge causes a fundamental change in himself, as a result of which the general and impersonal element is removed from this knowledge. It now serves as a framework within whose boundaries the person organizes his life story and his self-consciousness as an individual.<sup>13</sup>

From Jaspers' viewpoint, the change occurring in historical knowledge as a result of the individual's turning to it is not perceived as its distortion but as revealing its real significance: "[historical knowledge] proves its power in the ability of its results, to be replaced by real historic consciousness of the self existing in the present" (Ph 2, 120). In fact, the meeting between the person and

historical knowledge creates a mutual change. On the one hand, the existential view reveals new and unfamiliar facets of historical knowledge, enriches it and especially reveals its dynamic nature that enables it to turn to the world of present people. On the other hand, the individual's turning to historical science expands the boundaries of his existence and introduces to it belonging, context and depth. The concept of historicity thus connects the individual to the past and to the knowledge of the past. The knowledge of the past does not take away the individual's privacy, but bestows upon it a fuller meaning that is not restricted to the boundaries of personal existence.

Through the idea of historicity we can now mark out the boundaries of the collectivity in which the experience of guilt appears. This collectivity has two basic features: it indicates the link between the individual and his contemporaries, and it connects him, along with them, to ancestors and future descendants. The objective aspect of history, portrayed in the accumulated knowledge of the past common to members of the collective, and the subjective dimension comprising the range of references of individuals belonging to the collective towards this past, now turn out to be present in any experience of guilt. The absence of the objective dimension at the stage of the individual experience of guilt has now received a real solution from the perspective of the idea of historicity.

Questions regarding the injustices done to other humans during my lifetime and the crimes committed by previous generations of the collective with which I identify myself may now be seen to be an integral part of the individual manifestation of guilt. Jaspers' aim to establish independence between the experience of guilt and individuals' concrete behavior – an aim apparent already at the stage of individual experience of guilt – now receives additional validity, since the idea of historicity indicates that the person never manifests alone in existence.<sup>14</sup> More precisely, the reference point for human existence is anchored in multiplicity, i.e., in society. Indeed, "the effects of natural causes depend also on how man takes them, how he handles them, what he makes out of them" (GG, 85). Moreover, the idea of historicity does not remove the uniqueness of the individual and accordingly claim that in the collective manifestation of guilt the objective dimension is granted priority or greater weight than that of the individual manifestation.

In his discussion of the idea of historicity Jaspers referred to the aspects relating to the individual's consciousness in existence. However with regard to the ontology of guilt it is more important that this idea appears in the description of the way that individuals who have this consciousness are present in existence. In other words, they are manifested as part of a collective and there is objective knowledge referring to them as a collective. Thus, the individual is present in



the collective and in certain cases may even be an object of knowledge that will be handled with objective tools. However, both the collectivity and the knowledge represent a deviation beyond the manifestation of the individual as such.

From a phenomenological viewpoint, the explication of the collective dimensions, including that of the objective aspects entailed in the experience of guilt, reveals no new dimension that did not exist in the individual stage. It elucidates what was contained but not revealed in the individual manifestation of guilt due to the restricted perception at that early stage. More precisely, the two stages of the experience of guilt supplement each other. The personal link to the reality to which the guilt in its individual manifestation refers is joined by another form of linking to reality anchored in objective knowledge, which indicates a Being going beyond the boundaries of private existence.

Against the background of the discussion of the idea of historicity, we can now understand Jaspers' statement in *The Question of Guilt*: "we have to bear the guilt of our fathers" (GG, 79) as summarizing the concrete stage in his perception of guilt. All the individuals in a certain collective inevitably become guilty, merely by their belonging to the collective. The collective thus indicates the horizon of possibility (*Möglichkeit*) at the disposal of the individual in existence at a given time. Even if this individual did not express in practice a behavior harmful to others, his own manifestation was saturated in the collective to which he belonged. Thus, being part of the collective, he inevitably bears the guilt. The component of "possibility" in guilt adds a layer to the general trend seeking to detach the experience of guilt from linkage to concrete actions, thus giving another indication of the continuity between the stage of the individual experience of guilt and the collective stage that expands it.<sup>15</sup> Jaspers went further and defined guilt itself as a possibility. As he put it:

In tracing our own guilt back to its source we come upon the human essence – which in its German form has fallen into a peculiar, terrible incurling of guilt but exists as a possibility in man as such (GG, 100).

