

THE “KARL JASPERS FORUM” UPDATE 15
JASPERS APPLIED TO RAMONA FOTIADE’S LEV SHESTOV

FOR QUICK REFERENCE:

- 1. Missing a reference to Jaspers in last week’s UPDATE**
- 2. Ramona Fotiade’s Response affects Herbert**
- 2.5. Shestov called as witness in Jaspers’ defense**
- 2.9. Why Herbert cannot drop “MIR”**
- 2.10. The real issue between Shestov and Jaspers**
- 2.11. Keeping it simple, its the protestant/catholic issue**
- 2.12. Rounded Jaspers is stuffed between square brackets.**

1. The “Sunshine Law” has a spirit or common ethical heart the breaching of which necessitated the legislation regarding communication. The sunshine law requires that governmental meetings and records be open to the public. Though the law cannot be applied in all areas of communication, the ethical spirit is a reasonable expectation for fourth estate reporting in circles of academia. Unquestionably any website chitchatting under the banner of the academician Karl Jaspers involves ethics. For example if I’m reporting on what passes through Mr. Muller’s Website, I have a personal ethical obligation to reasonably report findings.

1.2. My reporting on Mr. Muller’s Website is a bit hampered. One reason is that I was not only censured from contributing but also removed from the weekly mailing list. This means that of two entrances only one is available to me--unless I wanted to impose on a listed recipient. I try to remain careful about my own errors, and though I had checked at various times, as one can see by UPDATE 14, caution was still engaged when reporting whether Karl Jaspers had been mentioned in Herbert’s “Karl Jaspers Forum’s” postings of the week. A review of UPDATE 14 shows the caution was needed, for in the PREFACE I had stated within a paragraph relative to Mr. Umpleby’s postings, “No reference to Karl Jaspers is made.” The possibility that a posting might get by my findings led to restricting the comment to that paragraph. Surely it would have to be my mistake even if I had not anticipated something or did not allow for computer malfunction. Surely no honest thinker would arrange things to make it seem that I erred.

1.3. Discovering an...oversight--Today March 17 I found postings assigned the 18th and noticed a Comment by Rodrigo Barros Gewehr to Herbert Muller. A check was made and sure enough there was not one but two by Herbert, and one had an apparent prepared date of March 5th and a posting date of March 11. Herbert’s Comment included a part of a Response to his TA 78. *That Target Article was the crucial setting for my censure.*

1.4. Herbert’s TA 78 and my TA78, C4—Herbert’s defense of his Target Article 78 included deferring the question of ultimate “origins” to vatic authority and then censoring me upon my objections. He allowed a final plea for a fair hearing but tucked it away in the Short Notes section. One can currently read my C4 and other Comments under TA 78 on his Website, if not, all my Comments, Responses, and Target Articles will soon be

available on Karl Jaspers Applied—but with my own arrangement and titles. The dynamics of the process of excommunication can be found on the front page of my Website. Because I did not kowtow to the theistic use of a vatic-homunculus authority, he applied an ad hominem accusation for censoring purposes.

1.5. Herbert's Comment to Rodrigo-- After dropping the name of “vonGlassersfeld” in the first paragraph Herbert reaffirms, in effect, that The Transcendent and the Encompassing is conjured as in absolute-origin, i.e., the ground of theistic thinking is the “evolved” mind. Herbert thereby sets up an effort to imply Jaspers thought that way also, at least in what Herbert thinks was Jaspers’ better moments (a confusing incoherent argument, for Herbert considers better moments to be when Jaspers was not realistic, i.e., not thinking anything real could be independent of thinking). Herbert also mythically exploits Buddha through the use of “ism” in “Buddhism”, in effect classifying it as comparable to Herbert’s atheism, i.e., “God is a human creation, or structure”. (Later, below, it will be shown that Shestov had more respect for Asian culture than that, and so did Jaspers.) And there you have a form of “Constructivism”, an attitude and a didactic method to be used in the education industry. Herbert then uses the Comment to Rodrigo as an occasion to attach the first 7 of 82 paragraphs of his Target Article 78 and in item [3] he mentioned Karl Jaspers. So, I missed it. Regardless of how I missed it, and the record of assigned dates could indicate to superficial reviewers that the name of Karl Jaspers was missed when I checked. But the implication, conscious or not, being made to Rodrigo is that he needs to see what happens to one not given to evolutionism like myself and Jaspers—and one speaking theistically, biblically, like Jaspers and Lev Shestov. And this brings us to Ramona Fotiade’s Response this week, i.e., the reference to the religious philosopher Shestov.

