

Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences 8

Ronny Miron

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# Hedwig Conrad-Martius

The Phenomenological Gateway  
to Reality

 Springer

# **Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences**

Volume 8

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Ronny Miron  
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Bar-Ilan University  
Ramat Gan, Israel

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# Preface

## Introduction: “Die Frau in der Philosophie voran-!”

### A. The Prize Essay (*Die Preisschrift*)

Hedwig Margarete Elisabeth Martius (27 February 1888–15 February 1966)<sup>1</sup> (HCM)<sup>2</sup> first appeared in the phenomenological discourse when, in 1912, she won the essay competition of the Philosophy Department of the University of Göttingen. A while before, in 1910 she had started attending the lectures of Edmund Husserl, who was a professor there. The founding father of phenomenology, who rose to prominence with the publication of *Logical Investigations* (1900–1901), established a prize competition about “The epistemological principles of positivism” in honor of the University’s festival. The prize was promised to the best original philosophical essay (HCM, 2015b, 62).<sup>3</sup> About two hundred essays were submitted to the strict, anonymous judgment of philosophy professors of repute and status. Only one essay, entitled “The epistemological foundations of positivism” (*Die erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen des Positivismus*) was found worthy of the prize. This essay, later called the “Prize Essay” (Avé-Lallemant, 1971, 52, 213, 1975b, 197), was written

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<sup>1</sup>The literature suggests two options regarding the places of HCM’s birth and death. Except for Hart, who reports that she was born in Königsberg (Hart, 1973, 14), all other sources indicate Berlin. There also appears to be disagreement regarding the place of her death. The majority (and most probable) position indicates Munich, while a few sources (Wikipedia.de included) note it as Starnberg. Martha Martius, HCM’s mother, composed a family chronicle in four volumes in which she described both the positive and negative sides of her six children (HCM was the third), who were rather different from each other. Martha Martius’ grandchild, Goetz-Alexander, published some sections from this chronicle (Martius, 2002, 2003a), which has also been published as a book (Martius, 2003b).

<sup>2</sup>In his speech from 27 February 1958 for HCM’s 70th birthday, Avé-Lallemant indicted that “HCM” was Conrad-Martius’ nickname among her pupils at the University of Munich.

<sup>3</sup>This source is a first publication of the text of HCM’s acceptance speech (to be referred to later in the body text) (HCM, 1958bN). It contains the original German text (HCM, 2015a, 56–59) and its translation to English by Ferrarello (HCM, 2015b, 60–63), which also added an introduction (Ferrarello, 2015, 51–55). See references to the speech in: Ursula Avé-Lallemant (1965/1966, 207), Pfeiffer (2005, 49).

by a 21-year-old student named Hedwig Martius. The surprising win was covered by the local press. On 6 June 1912, the *Berliner Tageblatt* wrote:

*A woman at the forefront of philosophy!* Or better, a young miss (*Fräulein*), since this is not Madame Curie or a famous lady scholar, but a young student who, by submitting an essay to a prize competition (*Preisbewerbung*) defeated all the other applicants [...] The essay was crowned with the prize in full. The author's name was revealed when the envelopes were opened, Miss *Hedwig Martius* from *Rostock*. (HCM, 1912N)<sup>4</sup>

The *San Francisco Examiner*, an English language newspaper published in Berlin, wrote on 22 September 1912, under the headline “German Fraulein is a Clever Thinker”:

People who dislike clever woman [*sic*] are in a tragic mood. The Cleverest philosopher in Germany is a woman, and a brand-new woman, too.

Hedwig Martius has had her book on philosophy crowned and prized by Goettingen University [*sic*]. A 21-year-old girl, with the round, pleasant features of an everyday German hausfrau, has beaten the cleverest brains of Germany. (HCM, 1912N)

The reporter added that the essay was found worthy of the prize due to its being “profound, original, and striking”. They guessed that the essay had been written by a brilliant young professor from Leipsig [*sic*]. But when they opened the envelope, they saw to their amazement that the essay had been composed by a young woman. It was reported that a professor from Göttingen University exclaimed: “if women begin with philosophy they will go further. They will degenerate to the condition of their English suffragist sisters, and take to breaking windows” (HCM, 1912N).<sup>5</sup>

On the face of it, this win could have seemed as a natural, perhaps even expected, progression for someone who was known as one of the first women to have studied at a grammar school (*Gymnasium*)<sup>6</sup> and then at university in Germany (Sander, 1997, 155). HCM described her feelings upon graduation from the secondary school for girls (*Höhere Töchterchule*) as a “sudden... passionate desire to study” (HCM, 2015b, 60). After completing her grammar school studies, she attended courses in

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<sup>4</sup>All translations from the German original into English are mine. Emphases follow the original unless stated otherwise. In cases of unique terms or phrases, the original German is included in parentheses. I have attempted to maintain consistency in the translations I offer. However, at times, certain contexts have obliged me to choose a different English phrase for the same word in German. There is no doubt that HCM's unique vocabulary and her solecisms have frequently necessitated the inclusion of the German term in parentheses. Regarding other German sources, in particular the writings of Edmund Husserl and Adolf Reinach, the text refers to English translations of the German sources, where available. In light of the many sources mentioned, and in order to assist the readers, a system of abbreviations is employed. This system is listed alongside each item in the References section at the end of each article and at the end of the book. For convenience, I have avoided using the abbreviation *ibid*, and I have repeated the abbreviation with each reference.

<sup>5</sup>This citation is taken from a photograph of the newspaper cutting that is stored in Bavarian State Archive (BSM) in Munich and cataloged under the title *Zeitungsveröffentlichungen zur Preisschrift 1912*.

<sup>6</sup>In 1903, HCM enrolled in the *Gymnasialkurse für Frauen* at the Helene Lange School in Berlin, and in fall 1907/1908 she received her Abitur at the *Sophien-Realgymnasium* in Berlin.

History and Literature at the universities of Rostock and Freiburg.<sup>7</sup> Thus, she became the first woman (Stein, 2013, 7 n. 10),<sup>8</sup> or at least one of the first women (Sander, 1997, 155), to study in a German university. Without any doubt, moving to Munich in 1909 and choosing to study at the Ludwig Maximilian University there were a formative step in HCM's life.<sup>9</sup> Although her first encounter with academic studies in philosophy was already in Rostock,<sup>10</sup> it seems that in Munich it has dawned on her that philosophy was her calling.<sup>11</sup> She describes this period as follows:

It was a seminar on Hume.<sup>12</sup> At the end of that semester he [Moritz Geiger - RM] gave me a note for Adolf Reinach, a lecturer in Göttingen who was like him a pupil of Husserl, and said "You have to go to Göttingen to go to Husserl." I knew virtually nothing about Husserl, but I went and dropped right into the center of the original circle of phenomenologists. Lightning (*Blitz*) struck for a second time. (HCM, 2015b, 61)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>In WS 1907/8, HCM enrolled in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Rostock and spent three semesters attending courses in philosophy and German Studies. In SS 1908 (one semester), she studied philology at the University of Freiburg. In 1908–1909, she returned to Rostock for two more semesters (WS = winter semester; SS = summer semester). Avé-Lallemant refers to HCM's writing of fine literature, yet he adds that "later she burned her own poetic and dramatic attempts" (Avé-Lallemant, 1984, 212). Avé-Lallemant also testified that after her religious experiences at the beginning of the 1920s (concomitant with Stein, to be discussed below), HCM had a big auto-da-fé and in 1929 she burned also her poetic writings from her time at Bergzabern. Nonetheless, a copy of two valuable manuscripts survived. For this study of particular importance is: HCM 1916aN (cited from: Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 79 n. 45).

<sup>8</sup>This note was composed by the editor of Stein's mentioned work, Andreas Uwe Müller.

<sup>9</sup>In October of 1909, HCM transferred to the University of Munich, where she studied philosophy with Max Scheler and Moritz Geiger. She remained there for two semesters (WS 1909/10 and SS 1910). During her first semester in Munich, HCM enrolled in courses with Max Scheler and with professors who were the students of Theodor Lipps, in particular Ernst von Aster (1880–1948) and Aloys Fischer (1880–1937).

<sup>10</sup>In Rostock, she participated in an advanced seminar on Spinoza's *Ethics* with her Professor, Franz Bruno Erhardt. Later she would describe her encounter with Spinoza as her first experience of being "hit by lightning" See: HCM (2015b, 61).

<sup>11</sup>Fréchette suggests that in 1905, two groups of philosophers in Munich can be largely distinguished (Fréchette, 2012, 156–157). One, whose members remained largely faithful to Theodore Lipps and included August Gallinger, Aloys Fischer, Fritz Weinmann, and Max Etlinger. See here also: Smid (1982, 114–115), Schuhmann (1973, 128–132). The second group included Theodor Conrad, Johannes Daubert, Adolf Reinach, and Moritz Geiger. Fréchette characterized them as "already showing more than a mere interest in phenomenology and it progressively abandoned most of the Lippsian conceptions" (Fréchette, 2012, 156).

<sup>12</sup>Hart indicates that according to Ludwig Maximilian, in Munich the seminar was on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, see: Hart (2020, 2 n. 3).

<sup>13</sup>A similar testimony of this striking experience that took place as HCM first encountered Husserl's phenomenology appears in Avé-Lallemant's Habilitation. It documents a conversation Avé-Lallemant conducted with her on the occasion of her 70th birthday at Munich University. The conversation (in manuscript) was stored in the Munich Archive. See Avé-Lallemant (1971, 212 n. 1).