At this point, the dimensions of the particular collectivity to which individuals belong have been expanded, and the experience of the guilt has been directed to a deep element in human Being, an element "which cannot be flatly referred to as our guilt" (GG, 33). This is an element that does not relate to individuals per se or as belonging to a particular collective but to the widest collective imaginable, the one to which all humans belong. This wide space, to which "the ineluctable guilt of all, the guilt of human existence" (GG, 34) refers, leads to the metaphysical stage of the experience of guilt.

#### THE METAPHYSICAL STAGE—GUILT AS A "BOUNDARY SITUATION"

The metaphysical stage is the third and final manifestation of guilt. The element of possibility in the collective approach established the status of the second stage as intermediate in the experience of guilt. There is a negative facet entailed in this understanding of the collective that separates it from the perception of people and nation in a-priori and absolute terms. Apart from this it has a positive role in relation to the other two stages. First, the perception of collectivity as a possibility of the individual creates continuity with the stage of the individual experiencing guilt. Second, the perception of collectivity as a possibility lays the foundation for the experience of guilt going beyond the boundaries of the individual and the group to which he belongs and turning to the widest context in which he participates. Now the experience of guilt appears as the "guilt of human existence" (GG, 34). The realm of the experience of guilt at this stage encompasses human existence as a whole, and thus one cannot mark its starting point or its boundary. As Jaspers wrote:

If I knew the beginning of my guilt, it would be limited and preventable; my freedom would be the possibility of preventing it; I would not need to take upon myself anything, not myself in the sense of a self-choice and not existence [Dasein] into which I enter and for which I become responsible in my actions. (Ph 2, 197).<sup>16</sup>

The absence of clear boundaries of guilt prevents us from noting the lack of the beginning of guilt and from determining the boundary beyond which people no longer experience guilt, since human existence ceases where people do not experience guilt. Now it appears that experiencing guilt as an undefined human possibility – positive or negative – has maximal dimensions, and is therefore inevitable. In other words, the area where guilt manifests itself is coextensive with that of human existence and for this reason a person cannot avoid experiencing guilt. The exhaustion and radicalization of the approach that translates possibility into necessity exists in Jaspers' conception of boundary situations (*Grenzsituationen*).<sup>17</sup>

The term "boundary situation" embraces two basic concepts that appear in Jaspers' philosophical writings in different contexts: "situation" or "situation Being" (*Situationsein*), and "boundary". A "situation" that people experience comprises the duality of freedom and necessity. Freedom represents the possibilities for self-realization at the disposal of the Existenz, while necessity includes all the facts and constraints that restrict its ability to act (Ph 1, 1).<sup>18</sup> Jaspers used the concept of "situation", which is significantly narrower than



that of "world"<sup>19</sup> to express the fundamental insight that people never experience reality as a whole. Humans experience only very limited contexts in which they have freedom but at the same time are subject to restrictions that are not dependent upon them and that reduce reality. The concept of boundary is likewise typified by duality, portraying the limit of the possibilities of human experience and understanding, and at the same time the human desire to go beyond the boundaries of existence and consciousness. As Jaspers said: "every boundary immediately raises the question what lies beyond it" (Ph 1, 45).