2. Ramona Fotiade’s Response makes Herbert’s interpretation of Jaspers’ Encompassing concepts invalid, non-viable, and wholly void of veracity—Ramona does this by mentioning, seemingly as an afterthought, that Lev Shestov wrote a “long essay on Jaspers”. Ramona’s Response would have been more Jaspers’ orientated if the TA had included this very pertinent reference initially and in some emphatic manner. It should be noted that some of Jasper’s works have been also available to Ramona no less than to Derrida, and more so to Shestov--as we will see due to his friendships. Ramona has an academic profession--with a French connection--at Glasgow University and in association with that Institution manages a Shestov Website. The Response on Herbert’s Website has the effect of establishing a link of sorts to that Website. The main purpose of Ramona’s Response seems like an effort to validate talking about Derrida rather than Jaspers, and from Derrida, because he contributed to French existential thinking, then to Shestov who supposedly introduced a critical and peculiar form of Husserl’s phenomenology to France. The reference to Jaspers through Shestov appears incidental if not providential.

2.1. A bit of Shestov/Husserl/Jaspers dynamics—Lev Shestov (1866-1938) though less renown than Husserl and Jaspers, was a uniquely acerbic critic, even toward Husserl in the beginning. Lev’s works were not all that popular and he had not much to lose by being virulent toward Husserl, and he was the first publicizing anything about Husserl in

France, introducing a phenomenology in France. This offered both Husserl and Shestov an opportunity to arrange meetings to supposedly iron out their differences. So, Husserl was already renowned and could afford to take the hits and in turn increase his popularity through Shestov in France. So this is the human-theoretical background.

2.2. But there's more background. Husserl and Jaspers were more cordial than harmonious. And here comes along an unknown but brilliant French acerbic writer that Husserl could sic on Jaspers. Due to his illness Jaspers could not travel or even have visitors especially like Shestov. So Jaspers' handling of Shestov was to do nothing, and one could guess, to acknowledge Shestov and react would have amounted to elevating the unknown's status. Husserl introduces Shestov to the works of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche knowing Jaspers' interests and potential as shown in his textbook *General Psychopathology*. The growing estrangement is not all that theoretical.

2.3. Jaspers 1913 General Psychopathology's footnoted Husserl--Jaspers under a sub point on psychopathology and psychology merely mentions Husserl in a footnote relevant to psychology textbooks. He strikes at the heart of Husserl's contribution to psychology: "No new principle but a new thoroughness in the old method is offered by Husserl in his phenomenological basis for psychological enquiry" (see Introduction). It is no wonder then that Husserl could seek support from another source, such as he had hoped for in Heidegger. But to accuse Husserl of not having a principle is like refusing to use Herbert's formulae; the footnote declares there is absolutely nothing original in principle but only in the fingerprint one is determined to plant. In one more footnote he reminds readers that phenomenology as a term was used by Hegel; and Husserl came to use the term "in the sense of 'the appearance of things', which is not the way Jaspers is using the term in his GP. Here Jaspers shows why Husserl's phenomenology is not a principle for the science of psychology and psychopathology. The point here is that Jaspers was not the disciple Husserl expected. Husserl could easily have misinterpreted Jaspers inquiries about phenomenology. He, perhaps due to a high regard for himself, thought that Jaspers was more personal than simply utilizing what was in vogue, and applying it to his more reflective thinking. So when Jaspers dared to use the word and method of phenomenology more with patients in mind than Husserl's principle interest in appearance of things as such, it cannot be wholly unrelated to a utilitarian relationship between Husserl and Shestov. And this is where we concentrate the spotlight. Just as Husserl had to direct Shestov to Kierkegaard, it is reasonable to assume that Husserl also said something like: Jaspers is very popular and you can establish your credentials further by turning your virulence toward him and we can become visiting-symposium friends. Jaspers had already ask Husserl some embarrassing questions, for, Jaspers had written to his parents in 1911 that Husserl has no clear knowing of what he means by phenomenology (Kirkbright p. 69). Jaspers could use the term for something clear and methodical in psychopathology. Husserl knew full well Shestov's religious slant or bias, but had not predicted (or maybe he did) Jaspers' reasonable approach to religious faith and its vivid place in the formation of his philosophical logic. Jaspers was a religious force to be reckoned with and who other than the biblical Shestov could be unpopular and alert enough in Germany to get away with a critique that would gather momentum before