HCM took Moritz Geiger's advice, having attended his courses on Psychology and Art History at Munich University in 1909–1910, and went to Göttingen.<sup>14</sup> On his part, Geiger prepared HCM's arrival to Göttingen well. In a letter to Husserl from 28 September 1910, he informed him about HCM's plan to study phenomenology and probably write her dissertation at the University of Göttingen on phenomenology. He also mentioned in this regard her preparing studies in phenomenology already in Munich. Geiger asked Husserl to pay attention to HCM despite her timidity "since she is philosophically the sharpest woman I have encountered so far" (Geiger, 1910b, 103). On the same day, Geiger delivered a special postcard to Reinach informing him about HCM's arrival at Göttingen and expresses his special recommendation about "our most talented Munich philosopher". Geiger promised Reinach: "you will already notice what makes her into what she is" (Geiger, 1910aN).<sup>15</sup>

### **B. "The Munich Invasion of Göttingen"**

HCM moved from Munich to Göttingen together with a group of young philosophers previously related to the "Academic Society for Psychology" (*Akademische Verein für Psychologie*).<sup>16</sup> Their plan was to attend the courses of Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and of Adolf Reinach (1883–1917). The subsequent designation of the event by the local phenomenologists as "The Munich Invasion of Göttingen"

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<sup>14</sup>Ferrarello details the courses delivered by Husserl and Reinach between WS 1910/11 and SS 1912 that HCM attended in Göttingen. In the WS 1910/11, she attended Husserl's following courses: "logic as a theory of cognition" (*Logik als Theorie der cognition*), "Basic Problems of Phenomenology", and "Philosophical Exercises in connection of David Hume's Tractatus 'On the Human Spirit'" and Adolf Reinach's "Kant's Critique of Reason". In SS 1911, she attended Husserl's "Basic Problems of Ethics and Theory of Values" and "Philosophical Exercises with connections with Ernst Mach" along with Reinach's "Philosophical Exercises: Selected Problems of Present Philosophy". In the WS 1911/12, she attended Husserl's "Kant and the Post-Kantian Philosophy", and "Philosophical Exercises in Connection with Kant's Critique of Pure Reason" and Reinach's "Freedom of the Will, Attributions and Responsibility" (Ferrarello, 2015, 52 n. 1). See here also Schuhmann's report of the courses Husserl delivered in Göttingen. See: Schuhmann (1977, 67–198).

<sup>15</sup>HCM's exceptional talent was well-known among her family members, even many years after her death. See, for example, the report of Hueglin, the grandson of HCM's younger sister, Helene: "Her [Helene's] sister Hedwig Conrad-Martius had gone through life as an independent philosopher and university teacher, and her brother was a famous gynecologist and author of numerous scientific treatises and textbooks. Many around my grandmother were certain that she could have been the brightest star of them all" (Hueglin, 2010, 108).

<sup>16</sup>During her first period in Munich, HCM was involved in the related society, see: Feldes (2015, 20–22), Fréchet (2012). Apart from HCM, four more women were involved in the society: Margarete Calinich, Frau Dieltrich, Frau Dr. Ortner, and Katharine Tischendorf (indicated in the list of members from Maximilian Beck's estate in the Bavarian State Archive (BSM)) (signature: Ana 354 D. II. 1), cited from: Hart (2020, 2 n. 4). The society was established in 1895 by Theodor Lipps and later operated by his students and assistants. Walther's addendum of "philosophy" to the name of the society (*Akademische Verein für Psychologie und Philosophie*) (see: Walther, 1960, 379) mirrors its origin in "the Munich psychological school" (*Die Münchener psychologische Schule*) and its declared objective of "scientific engagement with psychological questions and the philosophical [questions] included in it" (cited from: Smid, 1982, 114).

seems to reveal a sense of a threat.<sup>17</sup> However, alongside the apparent negative aspect, a positive one transpires from Schapp's description of the time, in which he testifies "we used every opportunity, day and night, to engage in philosophical discussions with the Munichers. In our opinion, they were much ahead of us in every aspect" (Schapp, 1959, 20). The admired figure of Reinach served as "connector" (*Klammer*) between the phenomenologists from Munich and the local ones (Avé-Lallemant & Schuhmann, 1992, 85 n. 8).<sup>18</sup> Husserl, who felt rare admiration toward Reinach, stated: "The phenomenological mode of thinking and investigation soon became second nature to him" (Husserl, 1983, xii, 1987b, 301).<sup>19</sup> Likewise, HCM called him "the phenomenologist among phenomenologists, the phenomenologist *par excellence*" (HCM, 1951b, 7).<sup>20</sup> The group received various names, whose use was not consistent even by those who coined them, yet they all referred to the same cultural occurrence: The Göttingen Circle (Rosenwald, 1989, 16, 21–22); The Göttingen Movement; The Göttingen School (Conrad, 1953/1954N; Schmücker, 1956, 7).<sup>21</sup>; The Munich-Göttingen Phenomenologists; The Munich Circle; The Munich-Göttingen Phenomenology (Conrad, 1954N)<sup>22</sup>; The Munich Phenomenology<sup>23</sup>; The Munich-Göttingen School (Rosenwald, 1989, 19)<sup>24</sup>; The Munich-Göttingen Circle (Hart, 1973, 14); The Munich-Göttingen Group (Avé-Lallemant, 1975a, 23); The Munichers (*Die Münchener*) (HCM, 2015b, 62 n. 1)<sup>25</sup>; The First Phenomenological School (Landgrebe, 1963, 22); The Old Phenomenology

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<sup>17</sup>In Göttingen, the group met Husserl's and Reinach's students, among which were Wilhelm Schapp, Karl Neuhaus, Alfred von Sybel, Alexander Rosenblum, Dietrich Mahnke, Heinrich Hofmann, David Katz, and Erich Heinrich.

<sup>18</sup>Johanes Daubert (1887–1947) is also mentioned as "an important mediator between the Munich phenomenological circle and Husserl" (Stein, 2005b, 204 n. 5) (notes by Maria Amata Neyer and E. Avé-Lallemant). The students' admiration for Reinach is also indicated in the obituary Husserl composed about him after he fell during the First World War (16 Nov. 1917). The obituary first appeared in the daily newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung* (6 December 1917) (see: Husserl, 1917/1987a). Subsequently to Husserl's transcendental turn (to be discussed below), it was Reinach's philosophy on which the Munich phenomenologists relied. Spiegelberg argues that "independently of each other, the Göttingen students of phenomenology [...] in their accounts of this period refer to Reinach, not to Husserl as their teacher in Phenomenology. [...]". It was his [Reinach's] "death in action in 1917 rather than Husserl's going to Freiburg which cut short not only his own promise but that of the Göttingen phenomenological Circle" (Spiegelberg, 1984a, 191–192). After Reinach's death, his students published his writings, and HCM wrote two introductions to his essays. See: HCM (1921b, 1951b).

<sup>19</sup>See here also: Husserl (1919/1987b/1983) (English translation).

<sup>20</sup>This statement by HCM echoed in the research literature. See: Spiegelberg (1960, 195/1984a, 192), Schuhmann and Smith (1987, 16/1989, 618), Feldes (2015, 55).

<sup>21</sup>See here also: Avé-Lallemant and Schuhmann (1992, 85 n. 8).

<sup>22</sup>Cited from: Smid (1982, 112).

<sup>23</sup>Like Smid, I favor the term "Munich Phenomenology" since several important phenomenologists belonged to the group who had no connection to Husserl or to Göttingen. For the history and various appearances of the term, see a review in: Smid (1982).

<sup>24</sup>This phrase was coined by Theodor Conrad and describes the philosophical realism that united the phenomenologists of Munich and Göttingen. See also: Rosenwald (1989, 14).

<sup>25</sup>See here also: Spiegelberg (1959, 60).

(Rosenwald, 1989, 13); The Older Phenomenological Movement (Spiegelberg, 1960, 168f.)<sup>26</sup>; “The oldest generation” (Spiegelberg, 1985); The Early Phenomenology (Rosenwald 1989, 13); the Original Phenomenological Movement (Spiegelberg, 1984a, 166f.), and The Beginning Phenomenology (*anfangenden Phänomenologie*) (Husserl, 1999, §59 138/1991, §59 165). Finally, due to their special affinity to Reinach, the group was called “Reinach Phenomenologists” (Stein, 2005b, 203). Whatever the terminology, it denoted the first generation of phenomenologists active during and immediately after Husserl’s time.<sup>27</sup> Among their leading members: Alexander Pfänder, Johannes Daubert, Moritz Geiger, Theodor Conrad, Adolf Reinach, Maximilian Beck, Max Scheler, and Jean Hering. The younger members of the group were: Hans Lipps, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Alexandre Koyré, Roman Ingarden, Edith Stein, and Hedwig Conrad-Martius.<sup>28</sup>

HCM’s star seemed to be on the rise in Göttingen, where she moved in the fall of 1910/1911. Rapidly, she became the living spirit and the driving force of the young group. During this period, she participated in the seminar of the Göttingen Young Phenomenologists, which she chaired in 1911, and was appointed Chair of The Philosophical Society in Göttingen (*Die philosophische Gesellschaft Göttingen*).<sup>29</sup> In all these early settings, where the participation of a woman was unusual, HCM stood out as an original and daring intellectual, leading to her being known as the “first lady” of German philosophy (Hart, 1972, 1, 1973, 14). HCM described the atmosphere at that time with the following words:

We were not doing anything other than carefully scrutinizing virtually everything with regards to its real essence. We disputed about the essence of nature, amongst all the genres of nature plant, animal, human—kinds of nature, about the sociological and historical and its nature, about art, about the psychological, ethical and transcendental. We talked about nature spirits, demons and angels as if we had, de facto, met them. We didn’t meet them de

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<sup>26</sup>Likewise, Theodor Conrad described them as “the oldest group” (cited from: Feldes, 2013, 206) and Alexander Koyré referred to them as “the ‘old people’” (Stein, 2005b, 193).

<sup>27</sup>In this context, see Spiegelberg’s discussion of the three generations of phenomenology, including his characteristics of the members of the first generation, which included the members of the Munich and Göttingen circle (Spiegelberg, 1985). Spiegelberg posits that regarding the significance of a generation in philosophy, “Here the decisive criterion would be the relation not between child, parent and grandparent etc., but the analogous one between a student—his teacher and his teacher’s teacher etc.” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 252).

<sup>28</sup>Avé-Lallemant suggests dividing the phenomenologists in this period into three groups, which maintained mutual relations and were connected to Husserl before the first world war: (1) The real Munich group, including: Pfänder, Daubert, and Geiger; (2) The Munich-Göttingen group, including Reinach and Theodor Conrad, and later also Wilhelm Schapp, Jean Héring, Alexander Koyré, Hans Lipps, Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Roman Ingarden, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Edith Stein, Fritz Kaufmann, and Adolf Grimme; (3) Max Scheler’s group, which had a counter-influence of the two previous groups (Avé-Lallemant, 1975a, 23). See here also: Schmücker (1956).

<sup>29</sup>The related *Society* was chaired by Theodor Conrad up to the summer semester of 1912, with breaks, during which his place was filled by HCM (SS 1911, WS 1911–1912) and Hildebrand. Feldes describes this group as constantly admitting new members, who later composed the group that became known as the Munich-Göttingen Group. In this context, see also: Avé-Lallemant and Schuhmann (1992), Feldes (2015, 30–32).

facto—at least not the angels, but we met their essence and got a grasp of it. We didn't ask at all whether they actually really existed. (HCM, 2015b, 61)<sup>30</sup>

The plural used by HCM is not just an expression of a style typical in this period, but also denotes the fundamental understanding of the Munich phenomenologists that they were part of a “phenomenological movement” (*Phänomenologische Bewegung*) (Avé-Lallemant, 1988, 62). This formulation became popular with the publication of the first treatise presenting the history of phenomenology to the English-speaking world, with the title: *The Phenomenological Movement* (Spiegelberg, 1960).