The duality typical of both the components of the concept, "boundary situation" expresses the basic pattern of human experience that is split into the experience of enforced givenness and the wish to transcend it that represents human freedom. Against this background, Jaspers, following Kant, defined human reality as anonymous reality (Ph 2, 249), meaning a reality trapped in an unknowable contradiction.<sup>20</sup> This is how Jaspers described the experience of this reality:

[One] can never remain in the concrete finite, since everything concrete has at the same time both a finite and an infinite nature. No matter what the essential [thing] for him, he always encounters ways to the infinite or the whole. He can find in the face of the infinite in the evasive mystical experience a limited satisfaction in time and in quiet. However, if he remains alert, if he remains in the split between object and subject, any infinity leads him to the abysses of the contradictions that are called anonymous. (Psychology, 231).

So, the anonymous nature of reality is an expression of the undetermined duality which man encounters in existence in the world.<sup>21</sup> This means the simultaneous presence of good and evil, positive and negative, infinite and finite, whole and partial, day and night. The anomaly, just like the element of "possibility", is entailed in any human experience as such. However, while these features are present on different levels in man's routine existence, in the boundary situations they appear in their full force and transparency. Jaspers described boundary situations as follows:

These situations, like those I always exist within, that I cannot live without struggle and sorrow, that I accept upon myself inevitable guilt, that I must die, I call boundary situations. They do not change, but only their manifestations, in their reference to our existence they are totally void. We cannot see beyond them; in our existence, we do not see [anything] behind them. They are like a wall that we push and walk into. They cannot be changed through us, but we can only bring them into clarity without being able to deduce them or explain them from something else. They exist with existence itself. (Ph 2, 203).<sup>22</sup>

Guilt, like the other boundary situations (death, struggle, etc.) appears as an experience that people cannot avoid, just as they cannot change the anonymous nature of the reality revealed to them particularly in these situations. In guilt as a boundary situation, man is manifested both as a free Being (Ph 2, 196), and at

the same time as denied freedom, as subject to arbitrariness and impotence, as a "game ball" (Ph 2, 216). Freedom and necessity appear as interconnected in the experience of guilt, or as Jaspers put it, "my guilt inside my freedom is each time something defined and thus something I experience and not something I enable to approach me" (Ph 2, 197).

The lack of a connection between the experience of guilt and concrete behavior, revealed by the analysis of the two previous stages of the experience of guilt, becomes an explicit datum in the perception of guilt as a boundary situation. In Jaspers' words:

Inaction. [*Wirkungslosigkeit*] is in itself an action, meaning omission [*Unterlassen*]. Inaction would necessarily become a rapid sinking; it could have been a form of suicide. Non-entry into the world is a self-negation in the face of the demand of the reality turning to me . . . to dare to experience what has formed from it. (Ph 2, 247).

Action and avoiding action thus express both freedom and necessity at the same time. Moreover, in terms of the manifestation of guilt there is no difference between the results of inaction and those of action, and thus one cannot attribute guilt to the difference between them. In other words, man is guilty whether he acts or avoids acting. Finally, avoiding acting is a false choice as it distorts the person's manifestation, since human freedom is reduced by avoiding action. In fact, not only the absence of a connection between the experience of guilt and concrete actions but also its inevitability appears as an explicit datum in boundary situations. Now it transpires that boundary situations, delimiting the boundaries of human existence, do not leave another space for the existence of guilt, since beyond them the human Being ceases. The boundaries of existence are also the boundaries of guilt, and thus the ontology of guilt is also the ontology of reality.

However, the manifestation of guilt at the metaphysical stage is not limited to the absence of a link to concrete actions or to its inevitability. Another datum of human existence is also revealed in it. As Jaspers says: "every boundary immediately raises the question what lies beyond it" (Ph 1, 45). This datum is transcendence.<sup>23</sup> Transcendence appears when man seems to himself to be "aiming at a different freedom", as "referring to a Being that is not himself but is his transcendence" (Ph 3, 2). This discovery does not indicate that a person's entity is distorted in all the other experiences that are not included in the boundary situations. Just as the collective experience of guilt reveals the individual included in this collective more fully, so also the experience of guilt as a boundary situation indicates that turning towards transcendence constitutes part of human experience in general. In Jaspers' words: "we live in activity . . . I must want; because wanting must be my last [thing] if I finally want to



be. However, the way I want to be can certainly be opened to transcendence" (Ph 2, 197).