Jaspers might respond. Either by design or whatever, Jaspers correctly ignored the Essay Ramona refers to—to my knowledge.

2.4. Shestov's essay's failed attack on Jaspers—And this is where we find Ramona referencing Jaspers. The reference is not getting so much...to...Jaspers as it is getting...at...him through an essay done by Lev Shestov in 1937, the year before Lev died. It is a critical review of Jaspers' 1935 *Reason and Existenz*. Jaspers without good reason would not respond to someone already unable to defend himself from the grave. I'm not being critical of Lev but rather critical of those who would expect Jaspers to kick a person when he's down and incapable of getting up. Nor would Jaspers raise him from the dead to save face. Besides, Jaspers was bright eyed enough to get the gist of what was going on in Husserl's mind more than Husserl, for Jaspers understood phenomenology more than Husserl—and possibly more than Shestov for that matter. It seems almost unreasonable to think that Jaspers was not aware that a French writer was critiquing Husserl, and that he later critiqued Jaspers. Jaspers was also trying hard not to bring too much attention to himself and Gertrud around that time. Now to the essay:

2.5. Shestov's Essay "On Philosophical Honesty" is an expert witness—It is obvious that Shestov is straining hard to find something to be critical of in Jaspers' book. His friendship with Husserl obliged as much. This friendship could be in part made easier due to Husserl's Jewish to Lutheran conversion, i.e., having something in common with Shestov who married a Christian. I could not find quickly anything regarding what "Christian" meant, except that he met and married in Rome. Jaspers was married to Gertrud by this time, so much of Shestov's criticism of Jaspers' book has to be seen as unfounded in light of Jaspers' protestant upbringing which included a regard for biblical tradition and perhaps even enhanced by the complementary relationship with Gertrude and the fact that while in exile during the Nazi regime they were reading the Bible together. Therefore Shestov's association with Husserl and Heidegger and his review of Jaspers must be suspended or open to radical modification had Shestov lived longer, unlike Benjamin Fondane, Shestov's close friend and student, who was exterminated in the gas chambers of Birkenau. What I am saying is that what Shestov is arguing against, is one of those arguments against what was never argued, namely that Jaspers had no less regard for biblical faith and tradition but included some comprehensiveness due to his perspective having been in the clinical and social pathological thick of things—no less and even more than Shestov. Whereas with Shestov he personally felt he was living during the best of times up to WWI, and his 1937 essay made a point of saying so at Jaspers' expense. But now to the point: *Shestov can be called as a witness for the defense of Jaspers' Encompassing and Transcendent concepts*. Considered by the French to be a genius, his testimony is all the more important for he can be considered hostile toward Jaspers' concepts, but though hostile, yet more correct than Herbert.

2.6. Shestov's interpretation of the Encompassings—Shestov cannot avoid Jaspers' philosophical logic and attempts to circumscribe the flexible and constantly moving encompassing concepts. Anyone who has read and comprehends *Reason and Existenz* cannot avoid the horizon-reality of the many encompassings including the general and special relative perspectives. Horizon is a cypher (inspirational, revelational, meaningful

