



# Existenz

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Volume 14/1, Spring 2019

<b>Editor's Introduction</b> Helmut Wautischer <i>Sonoma State University</i>	iii
<b>On Being with Others: Jaspers and Ortega</b> Oliver W. Holmes <i>Wesleyan University</i>	1
<b>Ortega and the Dynamics of Historical Reason</b> Pierre Keller <i>University of California, Riverside</i>	12
<b>Jaspers and Ortega on the Historicity of Being Human</b> Marnie Binder <i>California State University, Sacramento</i>	28
<b>José Ortega y Gasset and Karl Jaspers: Some Intriguing Parallels</b> Oswald Sobrino <i>University of Florida</i>	35
<b>Histories Beyond History</b> Dmitri Nikulin <i>The New School, New York</i>	43
<b>Can There Be History Without Representation?</b> Jeffrey A. Bernstein, <i>College of the Holy Cross</i>	69
<b>"Please, stop at Zuckerman" – Names and Memory in History</b> Alfredo Ferrarin, <i>University of Pisa, Italy</i>	73
<b>Creativity and Historical Non-Being in Nikulin's <i>The Concept of History</i></b> John V. Garner, <i>University of West Georgia</i>	78
<b>Hermeneutics, Historicism, and <i>The Concept of History</i></b> Adam J. Graves, <i>Metropolitan State University of Denver</i>	84
<b>Toward a Happy Ending: Memory, Narrative, and Comedy in History</b> Sonja M. Tanner, <i>University of Colorado, Colorado Springs</i>	90
<b>History and Historical Conceptualization</b> Massimiliano Tomba, <i>University of California, Santa Cruz</i>	93
<b>The Axial Age and the Quest for a Secular Religion in Modernity</b> Michael Steinmann <i>Stevens Institute of Technology</i>	98
<b>Breakthrough to Transcendence? – Three Concepts of Inter-Cultural Philosophy (Leibniz, Hegel, Jaspers)</b> Helmut Heit <i>Tongji University, Shanghai, China</i>	107
<b>Cultural and Anthropological Patterns in the Axial Age</b> Markus Wirtz <i>University of Cologne, Germany</i>	115

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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*Jaspers, Ortega, History, and Axial Age* is the third issue in a series of upcoming volumes designed to include selected contributions presented at the Eighth International Jaspers Conference held in 2018 in Beijing. Three additional perspectives on the Axial Age are being made accessible here, all of which reflect upon the reality of Eurocentrism yet with differing interpretations of Jaspers' motivation for advancing the idea of an Axial Age. Michael Steinmann (Stevens Institute of Technology, USA) reads Jaspers with an eye on Immanuel Kant as he investigates the Axial Age within the context of philosophical faith, suggesting that Jaspers envisioned the dawning of a new era for humanity that integrates and spans across cultures. A pragmatic perspective is being offered by Helmut Heit (Tongji University, Shanghai) who draws from Leibniz and Hegel in order to demonstrate a long-standing misperception of non-Western thought and who interprets Jaspers' call for a unifying culture-inclusive philosophy as being too restrictive when he objects to the fact that Jaspers recognizes only three world cultures and omits all others. For Markus Wirtz (University of Cologne, Germany), the most plausible interpretation of an Axial Age exceeds Jaspers' philosophical intentions and instead is being found in the simultaneity of increased cultural and anthropological complexity across civilizations.

Four essays devoted to Jaspers in relation to Ortega y Gasset address the compatibility of these two philosophers regarding some of their respective contributions to the field of philosophy. Their shared ideas include the recognition of the importance of historicity, the role of the individual for living an authentic life, the recognition of a primordial reality, and their indebtedness to Kant and the Marburg School. The two philosophers did know of one another; however, records suggest that their personalities might have been simply too distant as to allow for constructive dialogue. Nonetheless, Ortega did write a 30-page tribute to Jaspers on the occasion of his seventieth birthday that Jaspers acknowledged with thanks.

A book by Dmitri Nikulin (The New School), namely *The Concept of History* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017) is the subject of seven essays included in this issue. Nikulin offers a thoughtful and detailed reply to the six critiques that are ranging from contrasting his understanding of history from the one by Jean-Luc Nancy, to the place of names and images in historiography, to the multiplicity of histories, and to the politics of history. Videotaped versions of eight of the fifteen essays in this issue can be found at [existenz.us/media.html](http://existenz.us/media.html).

Helmut Wautischer  
Editor-in-Chief

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