Transcendence grants meaning to the nature of human freedom as something existing in the face of an object existing beyond it, a reality exceeding the boundaries of the person's existence and consciousness. The boundary marking the end of the realm of freedom and necessity in human existence thus also marks the beginning of the realm of transcendence, spreading from that point onwards.

Furthermore, the meaning of transcendence for human existence is not exhausted by its sharing a common boundary with existence. It is portrayed as a source of meaning for the experiences within existence – especially since it exists beyond human existence: "Were there no existence, the question would have arisen why I need to want. I can actively want only when there is transcendence" (Ph 2, 198). Wanting, one of the prominent expressions of human freedom, may now be seen to be lacking direction and meaning without transcendence. As Jaspers phrased it:

Transcendence is not my freedom, but is present in it. Only in the freedom of my selfhood, where I think to surround all the necessitatness of . . . necessity, am I aware that I did not create myself. It now occurs to me that where I am completely myself, I am not myself alone. Where I really was myself in wanting, I was at the same time subject to myself in my freedom. (Ph 2, 199).

Thus, the recognition of transcendence does not deny human freedom, nor does it change the range of restrictions in which it exists. However, through its function as the **object of possibility and necessity**, transcendence reveals the real dimensions of the two elements that constitute human existence: freedom and necessity. These are determined in light of, and perhaps even as a result of, another entity existing above and outside human existence, but sharing a common boundary with it. Becoming acquainted with transcendence complements the understanding accumulated so far regarding the elements of possibility or freedom and necessity, and thus it helps position more accurately the status of humans in Existence. In Jaspers' words: "It realizes that what is coming towards it fills it . . . It verifies its possibility only if it knows itself as based on transcendence" (Ph 3, 4).

Transcendence, as the entity humans face, determines both their possibilities and their restrictions. These two elements, freedom and necessity, are thus clarified only by recognizing the existence of transcendence, a more encompassing and whole entity than them.

In the ontology of guilt, transcendence serves as an object for the experience of inevitable guilt, without which the experience would appear meaningless or arbitrary (Ph 2, 198). Just as we think about something, want something,

do not think about anything or want anything, so too does guilt require an object. We are guilty of something or about something. Since the explanation of the experience of guilt reveals human ontology, we can state that all human activities including guilt manifest themselves in relation to an object. However, transcendence as an object has a more encompassing meaning than the other objects of human activity. Jaspers' perception of transcendence as an entity that exists independently of humans, even if this entity is revealed in human existence and has significance for it (Ph 2, 22–23, see also Ph 3, 164–165), enables a more accurate understanding of the human experience of guilt.

Guilt is not only being guilty of something, it is also being guilty in the face of something or towards something. We can clarify the significance of transcendence for human existence with the aid of Jaspers' statement: "the boundaries appear in their real function, to be immanent and already to indicate transcendence" (Ph 2, 204). This statement confirms the obvious, that human actions take place in the world and are known there, but at the same time it indicates that human activity is not exhausted by this since a new ontology exists above and beyond its boundaries. To be precise: the ontology of guilt is not identical to the ontology of transcendence, but is tangential to it. This tangent is not a tangible point, but expresses a horizon of reference. Transcendence, like any otherness in relation to which human activity takes place, is now set in context:

Against the tendency to self-sufficiency, against the satisfaction with the knowledge of general consciousness, against the individual's self-will, against the drive to self-closure in self-contained life . . . (Ph 2, 60).