term) for the reality that encompasses and the reality into which all free individuals can step if the source of the possibility is remembered. But, like Herbert circumvents all but one encompassing, Lev captures one, saddles it, and attempts to ride it into submission. But he clearly reiterates several of Jaspers' encompassings, which sometimes can be differentiating-modes of the always-returning horizon most visible at the beginning and close, rise and fall, of every new day. It's as though every creative day is encompassed by the eternal recurrent horizon of time's morning and evening. But Lev settles, fixates, on the encompassing we are (or I am). Lev tries hard to settle on one to beat it to death. It is not honest to treat Jasper's philosophical logic that way. It does a dishonest injustice to the philosophical honesty inherent in Jaspers' way of handling reality; it is *ignorantia Encompassings neminem excusat*. Lev does this in paragraph 10 and 11 under part 1. Here he reiterates at least four encompassings and three modes of encompassings, which he concludes, is only a new chorus to Aristotle's old song sung ("consciousness as such") through the middle ages, and here Lev attempts to open the door for "St" Thomas Aquinas (my assumption). All Jaspers was doing is showing how he handles reality, and others are welcomed to see the system's value. But there is no doubt about the objectivity of reality in Jaspers' works.

2.7. Shestov's damaging testimony—Ramona's Shestov is an expert witness to Jaspers' flexible encompassing concepts used to handle a non-fixating complex reality. In the process of calling attention to...the...Encompassing, the encompassings and the modes of those encompassings, his testimony becomes invaluable. And by explicit reference also to Transcendence, the witness is testifying against Herbert Muller's claim that Jaspers' concepts are a base for what Herbert means by zero derivation ("0-D") and the major-negative reality premise that one single encompassing (individual or collective) "mind", is the origin of reality. Jaspers and Shestov are theistic, but one is protestant and the other catholic in thinking. Before returning to the clear but complex difference between Jaspers and Shestov, *a space here must be made for an appeal to Herbert*.

2.8. The defense of reality rests its case and moves to acquit Jaspers—Sufficient evidence has been provided to have Herbert lower the Jaspers' masthead. He cannot be legislated into doing so. He can only continue to fly the banner--and exploit its meaning through mere association--by some consensus-argument amounting to contributor-continuum. He must use *argumentum ad baculum* or go it alone. He has in certain terms stated on his "forum" that he has "no intention" of changing the name. Intentionality of that magnitude means he must lower it or look ridiculous, or...be converted. He can only save face through conversion (inner transformation) through such communicative efforts as a new contributor like Rodrigo or Ramona's Shestov might give excuse.

2.9. Why Herbert has no intention of dropping "MIR"—Herbert has somewhat ameliorated his position on zero-derivation but that is only because the presumably "evolved" mind cannot have its derivation in "the" objective and absolute derivation, i.e., evolutionism. His formula of "0-D" and evolutionism, ontolog(ism), could not be sustained. "MIR" serves also as creed, an inquisitor's creed, a short-cut reduction imposed on reason. We can illuminate for ourselves the reason he doggedly adheres to the use of "mind" over all the rest of reality from consciousness to experience and

beyond. It is because he has mistakenly staked his reputation on the formula or creed of distinction “MIR”. If he talks too much consciousness, about what really encompasses “mind” he must lose the title of distinction into which all reality-dissenters must be cast and be purged. I mean he would have to drop the “M” and he has no intention of doing so. The oath or test of participation in his “Karl Jaspers Forum” must be taken. One must pledge allegiance to the use of “MIR” as Ramona does in the first paragraph of this week’s R1. Rodrigo takes the “use” pledge too. It seems they have fallen victim perhaps; it must not be...believed...to be collusion. It must rather be believed to be another one of Jaspers’ encompassings, the encompassing of spirit (Reason and Existenz), the predictability of which allows horizons to be seen and pre-judgment or condemnation laid down. Now, to return to the difference between Jaspers and Shestov:

2.10. The issue between Shestov and Jaspers—Note this is an issue Shestov makes. It is not—to my knowledge—one Jaspers participates in with Shestov. It is therefore only indirectly relevant to Karl Jaspers such as made above regarding Herbert’s misunderstanding and misuse of “encompassing”. Shestov finds nothing in Jaspers concepts of the encompassings and the encompassing of concepts about which to be clearly and successfully critical. All Shestov demonstrates in the 11th paragraph is his reworked awareness of some of Jaspers’ philosophical logic that pertains to the encompassing concepts. The nearest he comes to any substantial criticism is poetical: it’s a new chorus to an old song, he says. But Jaspers philosophical logic is not a new chorus but an honest individual’s arrangement of reality communicable to those open to the horizons of reason.

