



## The Axial Age, the Moral Revolution, and the Polarization of Life and Spirit

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**Abstract:** The essay concerns issues related to my book, *From the Axial Age to the Moral Revolution*, and begins with a discussion of how I came to uncover the forgotten work of John Stuart-Glennie, who some seventy-five years before Jaspers proposed a comprehensive theory of the phenomena described by Karl Jaspers as the Axial Age. Although they each drew similar conclusions regarding many of the facts of the moral revolution respectively the Axial Age, there are significant differences in their philosophies of history, concerning, for example the problem, whether history can be regarded deterministically or as an open whole, and whether nature can be a source of profound spiritual significance and even transcendence or whether that realm is limited to historical consciousness. I also briefly discuss two other overlooked contributors, namely D. H. Lawrence, who wrote on the phenomena twenty years before Jaspers, and Lewis Mumford, who is one of the first writers to draw from Jaspers' work. I then respond to four diverse scholarly essays on my book.

**Keywords:** Stuart-Glennie, John S.; Jaspers, Karl; moral revolution; Axial Age; panzooism; ultimate law of history; evolutionary legacy.



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Let me first express my gratitude to Helmut Wautischer for organizing the author meets critics session on my book, *From the Axial Age to the Moral Revolution*, at the 2018 APA Pacific Division meeting.<sup>1</sup> I am honored that

such able critics discuss my work. It is rare to have people who can understand you, and these critics understand what I was trying to say, and raise serious and important questions that I address below, after first providing some context as to how the book came to be written.

Ever since I was a graduate student in the 1970s, I have been interested in issues surrounding what Karl Jaspers termed the Axial Age, that revolutionary period

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Halton, *From the Axial Age to the Moral Revolution: John Stuart-Glennie, Karl Jaspers, and a New Understanding of the Idea*, London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. [Henceforth cited as AMR]