Furthermore, Reinach's description of this period shows that not only were the early phenomenologists conscious of the group ethos, it also possessed a visionary component: “At the moment when, in place of momentary brainstorming, there sets in the laborious effort at illumination, there *philosophical work is taken out of the hands of individuals and laid in the hands of ongoing generations*” (Reinach, 1969, 221, my emphasis).<sup>31</sup> Indeed, this period would later be characterized by Spiegelberg as “a time of group philosophizing and of a vigorous mutual criticism” (Spiegelberg, 1960, 169) or “period [...] of joint philosophizing and live mutual criticism”. In connection with Reinach, Spiegelberg adds: “Like all the other early phenomenologists he firmly believed in philosophy as a cooperative scientific enterprise to which each researcher would have to contribute patiently and unhurriedly, much in the same way as was the case in the sciences. There could be no such thing as a one-man system” (Spiegelberg, 1984a, 166/1960, 196).<sup>32</sup> From the methodical aspect, the circles of Munich and Göttingen followed Husserl's doctrine of regional ontology that is designated to serve as a framework for the study of essences. In this regard, the region (*Region*) is marked as the highest material genus of the essences that belong together (Husserl, 1952a, §9/2012a, §9) and consolidate “the *highest and most inclusive generic unity belonging to a concretum*” (Husserl, 1952a, §16 36/2012a, §16 31). From a wider historical perspective, the related ethos of philosophical group communicated the Hegelian ideal of philosophy as an organic unity whose moments “not only do not conflict, but [...] each is necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole” (Hegel, 1977, 2).

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<sup>30</sup>In this context, see a similar testimony given to Edith Stein. Dr. Georg Moskiewicz (1883–1955), who studied with Husserl in Göttingen and was very close to him, said: “In Göttingen, they only philosophized—day and night, about the essence, in the street and everywhere. They spoke only about ‘phenomena’”. This testimony is cited in: Avé-Lallemant (1988, 70).

<sup>31</sup>These words are taken from Reinach's best-known text, based on a lecture he gave at Marburg in January 1914. The German original of the lecture was published twice (Reinach, 921b/Reinach, 1951) and received two English translations (Reinach, 1968, 1969).

<sup>32</sup>However, regarding the similarity of phenomenology to the sciences, Spiegelberg wonders “what was to be the place of phenomenology, then, in such a framework?” (Spiegelberg, 1960, 196/1984a, 193). In any event, he establishes that “compared with the intensity and vitality of the philosophizing that went on in these two circles during the ten years of the ‘phenomenological spring’ (as Jean Hering has called it), the later Phenomenological Movement, though richer in literary output, seems to be almost shapeless and anemic” (Spiegelberg 1960, 168–169/1984a, 166). Likewise, Seifert emphasizes the uniqueness of the Munich phenomenology as a philosophical occurrence that has no equivalent in the history of modern philosophy. See: Seifert (1971, 97).

However, the early phenomenologists rapidly discovered that the very thing for which they had gathered around the founder of phenomenology in Göttingen was largely no longer in existence. In a letter from Reinach to Conrad dated 1907, he reported about a conversation with Daubert who maintained that “one might really question whether proper phenomenology, as it is pursued in Munich, has its roots in Husserl!” (Reinach, 1907N).<sup>33</sup> Likewise, shortly before the start of the semester, the *Ideas* appeared in Husserl’s *yearbook*.<sup>34</sup> Stein writes:

[...] the *Ideas* included some expressions which sounded very much as though their master wished to return to idealism. His oral interpretation could not appease our concerns. It was the beginning of that development which led Husserl to see, more and more, in what he called ‘transcendental Idealism’ [...] the genuine nucleus of his philosophy [...]. This was a path on which, to his sorrow as well as their own, his earlier Göttingen students could not follow him. (Stein, 2002a, 201)<sup>35</sup>

Finally, in retrospect HCM recalls her personal disappointment already during her time in Göttingen. Back then, it would soon transpire that winning the prestigious prize from Göttingen University was merely a fleeting moment, after which signals of trouble and difficulty started to appear one after the other. Among these, it is barely even possible to include declining an offer of marriage from a wealthy man from Marburg who wanted a wife who would bake him cakes rather than a brilliant philosopher (HCM, 1912N). HCM clearly felt in real time the arrows of criticism and mistrust directed at her following her win. Later in life, she described the responses to the fact that none other than “a little female student from Rostock had won the first and only prize—very much to the delight of Husserl but not to the delight of those opposed to the academic education of women” (HCM, 2015b, 62). Unfortunately, HCM’s case transpires as one in which determination, exceptional talent, and unending dedication to the human spirit were not enough.

### C. Philosophical *Peripeteia*

The “prize essay” should have framed as a nice early episode that would be expected to be forgotten in light of HCM’s subsequent massive crop of writings and unique

<sup>33</sup>Reinach’s letter is mentioned also in: Smid (1982, 116), Fréchette (2012, 150).

<sup>34</sup>Husserl’s *Ideas* first appeared in the first volume of Husserl’s *Yearbook* (Husserl, 1913).

<sup>35</sup>The research literature generally identifies the ontological-formal starting point with *Logical Investigations*, while the shift to an idealistic-transcendental position is identified with the publication of the first volume of his *Ideas* in 1913, where this position appeared in writing (see: Husserl, 1952a/2012a). However, later in life, HCM reached an understanding that what she called “Husserl’s incomprehensible retreat to transcendentalism, to subjectivism, if not to psychologism” occurred “already in volume 2 of ‘*Logical Investigations*’” (HCM, 1965c, 395). Avé-Lallemant also indicated the gap between the two volumes of *Logical Investigation*. See Avé-Lallemant (1971, 14ff.). Avé-Lallemant shares this view about the *Logical Investigation* with Spiegelberg, who observed that the two volumes designated two periods in Husserl’s *Phenomenology* (the pre-phenomenological and the period of phenomenology), see: Spiegelberg (1960, 74/1984a, 70). In any case, Husserl himself testified that in 1905, already at his time in Göttingen he “first executed the phenomenological reduction” (Husserl, 2002b, 315). See also Husserl (1966 [*Seefeldler Manuskripte über Individualtion* (1905–1907)], 237–268), Heffernan (2018/2016), Nakhnikian (1964), Seifert (2004–2005, 146f.).

phenomenological approach. However, in the spirit of Aristotle, the winding path awaiting HCM after winning the prize could be characterized as a sort of *peripeteia* in both her philosophical and her personal life, namely: the turning point in a tragedy where the transition from happiness to misery occurs.<sup>36</sup> Thus, instead of this milestone, where her philosophical and critical talent was shining brightly, paving her way as one of the most original and daring phenomenologists of her time, HCM's work was pushed into the distant margins of contemporary philosophy. As a result, her philosophical ideas were largely formulated through internal dialogue and in the absence of a real possibility of sharing them and growing from the echoes they would have created among colleagues and students.<sup>37</sup> To an extent, this evaluation of the event of winning of that philosophical prize as a sort of *peripatetic* moment complies with HCM's retrospective observation of her life. Thus, on the occasion of the recognition and celebration of her reception of the award of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Großes Verdienstkreuz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) on 1 March 1958, she speaks out:

Even when I explore the most remote corner of my heart, I find no inkling of any possibility that I could ever be worthy of a celebration like this or be honored with such an award. This is not modesty. I wasn't pampered by life and there have been more crosses in a negative sense than crosses in a positive sense of exaltation. (HCM, 2015b, 60)

Against the background of this description, HCM added that precisely those people who objected to women receiving an academic education were responsible for her not being able to write her dissertation at Göttingen University, basing it on the prize essay.<sup>38</sup> The official reason was that her matriculation was of the *Realgymnasium Abitur* type, which did not include learning Greek, without which, they argued, it would be impossible to write a doctoral dissertation.<sup>39</sup> HCM explains that not only would male students have been granted an exemption in such circumstances, but that the school curriculum did not include such studies, so that she had not been given the chance to meet this condition.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>The proposed simile of *peripeteia* follows Aristotle's *Poetics*. While the *peripeteiac* moment is described as sudden, its roots are planted in the circumstances of preceding events. HCM herself used this simile in connection to *Being and Time*. See: HCM (1965g, 371). HCM employs this simile also in her theological discussions. See: HCM (1965e, 189, 1965m, 222, 1965n, 196).

<sup>37</sup>Kuhn testified to the "long painful lack of teaching activity" (Kuhn, 1966).

<sup>38</sup>This directly disproves Spiegelberg's statement that HCM submitted her doctoral dissertation in Munich with Pfänder and not in Göttingen with Husserl "for technical reasons" (Spiegelberg, 1985, 252). In fact, both statements, regarding the affiliation and regarding the identity of the supervisor, are incorrect. Husserl did not directly supervise HCM in writing her dissertation, and this was not "for technical reasons", as it transpires HCM was well-aware. Spiegelberg's statement, written in the USA, where he had emigrated, is tainted with blindness toward the difficulties HCM faced in the period where very few women even tried to write dissertations, let alone be considered for tenured academic positions.

<sup>39</sup>See Karl Schuhmann's editorial comment on Husserl's letter to Theodor Conrad on 21 July 1912, where he wrote that "for technical reasons she [HCM] was promoted with this essay but not by Husserl rather by Pfänder in Munich" (Husserl, 1994a, 16).