Transcendence as a permanent datum of human experience was posited by Jaspers against the distorting and harmful transience of human experiences. The fact that man stands alone in the face of transcendence reveals the basic connection between the first stage of experiencing guilt and its metaphysical stage where it appears explicitly as inevitable. The apparent immediacy of the inevitability of guilt restricts the horizons of human experience to a defined range from which there is no escape. However, the fact that the horizon that appears in the experience of guilt is that of transcendence, which in itself is not coextensive with the boundaries of human experience, and is not defined, may actually open new horizons for human experience directed at an entity rather than at itself or at the human at all.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the inevitability of guilt revealed explicitly in light of transcendence does not mark the boundary of the experience of guilt but the most appropriate starting point for clarifying human manifestation within guilt.



## CONCLUSION

The three stages of the experience of guilt – individual, collective and metaphysical – have been shown from the proposed phenomenological-ontological explanation of the concept of guilt in Jaspers' writings to belong to one reflexive and dynamic movement. Uncovering the constant process of boundary expansion of human experience has illuminated the complexity of the human experience of guilt, whose dimensions have wide-reaching implications for human experience, with the later stages elucidating the earlier stages. The link to guilt's starting point anchored in the individual's personal experience is constantly maintained. The basic feature of the entire phenomenological explanation, arising from the first datum appearing in experience and returning to it at the end of the interpretative process, is clearly expressed in the merging of the metaphysical stage of experiencing guilt with the individual stage. This further supports the fruitfulness of the phenomenological perspective regarding Jaspers' concept of guilt. Once the first cycle of explanation had been completed, it transpired that the three stages of experience did not denote different degrees of guilt, but were, instead, expressions of the basic patterns of human existence, themselves raised above any concrete context that might cause guilt.

Jaspers himself did not realize the potential for achieving an ontology of human existence from his perception of guilt, and he left it largely as a task for his interpreters. As we have seen, his approach contains a foundation on which the main stages of the experience of guilt can be formulated. However, Jaspers himself did not discuss the dynamic typical of the experience of guilt, nor did he usually connect other parts of his philosophy with his perceptions regarding guilt.

In this paper I have attempted to respond to these omissions by marking the three basic stages of the experience of guilt, explicating them and the relations between them, and linking them to other themes in Jaspers' thought that gave his statements regarding guilt a wider significance. In my opinion, the project of completing Jaspers' ontology of guilt should continue in this direction, examining the relevance of additional issues in his philosophy with a view to elucidating the basic stages of the experience of guilt, and perhaps even finding additional materials that could draw a more gradual progression in the transition between the various stages. This direction could both realize his original vision that the experience of guilt and the experience of existence are coextensive, but also reveal Jaspers' perception of guilt as a framework capable of containing the variety of subjects appearing in his philosophy and giving them an overall significance.