2.11. The Issue—Shestov conjures, constructs, an area of real difference and uses the Bible and the “Church”. The Bible to Shestov apparently means the Old and New Testament. It was easy for him hit on one point that was obvious, that Jaspers was not involved with institutional religion, whereas Husserl had become a Lutheran. The difference Shestov strains from *Reason and Existenz* is found in paragraph 12 where Lev talks about *a priori* synthetic reason, and in the same context says: “The idea of the infallibility of the church, the idea of the ‘power of the keys,’ [an obvious reference to Peter and the conjured Rome connection—my comment] is by no means an original idea of Catholicism” and goes on to say in effect that the keys are reasons’ development into religious institutions, thus making philosophy the handmaid of theology, meaning the Catholic Church—an obvious effort to make a Catholic out of Kant (in that paragraph). This trend of thought then continues through paragraph 14 under part 2. “Kierkegaard...went from Hegel and the Greek symposium to Holy Scripture” (to which I resonate), and then in the 18th paragraph Jaspers is incorrectly interpreted as saying Nietzsche’s atheism included the God of Kierkegaard. The misinterpretation Shestov is making is that he makes it sound like Jaspers was convinced Nietzsche was an atheist, but there’s a difference between being an atheist and categorizing the world as atheistic by virtue of world-wide misbehavior. Shestov sees this too, as do I, but fails to see Jaspers see it too.

2.12. Rounded Jaspers stuffed into square hole--To Shestov Jaspers is too protestant and not enough catholic. In paragraph 19 Shestov’s aphoristic description of Jaspers’

Encompassing of encompassings is forced into square brackets: “Jaspers makes a phenomenological reduction: both God and atheism are placed in brackets—outside the brackets remains the true philosophy.” *That forcing of the round into the square is done to establish a peg to hang a conjured difference on, and now we come to the real point as to why there has been this round about way of making Shestov enough relevant to gain admittance to Muller’s “Karl Jaspers Forum.” If Shestov can be shown to have misinterpreted Jaspers, then Herbert has been at least placed in good company by Ramona’s reference.* But, Shestov was a theist for he said “both God and atheism will not let themselves so easily be held in brackets”, and though seeming as more lasting than bronze, “they will blow everything up, even the ‘true philosophy’ that stands outside the brackets”. Shestov is correct if that were Jaspers’ position. But Shestov is radically incorrect in suggesting that Jaspers’ philosophy is “the” true philosophy. Jaspers would not admit to “the” true philosophy in the sense there is only an absolute catholic view. And this is the difference, for Jaspers philosophy and conversion is always an individual matter in an earth shaping way, but dependent on the historicity of prophets, including Jesus, he said, being the last of the biblical prophets. The catholicity becomes obvious in Shestov’s statement that Kant’s system was more universally kind, for Jaspers’ system’s hope for salvation was for very many and not for all. It is questionable whether the comparison is correct, but as portrayed by Shestov, Jaspers hope is far more realistic and less dangerously idealistic. And the revelation Jaspers is cautious about is the one that requires of individuals that unless in compliance, they can be excommunicated; it is that revelation that Jaspers refuses to trust.

2.13. Shestov’s poor criticism of Jaspers’ social-complex foresight--In his last paragraph Shestov sees shallowly the issue. Jaspers see the wider issue, i.e., the need for communication as endless as reason’s expanding horizons, but for Jaspers it’s communication between and among individuals, with a skeptical eye on vatic authorities, named and nameless powers. For Shestov who had not yet lived through WWII--though having lost a son in WWI—and had not seen the disadvantageous effects of catholicity in various forms, he closes with a final criticism of protestant critical thinking: “[T]he guarantee of ... ‘toleration’ [Kant’s subjection of reason to law—my comment] promises nothing good to the ‘exceptions’ [Jaspers’ emphasis on individuality more than institutional control—my comment] and only puts them more on guard” (see Shestov’s last sentence). Shestov had been meeting in discussion groups in Germany, including one long philosophical discussion with Heidegger at Husserl home in 1929. So we can illuminate for ourselves the reason why he may not have become, and will not become all that popular.

2.14. Jaspers remains the father of systematic theistic existential thinking.