<sup>40</sup>One wonders how Husserl, who, according to HCM was "delighted" by her winning the prize (HCM, 2015b, 62), was unable to influence her admission to the Philosophy Department at Göttingen

In any case, in 1912, HCM left Göttingen and returned to Munich. Under the supervision of Alexander Pfänder, who led the Munich phenomenologists group, she developed into an extensive treatise the first chapter of the prize essay entitled “The perception of ‘the Natural world view’ that is immanent in the ‘consciousness-independent external world’” (HCM, 1920a, 10–24).<sup>41</sup> In this opening chapter to her essay, HCM addresses positivism as “a content-designated doctrine that historically attached itself to the name positivism” (HCM, 1920a, 2). However, despite praising positivism for its awe toward “*real experience (wirklicher Erfahrung)*” and more generally accepting the “lawful positivistic basic tendency towards the datum (*das Gegebene*)” (HCM, 1920a, 4), she accuses positivism for “utter *Blindness* towards the living-being (*Lebewesen*)” (HCM, 1920a, 1).<sup>42</sup> HCM described the process of writing the new elaborated and enlarged essay, which took only four weeks,<sup>43</sup> as follows: “My doctorate came to me *a priori*. It was obviously bestowed on me in the cradle since I was already reading *Critique of Pure Reason* at the age of fifteen” (HCM, 2015b, 63).<sup>44</sup> Pfänder immediately recognized the related essay as a dissertation entitled *The Epistemological foundation of Positivism. On the Ontology and the Doctrine of the Appearances of the Real External World (Die erkenntnisstheoretischen Grundlagen des Positivismus. Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Außenwelt)* (HCM, 1913N).<sup>45</sup> It was submitted on 3 July 1912 to the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and was given the grade “*summa cum laude*”. A pretty close version to the dissertation was later published in the Husserl’s *Yearbook*<sup>46</sup> in 1916 under the title “On the Ontology and Doctrine of the Appearances of the Real External World, in Connection with Critiques of Positivistic Theories”

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University, where he was a senior professor. Also, Hart supports HCM’s impression and indicates that: “Husserl was willing to accept the work for a doctorate at Göttingen”, Hart (1972, 12 n. 1). However, it is still difficult to accept this state of affairs at face value.

<sup>41</sup>The first part of the dissertation, “The Entire Phenomenon of the Real External World” (HCM, 1916b, 345–397), is based on the first chapter of the “prize essay”. The second part of the dissertation “Sensory Givenness: Feeling and Appearing” (HCM, 1916b, 397–542) is entirely new and anticipates the subsequent book, *Realontology* (HCM, 1923b).

<sup>42</sup>Avé-Lallemant testified that the plan to adapt the remaining chapters of the Prize Essay was never realized. See Avé-Lallemant (1971, 213).

<sup>43</sup>During these weeks, HCM was in Munich, and not as Spiegelberg wrote: “her main work having been done at Göttingen” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 253).

<sup>44</sup>The understanding of becoming a phenomenologist almost as an innate givenness is repeated by several phenomenologists. In this spirit, as we have seen, Husserl characterized Reinach: “The phenomenological mode of thinking and investigation soon became second nature to him” (Husserl, 1983, xii, 1987b, 301). Stein referred to those who “were born phenomenologists” (Stein, 2013, 6) and HCM maintained that the phenomenologists “as [naturally] born out of a common spirit” (HCM, 1960b, 62).

<sup>45</sup>HCM was the first woman to be promoted in a German university. This was in 1912, by Alexander Pfänder, on the basis of her prize essay. See Stein (2013, 7 n. 10) (by the editor, Andreas Uwe Müller).

<sup>46</sup>Husserl’s *Yearbook (Jahrbuch für Phänomenologie und philosophische Forschung)* that was published between 1913 and 1930 and contained eleven issues in which the most foundational works ever in phenomenology were published, such as Husserl’s first volume of *Ideen* (Husserl, 1913) and Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* (Heidegger, 1927). Schuhmann wrote the only article to date that is wholly dedicated to Husserl’s *Yearbook* (Schuhmann, 1990).

(*Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Außenwelt. Verbunden mit einer Kritik positivistischer Theorien*) (HCM, 1916b).<sup>47</sup>

The apparent change in the dissertation's title, emphasizing the ontological aspect while relocating the criticism of positivism into the subtitle, is a clear hint of the direction HCM started to take immediately afterward. Its peak was the first treatise she wrote after her dissertation, *Realontologie* (HCM, 1923b). In any case, even prior to composing this work, it seems that she herself sensed that her philosophical oeuvre would not be restricted to ontological inquiries, but would enter the realm of metaphysics. In this spirit, she explained that eventually epistemological questions can be grasped only from the objective stance of the real to which the metaphysical dimension relates (HCM, 1920b, 130).

In any event, subsequently to obtaining her dissertation, her achievements seem to have faded as though they had never happened. HCM described her life in the following years: "During the following years my husband and I had to make a great effort to make a living and continue to substantiate it in a practical manner. [...] there was no way of making preparations or plans for the habilitation" (HCM, 2015b, 63). Thus, at the critical stage, after her doctoral dissertation had been approved in 1912, HCM encountered the fundamental barrier of inability to find a university where she could write a *Habilitation*, which was an indispensable condition for applying for academic positions.<sup>48</sup>

#### **D. Bergzabern—The Domestication of Phenomenology**

##### *1. The Conrads' Place and the Bergzabern Circle*

In 1912, HCM married the philosopher Hans Theodor Conrad (1881–1969) and left Munich for his hometown Bad-Bergzabern.<sup>49</sup> Theodor Conrad's plan was "securing the economic foundation and free time for her further philosophical work through the establishment of an orchard farm" (Avé-Lallemant, 1984, 213) that he had purchased before the First World War (Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 69). However, behind this choice to leave Munich, both the city and its university, stood Conrad's disillusioned awareness of "the difficulty of finding a place for a woman in university". Therefore he "encouraged her to devote herself to another passion, caring for plants" (Ales Bello, 2002, 210). In the following years, besides her arduous work in the orchard farm<sup>50</sup> HCM

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<sup>47</sup>Only in 1920 was the prize essay published by a private press. It is possible that the delay in publishing this treatise, and also perhaps its publication by a marginal press, contributed to the connection between it and HCM's doctoral dissertation not being known. Many of the articles in this volume are devoted to the interpretation of this complex essay, which is packed with the important elements of HCM's entire philosophy, including her later thought.

<sup>48</sup>Gerda Walther also described the difficulties women encountered when seeking to enter the university's lecture halls. See: Walther (1960, 17).

<sup>49</sup>The couple moved first to Theodor's mother in the Southern Palatinate, close to the French border. Theodor Conrad was a professor of Philosophy in Munich and belonged to the older Göttingen students of Husserl. Among the members of the Munich Circle, Theodor Conrad's nickname was *Autós* ("self" in Greek), inspired by his self-assurance. See: (Stein, 1960, 1993, 149 n. 2) (letter no. 146 to Theodor Conrad). In the circle of her friends, HCM's nickname was *Hatti*. Stein uses *Hatti* for HCM quite systematically, in particular in: See: Stein (2005b, 1960).

<sup>50</sup>Stein testified that HCM "has worked well beyond her strength in the farm" and therefore she planned to go and help her there (Stein, 2005b, 187). Walther, who was invited to the orchard farm in



explored the foundation of an ontology of reality and studied intensively German philosophy (especially idealism) and natural sciences (Avé-Lallemant, 1984, 213). The fruits of her study at that time were the *Metaphysische Gespräche* (HCM, 1921a), *Realontologie* (HCM, 1923b)<sup>51</sup> and several essays on plants.<sup>52</sup>

In 1920, the couple built their own house in Bergzabern.<sup>53</sup> A year later, and throughout the 1920s, the Göttingen phenomenologists gathered there, usually in the autumn and discussed the development of phenomenology, philosophical, religious, and political issues.<sup>54</sup> These meetings at the Conrads' home, in between which few hundreds of letters were exchanged among the members (Feldes, 2013, 16),<sup>55</sup> would later be called the "Bergzabern Circle" (Spiegelberg, 1960, 220).<sup>56</sup> Except for the Conrads, the members of Circle—"the children of the house" as Stein put it (Stein, 2005, 203)—included: Jean Hering, Alexander Koyré, Hans Lipps, Edith Stein, and Alfred von Sybel<sup>57</sup> (Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 69). All these were Reinach's

1923, found as an "accurate description" the impression HCM gave Walther's relative: "completely not an abstract thinker" but by means of "nice little apples [...] a seminal philosopher" (Walther, 1960, 331–332).

<sup>51</sup> An essay on the soul that preceded *Metaphysische Gespräche* was later included in it (HCM, 1917, 26–86). Stein was utterly impressed by *Realontologie* (Stein, 2005b, 188) and by *Metaphysische Gespräche* as well (Stein, 2005b, 196–197). However, Stein reports that Ingarden expressed a "vehement reaction to the book" and "fear for phenomenology" due to the metaphysical and religious tone that he found in it, see: Stein (2005b, 196).

<sup>52</sup> See: HCM (1933, 1934, 1938, 1963g). The common discourse of HCM's time often suggested a philosophy of natural sciences from the standpoint of human studies and in this regard communicated the philosophical project of Wilhelm Dilthey (see in particular: Stein, 2010a; Husserl, 1976/1970c). However, beside her realistic phenomenology, HCM consolidated a philosophy of nature in the most strict and classical sense that also manifested the spirit of German romanticism. Hart suggests that her "early and deep interest in nature owed much to her father who was a famous botanist" (Hart, 1973, 14). Also, Ales Bello argued that HCM's "interest in nature is also bound with her personal experience" (Ales Bello, 2002, 210).

<sup>53</sup> The Conrads continued to own their apartment in Munich, where they visited frequently even after their move to Bergzabern. However, following financial difficulties, the apartment was sold in 1919 (Feldes, 2013, 210). The mutual assistance among the circle's members was reflected by one of the members, Alfred von Sybel, handling the sale. The words of encouragement he sent the couple in this context show that the Conrads' home in Munich was a significant place for the circle's members. In a letter dated 12 September 1919, he wrote: "It is very sad that the Munich apartment now is not anymore. But meanwhile the orchard house grows, and this is actually much more beautiful" (cited from: Feldes, 2013, 210).

<sup>54</sup> Feldes (2013, 205); Hart (2020, 4).

<sup>55</sup> Only Stein's letters were published. See: Stein (1993), Stein (2005). From the correspondence of the Bergzabern circle in HCM's estate, her letter to Hering (HCM, 1955aN), as well as letters she received from him (Hering, 1914–1965N) and from Alexandre Koyré (Koyré, 1911–1964N), are preserved. The importance granted to letters at the time is articulated in Stein's following words: "man's life lies in his letters [...] not only for the interest of biography, but for arriving at the inside of things" (Stein, 1993, ix).

<sup>56</sup> Feldes discussed the origin of the name "Bergzabern Circle": Feldes (2015, 9–10).