## NOTES

- 1 Jaspers made it clear that his approach had nothing in common with the idea of original sin (GG, 100).
- 2 Jaspers' perception of Being is discussed directly in the following writings: Pk3; VAE; VAW.
- 3 Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage*, Von der politischen Haftung Deutschlands (1946), 1996, München. The discussion will refer to the English translation, which appeared as: *The Question of the German Guilt*, New York, 1947 (hereafter: GG). Other references to Jaspers' writings will follow the abbreviations appearing in the list at the end.
- 4 On the perception of Existenz as a "source" (*Ursprung*), see also Pk 2, 336–337.
- 5 For an extensive discussion of selfhood in Jaspers' writings, see: Miron, 2005.
- 6 For a more detailed definition of these concepts of guilt, see: GG, 31–33, 61–73.
- 7 For further discussion of Jaspers' idea of responsibility (*Verantwortung*), see: Harris, 1994.
- 8 The revolution Jaspers investigated in the individual perspective of guilt, familiar mainly from his psychological discourse (mainly Freudian), is clear against the background of the proposed analysis. While the latter leads to liberating the individual from guilt, or more precisely from guilt feelings, the former aims to anchor the experience of guilt and the process of the formation of self-Being on common ground. For a basic ontological distinction between guilt and guilt feelings, see: Babler. For Jaspers' criticism of psychoanalysis, see: GSZ, 137–139. See also his essay "Zur Kritik der Psychoanalyse", written in 1950 and published in *RdA*, 260–271. For further reading see: Kölle.
- 9 On Jaspers' handling of the difficulties involved in the solipsistic understanding of man and the turning point in his thought towards another approach of subjectivity, see Miron, 2005, 2010.
- 10 Jaspers demonstrates a possible discourse of escaping guilt (GG, 74). He believed that the ways of referring to the boundary situations and to the anonymous nature of reality in general expose the person's character, and he suggested classifying people by their various coping patterns. See PkV, 240 ff.
- 11 For further discussion of this issue, see: Miron, 2004.
- 12 Hegel, 142 ff.
- 13 Jaspers' attitude in principle towards general and objective knowledge, in this context towards historical knowledge, is an extension of his early attitude as a psychiatrist and active researcher of mental disease. As in his criticism of the science of psychopathology or of general psychology as formal frameworks of knowledge that cannot enable access to the fullness and uniqueness of human Being, here too it is assumed that general and formal historical knowledge cannot serve as a source for self-understanding.
- 14 It is important to clarify that although Jaspers sought to avoid reducing guilt to the concrete level of acts, circumstances or reasons, a level that on its own could lead to avoiding the clarification of guilt (see GG, 27: "The temptation to evade this question is obvious"), he did not reject factuality as irrelevant to the discussion of the issue of guilt. Moreover, in *The Question of Guilt* he refers to the concrete facts around which the uniqueness of German guilt was formulated in comparison to that of other nations and did not try to avoid the concrete implications necessitated by the actions of the Germans (see for example, GG, 70–71).
- 15 The idea of possibility is discussed in relation to the idea of freedom in Jaspers' philosophy. See: Young-Brauhl 1981, 64–65, 105–106.
- 16 The problem of the beginning has bothered many phenomenological researchers. Husserl noted the difficulty in determining the point at which the method of the philosophical enquiry starts being applied (Husserl 1913, §63) and also in terms of determining the nature of the datum this enquiry grasps (see Husserl 1913, §40). One of the conclusions Husserl reached was that the



definition does not help us understand since it is an arbitrary setting of a starting point. For further discussion, see: Fuchs, 1976; Fuda, 1966.

- 17 The "boundary situation" is an original concept of Jaspers'. Heidegger believed that this concept on its own could grant Jaspers his status as a philosopher, see: Heidegger, 1998, 10. For further discussion of Jaspers' concept of boundary situations, see: Latzel, 1957; Bohlow, 1964.
- 18 An early version of the idea of "situation" appears in GSZ, 23 ff.
- 19 The concept of the world is discussed extensively in the first volume of *Philosophy (Philosophical World Orientation)*, see especially: Ph. I, 63; VAW, 85–107.
- 20 Jaspers used the Kantian concept of anonymity, referring to a logical contradiction between two premises, each of which can be proven by disproving the other. The secondary literature interprets Jaspers' philosophy as Kantian. In another article I have discussed this approach and proposed an alternative to it. See: Miron, 2006a.
- 21 Jaspers discussed these contradictions in several contexts in his writings. See for example: Ph. 2, 248–249; Ph. 3, 102 ff.
- 22 The term "boundary situations" is discussed in two contexts in Jaspers' writings: Ph. 2, 201–254; PW, 229–280.
- 23 The concept of transcendence is one of the most complex in Jaspers' thought. It was not defined anywhere, except indirectly. See for instance: VAW, 107–113; Ph. 3, 1–35. On the problematic nature of this concept and on its philosophical implications, see: Collins 1952, 88–127.
- 24 See the demonstration in the diagram where transcendence appears as an open horizon. VAW, 142.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

