

Michael Steinmann

*Wertung und Wertwiderstand. Selbsterfahrung und die antinomische Struktur der Existenz bei Jaspers und Heidegger*

Stevens Institute of Technology – Hoboken, New Jersey

United States

e-mail: msteinma@stevens.edu

The essay discusses Karl Jaspers' concept of limit situations in his *Psychology of Worldviews*. In limit situations, individuals experience their finite existence in an essential way. The essay shows that the concept had great influence on Martin Heidegger, who gives two of the situations, death and guilt, a decisive role in the phenomenological analysis of human existence in *Being and Time*. For Jaspers' *Psychology*, the main emphasis lies on the individual's spiritual counter-reaction to the experience of limit situations, which leaves the overall status of the situations unclear. The essay also shows that for Jaspers limit situations are devastating because they affect the values that each individual strives to realize. The assumption of value-related attitudes allows us to read both Jaspers' and Heidegger's approach in light of more recent theories that investigate the relation between normativity and the experience of the self. Koorsgard, among others, has emphasized the essential role of normativity for the self. While both Jaspers' and Heidegger's *and* the more recent theories fail at explaining the origins of normativity, the concept of limit situations can provide important insight in showing how normativity cannot be separated from negativity.