<sup>57</sup> Feldes published the only study, so far, on von Sybel (see: Feldes, 2013).

students and before the First World War, all were members of the “Philosophical Society in Göttingen”.<sup>58</sup> The plan was to establish an institute with a library and an archive for phenomenology.<sup>59</sup> This idea seems to follow the early plan of Hering and Reinach before the First World War to erect what Hering referred to as a “Foundation for Phenomenological Purposes” (*Stiftung für phänomenologische Zwecke*) (Feldes, 2013, 63).<sup>60</sup> The group, whose members called themselves “the ‘old people’”, intended to initiate a “‘new direction’” that would provide a “counter” response to the “the unifying relationships that have developed around him [Husserl]” in Freiburg under the influence of Heidegger (Stein, 2005b, 193). In their view, the latter turned Husserl’s surrounding into “a dark spot” (Stein, 2005b, 191). They even invited Husserl to Bergzabern for the purpose of, as Stein put it, “[having] him here with us without the whole Freiburg atmosphere” (Stein, 2005b, 195).<sup>61</sup> Stein was also involved in gathering books for erecting a library at the Conrads’ place<sup>62</sup> and observed that “indeed it has become the general home for phenomenologists (*allgemeine Phänomenologenheim*)” (Stein, 2005b, 187) and referred to it as “the phenomenology house (*Phänomenologenhäus*) in Bergzabern” (Stein, 2005b, 191). These designations, to the point of urging Ingarden to come for a visit, arguing that this “certainly belongs to the category of ‘demands of phenomenology (*Förderung der Phänomenologie*)’” (Stein, 2005b, 190), not only express the emotional attachment to the Conrads’ place but also manifest the spiritual depth that tied the members of the group to each other.<sup>63</sup> HCM shed light on the uniqueness of the connection between the phenomenologist that gathered in Bergzabern, with the following words:

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<sup>58</sup>For an account of the society, see: Feldes (2015, 29–41).

<sup>59</sup>After Husserl moved to Freiburg, and following the dismantling of the philosophical society of Göttingen, the Conrads’ place became the constant address for their communication (Feldes, 210). Thus, for example, Hering asked about von Sybel, who had been sent to the front. The letters he sent to HCM are cited by Feldes (Feldes, 2013, 209).

<sup>60</sup>See here a letter of Hering from 23 April 1915 (found by Avé-Lallemant in HCM’s estate, cited in: Feldes, 2015, 64). However, Feldes leaves open the question whether the Bergzabern Circle was the realization of this early vision of Hering’s (Feldes, 2015, 64).

<sup>61</sup>It is hard to miss the deep, almost maternal concern that the circle’s members felt for Husserl, in particular Stein who expressed her sense of personal responsibility for working with Husserl as his assistant (Stein, 2005b, 39) and her fear that: “alone the master would not publish anything else” (Stein, 2005b, 65).

<sup>62</sup>The small library was sponsored by Winthrop Pickard Bell (1885–1956), Husserl’s student from Göttingen, who belonged to the circle there. Bell regularly read the writings of his phenomenologist colleagues (see Stein, 2005b, 65, 79, 89, 90 n. 4, 170), provided Stein with funding for her research activities (Stein, 2005b, 187), which probably financed the activity of the Bergzabern Circle (see: Stein, 2005b, 190; Feldes, 2013, 205), and probably had political influence, which he employed for Germany after the First World War. Later, Bell held a professorship in Canada (See Stein’s references to this in: Stein, 2005b, 162, 173, 190). Husserl’s letters to Bell were published in: Husserl (1994b, 3–58).

<sup>63</sup>For Stein, the Conrads’ house also possessed a spiritual value. In 1921, during a visit there, Stein reached the decision to convert to Christianity and was baptized, with HCM serving as her Godmother. Herbstrith describes Stein’s stay with Conrad-Martius before her baptism. See: Herbstrith (1972, 24–25).

The way in which we felt about each other was something totally different from usual friendship. There was first the communality of the philosophical atmosphere, from which we together with many others were born out (*herausgeboren*). We, that have been the personal pupils of our highly respected teacher and master, Edmund Husserl.<sup>64</sup> “spiritually born out”! I wish to emphasize here, that it was not about *mere* common type of methodical thinking and study, especially not common world view or the like. The certainly deep common type of methodical thinking and study produced – and posed – a connection between Husserl’s pupils, that I cannot designate other than a [natural] birth from a common spirit, that nevertheless is exactly *not* a common world view from the aspect of content. Nothing better than some words by Peter Wust could describe the essence of the communality of all genuine phenomenologists. He said that “from the outset in the intention of every new philosophical direction must well be concealed something entirely mysterious, a yearning back to the objective, to the sanctity of Being, the purity and virtue (*Keuschheit*) of the things, the ‘things themselves’. (HCM 1960b, 62–63)<sup>65</sup>

Against this background, Avé-Lallemant maintained that Bergzabern Circle “should not be understood as the Göttingen [circle] and the Munich [circle] in connection to their respective universities but as friendly-familial, philosophically fruitful relationship (*Beziehung*) of the always again meeting phenomenologists” (Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 69). Another evaluation of the Bergzabern Circle referred to is as “a kind of institutional response to Freiburg, whose goal was to sustain the genuine phenomenology” (cited from: Feldes, 2015, 14–15) that distinguished itself from the Heideggerian that has been established in Freiburg. During the period of National Socialism, the paths of the seven phenomenologists of the Bergzabern Circle parted. Stein was murdered at Auschwitz in 1942. Hans Lipps and Alfred von Sybel died. Avé-Lallemant’s attempt to study the history of the Bergzabern Circle after the war were unsuccessful, and he was unable to obtain access to their writings, which were kept by their families and not published.<sup>66</sup> Apart from Feldes’ studies (Feldes, 2013; Feldes, 2015), there are still no comprehensive studies about the group, even though it is mentioned in various contexts in studies of early phenomenology. These studies, and the few sources that exist, open a window upon the human experience, and thus enable a glimpse of the personal and even theological dimension behind their philosophical investigations.

## 2. *The Friendship with Edith Stein and the Choice of Faith*

Stein and HCM knew each other already from the Göttingen period from the circle of phenomenologists that formed around Husserl. HCM had already been mentioned in the newspapers following her winning of the prize (HCM, 1920a). However, the personal meeting took place in 1920, when Stein visited Bergzabern for a few months and even considered moving there (Stein, 2005b, 188). Between 1921 and 1922, the

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<sup>64</sup>Spiegelberg indicates that “[*Der*] *Meister*”, namely the master, was “the inner circle’s affectionate nickname for Husserl, or his associates” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 253).

<sup>65</sup>See here HCM’s reference to the similarity between her ontological understanding of the dialectic between Being and nothingness and the idea of spirit (*Geist*) in the thinking of Peter Wust (1884–1940) in: HCM 1963f, 261 n. 6. Wust was influenced by Max Scheler and was very involved in the Munich-based Catholic monthly *Hochland* (1903–1941) in which many of HCM’s articles appeared.

<sup>66</sup>See: Feldes (2015, 14 n. 25).

two experienced an “identity crisis” (*Sinnkrise*) (Stein, 2005b, 60 n. 4),<sup>67</sup> which was accompanied by a crisis in philosophical creation.<sup>68</sup> HCM considered taking a radical step following her religious experiences, as she described in a letter a few years later: “In me grows incessantly the demand (*Verlangen*) to lose everything for the sake of Jesus Christ. I know and feel that my philosophical desire stops me from being entirely poor and void before the Lord of all Lords” (HCM, 1924N). Eventually, the two chose different paths. As HCM put it: “we walked along a narrow ridge, close to each other, each present in every moment of divine call. It happened but is has led us to confessional different directions” (HCM, 1960b, 73). According to Avé-Lallemant, in the end, HCM “found her spiritual homeland in a community within the evangelic church” (Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 71)<sup>69</sup> joined the Protestant Free Church (*protestantische Freikirche*) (Stein, 2013, 7 n. 10).<sup>70</sup> For her, the choice of “liberal Protestantism” was after her parents’ home, which was in connection with the vivid evangelical community (Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 70). In contrast, in 1922 Stein joined the Catholic Church and entered a Carmelite monastery.

Interestingly, even in retrospect, the two did not view the choice of faith as conflicting with their philosophical work. For HCM, the choice of faith is based on essence intuition (*Wesensfassung*) that unveils its “existence possibility (*Daseinsmöglichkeit*)” that leads to a “tremor about heresy” (HCM, 1951b, 16). Likewise, in 1928 also Stein wrote (to Sister Callista): “it is possible to worship God by doing scholarly research [...] and even in the contemplative life, one may not sever the connection with the world” (Stein, 1993, 54). It appears that this fundamental approach shared by the two philosophers is based upon their realistic philosophical position, which helped them detect the basic connection between phenomenology and Catholicism. For Stein, the path from phenomenology is inherent in the close connection she discerned between Husserl’s phenomenology and medieval scholasticism. Her first and foundational scholarly elaboration of the connection between phenomenology and Catholicism takes place in her essay on Husserl’s Phenomenology and the philosophy of Aquinas from 1929 (Stein, 2014, 119–142). However, in *Finite and Eternal Being*,<sup>71</sup> which was written after her conversion to Catholicism, Stein reveals herself as the one of the modern thinkers who approached the question of Being “out of inner necessity” and “unmediated proximity”, yet independently of the traditional ties. Stein wrote:

this is especially the imperative way of the author for whom the school of Edmund Husserl is a homeland and her philosophical mother tongue is the language of phenomenologists. She must attempt to find in this starting point her way in the great cathedral of scholasticism.

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<sup>67</sup>The note added by the editor, Andreas Uwe Müller

<sup>68</sup>According to Avé-Lallemant, their stay at Bergzabern in this period entailed a break in publication and a turning to Christianity on the existential level, which was doubted in the scientific research the two had engaged in up to that point. See: Avé-Lallemant (2015, 78).

<sup>69</sup>The community was established in Schobdach Franconia and HCM always spent the Christian holidays there (Avé-Lallemant, 2015, 48 n. 15).

<sup>70</sup>The note added by the editor, Andreas Uwe Müller.

<sup>71</sup>According to Uwe Müller, it is almost certain that the treatise *Finite and Eternal Being* was composed between July 1935 and January 1937. See: Stein (2013, xiv).

She believed that as much as she is aware of this goal, as is necessary, it will guide her on the way. (Stein, 2013, 19–20)

It seems that the inner dialogue Stein shares here with her readers contributed to the interpretation that her “intellectual conversion led to a personal one” (Baring, 2019, 75). Later, in a treatise she wrote about Stein, in relation to the religious aspect of her figure, HCM quotes the following words from Peter Wust:

“even if the curse of subjectivism could not entirely be overcome by the father of this new direction of thought (Husserl), still many of his pupils endeavored in the direction of the original intention of the openness to the object (*Objektgeöffnetheit*) belonging to this school further on the path to the things, to the facts, to Being itself, and even to the habit of the catholic man, for whom nothing is more appropriate than the eternal measures of the knowing spirit to the decisive things”.