##### Jaspers' Writings and Their Abbreviations

- Jaspers, K. *Allgemeine Psychopathologie, Ein Leitfaden für Studierende, Ärzte und Psychologen* (1st ed., Berlin, J. Springer, 1913) (AP 1)
- Jaspers, K. *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Reichlin-Leipzig, 1931) Walter de Gruyter (GSZ)
- Jaspers, K. and Balthmann, R. *Die Frage der Biopathologisierung* (München, 1954) R. Piper & Co (BN)
- Jaspers, K. *Rechenhaft und Ausblick* (Rechen und Aufsätze, Tübingen, 1958) R. Piper (RuA)
- Jaspers, K. *Der philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung* (München, R. Piper & Co 1962) (PGO)
- Jaspers, K. *Philosophie*. 1932. 3 vols.: *Philosophische Weltorientierung* (Ph. 1); *Existenzentwurf* (Ph. 2); *Metaphysik* (Ph. 3) (Heidelberg, Serie Piper 1994).
- Jaspers, K. *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (Berlin, Serie Piper 1919), Heidelberg, 1985. (PW)

##### Secondary Literature

- Bohlow, O. F. *Existenzphilosophie* (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1964).
- Collins, J. *The Existentialist: A Critical Study* (Chicago, Henry Regnery Company 1952).
- Dilthey, W. *Weltanschauungslehre. Abhandlung zur Philosophie der Philosophie*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (8. Stuttgart: B.G Teubner, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1962).

- Fuchs, W. W. *Phenomenology and the Metaphysics of Presence: An Essay in the Philosophy of Edmund Husserl* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff 1970).
- Fuda, H. F. "Über den spekulativen Anfang," in D. Heinrich and H. Wagner (eds.), *Subjektivität und Metaphysik* (Festschrift für Wolfgang Iser, Frankfurt a.M., V. Klostermann 1966)
- Hartmann, K. "Shame, Guilt, Responsibility," in A. M. Olson (ed.), *Heidegger & Jaspers*, pp. 49–64 (Philadelphia, Temple University Press 1994).
- Hegel, G. W. F. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig, F. Meiner 1914).
- Heidegger, M. *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen, Max Niemeyer 1927), 1993.
- Heidegger, M. *Pathmarks* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1998).
- Husserl, E. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, vol. 1 (Tübingen, M. Niemeyer 1913), 1952.
- Knauss, G. "The Concept of the 'Encompassing,'" in Jaspers' *Philosophy*, in P. A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, pp. 141–175 (New York, Open Court 1957).
- Kolle, K. "Jaspers as Psychopathologist," in P. A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, pp. 437–466 (New York, IL, Open Court 1957).
- Latzel, E. "The Concept of 'Ultimate Situation,'" in Jaspers' *Philosophy*, in P. A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, pp. 177–208 (New York, Open Court 1957).
- Miron, R. "From Opposition to Reciprocity—Karl Jaspers on science, philosophy and what lies between them", *International philosophical Quarterly* 44(2):147–163, Fordham University Press, New York 2004.
- Miron, R. "Transcendence and Dissatisfaction in Jaspers' Idea of the Self," *Phänomenologische Forschungen* NF 10:221–241, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 2005.
- Miron, R. "Was Jaspers Really 'Kantian?' *Yearbook of the Austrian Karl Jaspers' Society* 19: 73–106, Studien Verlag, Innsbruck 2006a.
- Miron, R. "Toward's Reality: The Development of the Philosophical Attitude to Reality in Karl Jaspers' Thought," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 37(2):152–172, Jackson Publishing and Distribution, England 2006b.
- Miron, R. *Karl Jaspers: Value Inquiry Book, From Selfhood to Being* (Amsterdam, New York, Rodopi) (Forthcoming 2010)
- Pilnmeier, M. *Philosophie nach 1945 in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Hamburg, Vowohls enzyklopädie 1996).
- Salammun, K. *Karl Jaspers* (München, C.H. Beck 1985).
- Sauer, H. (ed.), *Karl Jaspers in der Diskussion* (München, R. Piper 1973).
- Scheier, M. *Philosophische Weltanschauung* (Bern, Francke 1954).
- Young-Bruehl, E. *Freedom and Karl Jaspers' Philosophy*, (New Haven, Yale University Press 1981).