Subsequently, she establishes the unequivocal determination: “if one marks the catholic in this way, then certainly all phenomenologists could be called ‘catholic’ also when they in no way confess to it” (HCM, 1960b, 63). In any event, the friendship between the two philosophers had a mutual, formative influence, mentioned in Stein’s letters and in research about Stein in the context of her decision to convert to Catholicism. Perhaps Stein’s tragic fate, which became well-known after her canonization in 1998, and particularly following the awakening of intensive study of her writings from 2000 onward, contributed to HCM not being completely forgotten in phenomenological research.

Incidentally, during that period, the Catholic church in Germany was losing parishioners. Therefore, the choice of some of the early phenomenologists to convert to Christianity has attracted scholarly attention. In addition to Max Scheler, von Hildebrand, the most famous case was of Edith Stein, who converted from Judaism to Catholicism.<sup>72</sup> Husserl himself converted from Judaism to Protestantism at the age of 28 in 1886 (Schuhmann, 1977, 15–17).

However, he distanced himself from the theistic position, which he interpreted as “a sign of inner wretchedness (*Elends*) in the soul”, explaining that “a true philosopher cannot be other than free: the essential nature of philosophy is the most radical autonomy” (Husserl, 1968, 22).<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, the connection between his

<sup>72</sup>For further reading on the conversion of Husserl’s early followers, see here: Schaber 2003.

<sup>73</sup>Husserl and Ingarden rejected this link between faith and philosophy on the basis of identifying the religious dimension with Christian dogmatism (see: Felde, 2015, 143). This position of theirs was expressed explicitly in reference to HCM’s work *Metaphysische Gespräche* (HCM, 1921a) (Stein sent Husserl and Ingarden copies, see: Stein, 2005b, 198 n. 1). Stein naively commented that “Husserl sent a card expressing his delight”, though she certainly mentioned Husserl’s stinging remark when he received the book and wrote to her: “I will first have to see how much of it considers philosophy as a rigorous science” (Stein, 2005b, 197). In his letters to Ingarden (Husserl, 1968, 23) and to Bell, Husserl expressed himself more decisively against HCM’s approach, which he considered to lack scientific rigor and to be instead “romantic ingenious soulful” (*Sinnig-seelenvolle Romantik*) (Husserl, 1994b, 34). In this spirit, he correctly identified the influence of the Catholic philosopher of romance, Franz von Baader (1765–1841). See Husserl (1994b, 34 n. 104). For examples of HCM referring to Franz von Baader, see HCM (1921a, 62, 66, 127, 140). Felde also notes Von Sybel’s reference to Franz von Baader (Felde, 2015, 153).

phenomenology and his students' search for the self in relation to Christianity did not escape Husserl's attention, and it seems to have bothered him. Thus, for example, in a letter to Rudolf Otto dated 5 March 1919, he wrote: "my philosophical influence has something remarkably revolutionary: evangelic become Catholic, Catholics become evangelic" (Husserl, 1994c, 206). This background seems to explain Oesterreicher's indication that Christianity was a loaded and tense issue for Husserl. He quotes from a private conversation he had with HCM and Sister Adelgundis Jaegerschmidt (O.S.B., St. Lioba-Kloster, Freiburg im Breisgau), in which Husserl said about his New Testament: "It is always on my desk, but I never open it. I know that once I open it and read it, I shall have to give up philosophy" (Oesterreicher, 1952, 43).<sup>74</sup> Other accounts of the matter suggested that the conversions of a few phenomenologists of the first generation concern phenomenology's appeal to intuition and its reservation regarding empiricism that made it open to religious belief.<sup>75</sup> To this extent, Baring characterized this phenomenon as "philosophical conversions" (Baring, 2018, 115). Spiegelberg presents a balanced position on this issue. Similarly, also Spiegelberg believed that this phenomenon should be linked to the nature of phenomenology. In his words: "The Truth of the matter would seem to be that the phenomenological approach in its openness to all kinds of experiences and phenomena is ready to reconsider even the traditional beliefs in the religious field in a fresh and unprejudiced manner". Nonetheless, Spiegelberg established that in spite of the many famous cases of conversion, still some of the members of the Munich circle chose to maintain their religious affiliation (Spiegelberg, 1960, 172–173).<sup>76</sup> Husserl, for his part, expressed indifference to the related phenomenon and in this regard wrote to Rudolf Otto: "I would be delighted to influence all true men, be it catholic, evangelic or Jewish" (Husserl, 1994c, 207). In any case, it would be difficult to disregard the conspicuous phenomenon of conversion among the early phenomenologists or ignore the influence of Christian thought on the phenomenologists who in the end did not convert or turn religious faith into the focus of their intellectual endeavor, such as HCM.

## The Realistic Orientation in Phenomenology

### A. The Call for "Go Back to the 'Things Themselves'"

Husserl's resounding call in his *Logical Investigation* from 1900 of "go back to the 'things themselves'" (*auf die 'Sachen selbst' zurückgehen*) (Husserl, 1970a,

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<sup>74</sup>See here also: Oesterreicher (1952, 334 n.1).

<sup>75</sup>See here: Vidal 1972 (cited from: Baring, 2018, 115 n. 5).

<sup>76</sup>Spiegelberg's words appear as an excursus entitled "Note: Phenomenology and Conversion". This section was omitted from the third expanded edition of his book (Spiegelberg, 1984a), despite the fact that in contrast to its predecessors, this expanded edition devoted space to discussing the realistic phenomenologists. The issue of conversion is addressed in "Faith, Individuality, and Radicalism", appearing as an appendix to this volume.

168/1984a, 10),<sup>77</sup> already at the time of *Logical Investigations* was referred to as the slogan of phenomenology, implied an unmistakably revolt against another current call of ‘back to Kant’.<sup>78</sup> This last call, by the neo-Kantian movement, was addressed to the then-dominant idealistic and materialistic theories of knowledge in the name of the possibility of a universal scientific truth, whose supreme ideal was the Kantian “thing-in-itself”. However, Husserl’s endeavors were harnessed to turning one’s gaze to what is already known or clearly seen. To this end, whatever presents itself to consciousness must be approached and understood on its own terms while avoiding addressing any category external to it. The subsequent elaboration of Husserl’s early call in *Ideas* from 1913 was consolidated as “The principle of all principles” that marks “an *absolute beginning*” for phenomenological study. In this regard, knowledge as such is regarded as based on an awareness of phenomena that can be presented to us “as it were in its bodily reality” (Husserl, 1952a, §24 51/2012a, §24 43).

The early phenomenologists, who perceived themselves as “confirmed realists” (*entschiedende Realisten*) (Stein, 2002a, 200), were attracted to Husserl’s call to “go back to the ‘things themselves’”. But beyond the inspiration they drew from Husserl’s reverberating call, when they came to realize the vision it embodied, they were not guided by a model. Rather, their encounter with Husserl’s ideas brought about, as Spiegelberg put it: “interpretive studies of the first-hand work of other well-known phenomenologists” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 251). Spiegelberg added in this regard that they “could enjoy again some of the freedom of the first generation in approaching the *Sachen* themselves without intermediaries. You no longer need to study the phenomena under the shadow of the historical authorities, not even the authorities of the founders of phenomenology” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 254). Likewise, Kuhn portrays vividly the atmosphere of the time as follows: “The slogan ‘back to the things’ (*zurück zu den Sachen*)” was: “a signal of inner relief (*Befreiung*). The chains (*Fesseln*) of the idealistic construction that held captive the spirit in its own made abstractions have fallen. The world in the multiplicity of phenomena opened itself up like an eye waking up from a slumber” (Kuhn, 1966). These observations by Spiegelberg and Kuhn were retrospectively confirmed in HCM’s description of her time in Göttingen: “*Wir wollten nur an die Sachen selbst heran*” (we only wanted to come close to the things themselves) (HCM, 2015b, 62). Moreover, the primary, foundation nature embodied in Husserl’s reverberating call was directly expressed in the first attempts to formulate a “metaphenomenology”, meaning reflective writing about phenomenology itself.<sup>79</sup> The independent inquiry into the essence of phenomenology is apparent in the essays written by the first generation of phenomenology with the titles: “What

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<sup>77</sup>The phrase “to return to the things themselves” appeared in Husserl’s writings in several contexts. See also: Husserl (1970a, §4 172, §6 174–175/1984a, §4 17–18, §6 22–23). This saying has also been discussed extensively in connection to the realistic orientation in phenomenology, see: Seifert (1971, 1995); Kuhn (1969); Schmücker (1956).

<sup>78</sup>For further reading, see: Willey (1978).

<sup>79</sup>This writing about phenomenology contradicts Spiegelberg’s statement regarding the first generation of phenomenology: “They could not but be ‘original’ in the sense of doing phenomenology without the threat of metaphenomenology” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 253).

is phenomenology?” (Stein, 2014, 85–90) and “About phenomenology” (Reinach, 1969).<sup>80</sup>

In this regard, HCM described the phenomenological turning to the things as a “veil” falling “away from the eyes” (HCM, 2015b, 61),<sup>81</sup> similar to Reinach’s description that: “things will present themselves to us quite differently than is today believed” (Reinach, 1969, 204). Also, the first generation of phenomenologists understood the call to “go back to the ‘things themselves’” as an appeal to return to the “origin phenomena” (*Urphänomen / arch-phenimenon*) in the spirit of Goethe. In this approach, phenomena are regarded as delineating the entire field of observation, to the extent that there is nothing meaningful behind or beyond it (Goethe, 1840, 67–68; Deibel, 1921).<sup>82</sup> The approach has been depicted by Reinach with these words:

Phenomenological analysis means that we are not permitted to inject the customary concepts of representation, thinking, feeling, and will in order to “build up” premeditation out of them, a process which inevitably would involve the loss of what is most essential to it. Rather do we have to make an effort to transport ourselves into the phenomenon in order to be able to render faithfully what we can vividly intuit there. (Reinach, 1921a, 122)<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, based on the fundamental principles of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, the Munich-Göttingen phenomenologists sought to establish knowledge and truth on evidence as immediate recognition of things, in contrast to the skeptical position whereby “there is no truth, no knowledge, no justification of knowledge” (Husserl, 1970a, §32 76/1975, §32 120). In contrast to the skeptical position, Husserl stated: “The most perfect ‘mark’ of correctness is inward evidence, it counts as an immediate intimation of truth itself. [...] Ultimately therefore, all genuine, and, in particular, all scientific knowledge, rests on inner evidence: as far as such evidence extends, the concept of knowledge extends also” (Husserl, 1970a, §6 17–18/1975, §6 28–30).

Finally, the phrase “go back to the ‘things themselves’” indicates the assumption that the ultimate independence and non-reductiveness of real things and of knowledge about them are a condition for achieving the objectivity of things. HCM described this principle as being “at the foundation of the sort of phenomenology... that I am targeting” to which she cannot “grant a particular name” to her own approach that she

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<sup>80</sup>HCM’s reflections about the issue appear particularly in two main treatises written in relation to the question: what is phenomenology? See: HCM (1951b, 2015b).

<sup>81</sup>The German original says: “*Um Phänomenologen zu sein oder zu werden, muß einem ja irgendwie der Star gestochen sein*” (in order to become a phenomenologist, one must somehow be a stabbed star) (HCM, 2015a, 57). These lines were omitted from the English translation of the speech (HCM, 2015b, 61). This passage is also cited in: U. Avé-Lallemant 1965/66, 208. However, the image of a “veil” falling appears in HCM’s critique of Idealism (see: HCM, 1963l, 44; HCM, 1963c, 195) and Positivism (see: HCM, 1920a, 1), within which they were accused of philosophical “blindness”.

<sup>82</sup>HCM declared the connection to Goethe explicitly as driving to return “the eye and the gazing power”. As she put it: “We see that alongside the wisdom that analyzes conceptually, the eye and the observing power return again to the order (*Rechte*), as was requested by Goethe” (HCM, 1963g, 347–348). An affinity between Goethe’s theory of colors and HCM’s view of the issue is noticeable in: HCM, 1929a). The association of Husserl’s phenomenology to Goethe has been indicated in the literature, see: Heinemann (1934), Seifert (2004–2005, 133–137), Spiegelberg (1984a, 23 n. 9).

<sup>83</sup>English translation cited from: Spiegelberg (1960, 197/1984a, 193).



terms as “phenomenology in the comprehensive and radical sense. Phenomenology equals essence-research! Phenomenology without any thematical restriction” (HCM, 1965g, 377). However, the most fundamental principle behind her phenomenology is portrayed as follows:

There is not only the pure consciousness, there is not only the existing human person. There are not only what is relative to pure consciousness directed intentionally, not only everything that is relative to the existential (*existenziell*) that is caring for the world, that is projected, and experiencing existence personally. There is also the world itself in its very own independency-of-Being (*Seinsunabhängigkeit*) in regard to consciousness *and* also from the existing I (*Ich*).

[...] such *independence of Being belongs to the essence of the real world!* If the world in which we live possessed no independence of Being... then there would be no real world, only a fake real (*vorgetäuscht Wirkliche*). (HCM, 1965g, 374–375)<sup>84</sup>

Dietrich von Hildebrand, a member of the Munich-Göttingen Circle, clarified this connection between the world’s independent existence and the possibility of obtaining knowledge about it: “The act of knowledge is an ultimate datum which cannot be reduced to anything else. Therefore, we cannot ‘define’ it; we can only point to it indirectly. The true nature of knowledge can be grasped only in-itself and not through anything else” (Hildebrand, 1973, 13).<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, independence on consciousness transpires for von Hildebrand as a unifying foundation of the objects of knowledge themselves, and at the same time as a justification of knowledge itself.

The unities in which [...] necessary states of facts are grounded stand entirely on their own feet. [...] If they are unequivocally and clearly given, they do not need any criterion for the integrity of the act that grasps them, but, on the contrary, they themselves justify the grasping act as not contaminated by error. (Hildebrand, 1973, 13)

Notwithstanding, for the first generation of phenomenology, Husserl’s related appeal of going “back to the ‘things themselves’” in no way denoted a call for addressing

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<sup>84</sup>See here HCM’s distinction between three types of phenomenology: the idealistic-transcendental of Husserl; the existentialism of Heidegger; and the ontologism of the Munich-Göttingen phenomenologists. See: HCM (1965c/1959a). The division into three types of phenomenology appears already in an unpublished manuscript from 1916 (HCM, 1916aN, 7–8). Avé-Lallemant testified that the manuscript was lost until 1960 (Avé-Lallemant, 1975a, 34). Also, in a handwritten note, Avé-Lallemant adds that probably Jean Hering produced the manuscript in a typewriter font during the First World War (Avé-Lallemant, 1975b, 197; see here also: Parker, 2019, 170). Avé-Lallemant emphasizes that already from the beginning, a difference was apparent between the phenomenology of the Munich Circle and that of Husserl, which he characterized thus: “For Husserl, the method of phenomenology was essentially an intentional analysis (*Intentionalanalyse*). For the Munichers [it was] essence analysis (*Wesensanalyse*)” (Avé-Lallemant, 1975a, 24). See here also: Avé-Lallemant (1971, 218).

<sup>85</sup>Von Hildebrand, a student of Reinach, taught in Munich after the Second World War (Avé-Lallemant, 1975a, 23). He was recognized by Husserl as continuing to develop Reinach’s theory (Schuhmann, 1987, 243) and as developing on the basis of his teacher a theory of phenomenological realism (Dubois, 1995, 97 n. 83).

real objects in the external world. In this regard, Arnold Metzger proposed an unambiguous phrasing when he said about “the motif of ‘addressing the things’ (*Wendung zu den Sachen*)” the following: “the ‘things’ are the ideal objects. *The turning to the ‘things’ is the turning to the a priori as an object*” (Metzger, 1966, 28).<sup>86</sup> HCM continues the same line as she addressed her ontological studies to “essence-holdings (*Wesensbeständen*) existing de facto” (HCM, 1916b, 354) and establishes the importance of the “science of essences of the real world (*Wesenswissenschaft vom realen Sein*)” provided by ontology as the “unabbreviated complete concept of finite reality” (*unverkürzter Vollbegriff endlicher Realität*) (HCM, 1963b, 82). However, as will be discussed later, the ontological orientation of phenomenology did not satisfy HCM either, and she sought to open paths from it to metaphysics.

## **B. Essence-Observation, Regularity, Necessity, and Unity**

Husserl’s early struggle in *Logical Investigation* against psychologism, relativism, and various forms of reductionism (Husserl, 1970a, §23, §31/1975, §23, §31), and particularly his demand that the conditions of consciousness be examined independently of the thinking subject (Husserl, 1970a, §66/1975, §66), served as primary principles for the phenomenologists of the Munich Circle. To this extent, Spiegelberg established that for the early phenomenologists, “Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* was the bible” (Spiegelberg, 1959, 60). In this spirit, Reinach wrote to his friend Theodor Conrad in a letter dated 22 January 1904 that he was studying Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* and “you certainly have to believe (*glauben*) them too” (Avé-Lallemant and Schuhmann, 1992, 77, my emphasis). Theodor Conrad’s familiarity with Husserl’s phenomenological method from *Logical Investigations* was presented as evidence of his being a “full-blooded phenomenologist (*Vollblutphänomenologist*)” (Avé-Lallemant and Schuhmann, 1992, 78).<sup>87</sup> Finally, the importance of the *Logical Investigations* within the evolution of the Munich Circle transpires also from the significance attributed to a meeting between Husserl and Johannes Daubert (1887–1947) in summer 1902. Just like the other members of the circle Daubert, then a student of Theodor Lipps in Munich, read Husserl’s book and was thoroughly impressed by it. In this regard, Schmücker reported that after this meeting, Husserl told his wife: “here is someone who read my *Logical Investigations* and understood!”. Schmücker further maintained that “in a sense, with this conversation commenced the ‘School’ that will be known as phenomenology” (Schmücker, 1956, 1). Theodor Conrad referred to this meeting several times (Conrad, 1954N,

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<sup>86</sup>Arnold Metzger (1892–1974) returned to Germany having left to the USA during the Nazi period. He held a teaching position at Munich University, alongside HCM. The work cited is his main treatise, in which he dealt with the problem of relativism, which he believed phenomenology was unable to solve. For further reading on phenomenology and relativism, see: Carr (1985).

<sup>87</sup>Notwithstanding, Avé-Lallemant and Schuhmann rightly noted here, the esteem in which the members of the Munich Circle held Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* should not be seen as mere acceptance. A more critical approach on this point was voiced by Rosenwald, who followed Landgrebe’s critique (Landgrebe, 1963, 21–22), arguing that their static understanding of the correlation between an object and intending it “turns out into faith, a faith which for many adherents of the Munich-Göttingen school was easily transformed into religious faith. This opened to phenomenology a path towards irrationalism” (Rosenwald, 1989, 19).

2, Conrad, 1965–1969aN, 1; Conrad 1965–1969bN, 1)<sup>88</sup> and Spiegelberg maintained that “this conversation was easily the most important single event in the History of the Munich phenomenological Circle” (Spiegelberg, 1960, 171/1984a, 169). Avé-Lallemant, who was personally exposed to these figures who were the first to provide a historical account of that time, unreservedly justified this determination by Spiegelberg (Avé-Lallemant, 1971, 31).

In any event, among the various issues Husserl addressed in *Logical Investigations*, essence intuition had a particularly formative influence on the members of the Munich-Göttingen phenomenologists. They saw it not just as Husserl’s most essential achievement, but also as the genuine core of phenomenology.<sup>89</sup> Following him, they were convinced that the objects perceived and the ways in which they are known are founded upon lawfulness of essence (*Wesensgesetze*) (Husserl, 1970a, 168/1984a, 10) stemming from the things themselves and capable of being directly grasped by the art of phenomenological intuition.<sup>90</sup>

The “essence observation” (*Wesensfassung*) method shaped in Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, which HCM called a “the genuine philosophical assignment (*Aufgabe*)” (HCM, 1916b, 348),<sup>91</sup> was aimed to reveal the essential “what” (*was/Washeit*) that makes something into this specific object, “while break[ing] through with theories and constructions” (Reinach, 1969, 220). Reinach explains: “There is no accidentally-being-so in essences, but rather a necessarily-having-to-be-so, and an essentially-cannot-be-otherwise” (Reinach, 1969, 210). Moreover, according to Reinach, the direct access to things is aimed at leading us not only to the essences we have “already” intended (*intendiert*), but also to new essences that must be discovered and brought into the gaze (Reinach, 1969, 210).<sup>92</sup> At the same time, he believes that “new light is thrown upon the old problems supplied by the history of philosophy” (Reinach, 1969, 219). In his opinion, “the first effort of phenomenology has been to trace out the most diverse of the domains of essence relations—psychology and aesthetics, ethics and law, etc. *Everywhere new domains of such relations open up to us*” (Reinach, 1969, 219, my emphasis). In the same spirit,

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<sup>88</sup>The reference to Theodor Conrad’s estate is cited from: Smid (1982, 130, 150 n. 139).

<sup>89</sup>Ludwig Landgrebe, Husserl’s close student in Freiburg, was one of the most severe critics of the Munich-Göttingen Circle’s. He argued that his colleagues’ use of the observation method was not only more intensive than that characteristic of Husserl, but also irresponsible. In his opinion, this gave phenomenology a bad name, and as a result, it was perceived as “method-less intuition”. See: Landgrebe (1963, 21).

<sup>90</sup>Regarding the formative influence of “essence intuition” on the Munich Circle, see: Schmücker (1956, 1–33), Ebel (1965), Pfänder (1913), Hering (1921, 39–40), Pfeiffer (2005, 1–13), Reinach (1951).

<sup>91</sup>See also: HCM (1923b, 159, 1965g, 377, 1965k, 347).

<sup>92</sup>In this context, Reinach likens direct observation as a movement from Socrates to Plato: “Socrates did signification analysis [...] Here it is a question of clearing up the obscurities and contradictions of significations a procedure which, moreover, really has nothing to do with definition, and certainly not with induction. By contrast, Plato does not start with words and significations. He aims at the direct view of the ideas (*Ideen*), the unmediated grasp of essences as such” (Reinach, 1969, 210, my emphasis).

HCM adds that in fact, there is not one essence that the whole of phenomenological thinking is harnessed to the philosophical understanding, but an “inexhaustible kingdom (*Reiche*) of entities (*Wesenheiten*) and of rules of essence that flow from it. This in-itself lies beyond the entire historical-philosophical difference of mere appearing and metaphysical in-itself” (HCM, 1951b, 6).

Along with the Husserlian essence intuition, and as part of it, the realistic phenomenologists also adopted the Husserlian thesis regarding the rationality of the world (Husserl, 1952a, §136–§137, §139, §142/2012a, §136–§137, §139, §142). This statement was particularly true for HCM. Assuming the fundamental intelligibility of Being in general (HCM, 1963h, 230),<sup>93</sup> she argued that the presence of essences in real things is original and perceptible (HCM, 1931aN, 2–3).<sup>94</sup> HCM explains that the “forms of essence” (*Wesensformen*) originating from the hidden depth of the human spirit are shaped by the objective logos of the real world (HCM, 1965I, 311–312). HCM apparently wonders: “don’t the two radically contradict each other?”. However, she immediately answers: “I don’t believe it. The same logos, which is intended in the conceivable most universal sense, accords with the essence and the Being of the world, lies concealed with the same universality also in human intelligence” (HCM, 1965c, 400–401).<sup>95</sup> Thus, the harmony existing between the logos of the self and the logos of the world is enabled. Despite its being peculiar and incomparable to any other mode of being (HCM, 1963h, 240), the ontological exclusivity of the I might be illuminated also “on the ground of Being itself” (HCM, 1963h, 243). Alternatively, “only out of this ontological foundation” of the real being in general is “a true ‘comprehension’ (*Begreifung*)” of the I possible (HCM, 1931aN, 6). Thus, inspired by Reinach’s statement according to which “that does not mean that intuition is thought of as a sudden inspiration and illumination” but rather with

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<sup>93</sup>Here, “Being” indicates the all-encompassing phenomenon of primordial Being (*Das Sein*) or “the Being or beings”, while “being” stands for particular existing things (*die Seiende*). This choice follows the classic translation of Heidegger’s Being and Time. See translator’s note in: Heidegger (1962, 19 n. 1). While for Heidegger it seems that almost anything one can think or talk about might count as a “being” or entity (books, animals, numbers etc.), regarding “Being” he clarifies: “In the question which we are to work out, what is asked about is Being—that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are already understood, however we may discuss them”, Heidegger (1962, 25–26).

<sup>94</sup>In this context, see Rosenwald’s assertion that on this point HCM opposed her realistic phenomenologist colleagues, who adopted the quantifying approach typical of the modern scientific method, which relied on what was then called the “‘subjectless’ aspect of reality” (Rosenwald 1989, 22–23). However, as I have demonstrated above, HCM’s argument that harmony between the personal logos and the world’s logos represents a more complex position of HCM, who assimilated her philosophy of the I into the philosophy of Being.

<sup>95</sup>This insight enabled HCM to view Heidegger’s perception, in *Being and Time*, of human understanding as the key to the philosophy of being and the interpretation of reality as an expression of “performing a radical existential turn”. Although alongside this, we should also mention her criticism of his chain of thought, which she described as “an absolutization of the mode of existence of the I-being by means of which once again brought about relativization of any other being”. See HCM (1963i, 186).

“a gradual approximation to the object” (Reinach, 1969, 220),<sup>96</sup> HCM added that “‘essence’ is not mystical nor is it a speculative construct or something thought out (*Erdachtes*). It presents itself from the exact [...] respective givenness itself. This possibility is proven through actual essence study” (HCM, 1965g, 377–378). She explains that studying the essence:

Mostly it requires a long and very precise philosophical work, in which the spiritual eye must be incessantly directed at the presently only darkly anticipated “sense-position” (*Sinnstelle*) of the essential (*wesenmäßig*) of the discussed issue. This is phenomenology in the inclusive and radical sense. Phenomenology or the study of essence! (HCM 1965g, 377)

From HCM’s point of view, revealing the essence at the basis of things requires mining into the depths for which surface-appearance (*Erscheinungsoberfläch*) functions as a sort of cover (HCM, 1916b, 353–354). In any case, the philosophical toil demanded of the phenomenologist by essence intuition should not remove from it the immediate quality that constitutes its hallmark. On the contrary, the presentation of essences to intuition appears as a brilliant light, to the extent that, as HCM puts it, “all of a sudden you see a thousand things you didn’t see before” (HCM, 2015b, 61).<sup>97</sup>

Two far-reaching insights regarding essences underly the above assertion. The first concerns the aspect of lawfulness in the essence, whose seeds first transpired in Husserl’s study of the laws of logic. In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl argued that mental activities only have mental significance when they have the form of logical law (Husserl, 1970a, §8 22/1975, §8 19–20). In addition, “what they say has entire validity: they themselves in their absolute exactness are evident and proven”. Instead of being “one of countless theoretical possibilities”, logical law as such is “the single, sole truth which excludes all possibilities” (Husserl, 1970a, §23 53/1975, §23 84). The second insight in this regard relates to the component of necessity entailed in this law. As Husserl phrased it: “To see *a state of affairs as a matter of law* is to see *its truth as necessarily obtaining*... [we] call every general truth that itself utters a law, a necessary truth” (Husserl, 1970a, §63 146/1975, §63 233). These two elements—law and necessity—are explicitly tied to the element of essence in Reinach’s following words:

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<sup>96</sup>One of the strictest critics of the early phenomenologists’ perception of essence was Ludwig Landgrebe, who characterized their use of Husserl’s phenomenology as “‘method-less intuitionism’ (*methodenlosen Intuitionismus*) that gives phenomenology a bad name” (Landgrebe, 1963, 21). No less severe was Rosenwald’s critique, claiming that: “Göttingen circle shows the results of advancing the ‘seeing of essences’ in isolation from the other procedures of the phenomenological method, and demonstrates the contradictoriness and lack of clarity that characterize phenomenology as a whole” (Rosenwald, 1989, 32).

<sup>97</sup>The image of a “veil” falling fits well into the severe criticism HCM directed at Idealism (HCM, 1963l, 44, 1963c, 195) and Positivism (HCM, 1920a, 1), which accused them of philosophical “blindness”.

Of essences laws hold true, and these laws are incomparable with any fact or factual connection of which sense perception informs us. These laws in question hold of the essences as such, in virtue of their nature (*Wesen*). There is no accidentally-being-so in essences, but rather a necessarily having-to-be-so, and an essentially-cannot-be-otherwise. That there are these laws is one of the most important things for philosophy and-if one thinks it out completely-for-the-world at large. (Reinach, 1969, 210)

The language of plurality employed by Reinach regarding essences and their laws, as a result which he observes that “the realm of the *a priori* is incalculably large” (Reinach, 1969, 215), echoes also in the HCM’s related idea of “kingdom of entities (*Wesenheiten*) and of rules of essence” flowing from it (HCM, 1951b, 6). The plurality of essences inserts to them an aspect of diversity. To this extent might be challenged the ideal of absolute exactness that accompanies Husserl’s discussions of the logical lawfulness upon which essences are established. Even more so, the question regarding the force that can bring together several essences in one and the same reality is of special importance for a realist phenomenology. At this point, the realist phenomenologists seem to speak with almost one voice when emphasizing the unity that characterizes the givenness of essences. This is apparent in Reinach’s criticism of the rejection of the *a priori* by empirical psychology. In this regard, he equates the significance theory of essences for empirical psychology to geometry for natural science and clarifies the following:

It is not correct to say that, when I have at the same time perceived A and B, and now represent A, a tendency exists also to represent B. I must have perceived A and B together *in a phenomenal unity* [...] in order to that distinct tendency to arise. Where two objects appear to us as related, an association sets in. Further, if the relation is one which is grounded in ideas (*Ideen*) themselves, e.g., similarity or contrast, then not even such a previous appearance [*sic*] is necessary. [...] Any relation at all is capable of setting up associations. But above all it must be said that in association we have to do, not with empirically collocated facts, but rather with rational (*verstehbare*) connections, grounded in the nature of things. (Reinach, 1969, 218, my emphasis)

This observation by Reinach of a unity that pervades essences, recurs also in HCM’s observations with the ontological accentuation typical of her thinking, in her words: “[if] we remain on the strict ontological ground, thus can be only *the substantial unity*, the existing (*Daseinede*) *itself*, that by virtue of the existential own potency (*Eigenpotenz*) ‘forms’ itself into the concerned essence” (HCM, 1963c, 220). Likewise, von Hildebrand devoted a special discussion to the aspect of unity existing in essences as such. In this regard, he postulated categorically: “Every existing thing is a unity and its such-being must in some way be characterized as a unity” (Hildebrand, 1973, 100). That is to say that not only are essences necessary, but the unity of the essence is also indispensable. Moreover, according to von Hildebrand, “necessary unities are the only genuine ‘essences’” (Hildebrand, 1973, 116).

Moreover, in the view of the realist phenomenologist, the force of the related unity operating in givenness is experienced as an evident aspect in essences themselves. In this regard, Reinach determines that one must be directed by “distinctions of essence which are ultimately given and found before us” (Reinach, 1969, 197–198), to the