

Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences 8

Ronny Miron

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# Hedwig Conrad-Martius

The Phenomenological Gateway  
to Reality

*Second Edition*

 Springer

# Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences

## Volume 8

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As the historical records prove, women have long been creating original contributions to philosophy. We have valuable writings from female philosophers from Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and a continuous tradition from the Renaissance to today. The history of women philosophers thus stretches back as far as the history of philosophy itself. The presence as well as the absence of women philosophers throughout the course of history parallels the history of philosophy as a whole.

Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir, the most famous representatives of this tradition in the twentieth century, did not appear from nowhere. They stand, so to speak, on the shoulders of the female titans who came before them.

The series *Women Philosophers and Scientists* published by Springer is of interest not only to the international philosophy community, but also for scholars in history of science and mathematics, the history of ideas, and in women's studies.

Ronny Miron

# Hedwig Conrad-Martius

The Phenomenological Gateway to Reality

Second Edition

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ISSN 2523-8760 ISSN 2523-8779 (electronic)  
Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences  
ISBN 978-3-031-25415-4 ISBN 978-3-031-25416-1 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25416-1>

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*Neither the “covered” (verhüllten) primordial phenomena (Urphänomene) nor especially the perceived ideas lie themselves on the concealed in the “bare surface of the mere appearances” (baren Erscheinungsoberfläche). Accordingly, the work required here can thereby nevermore be achieved, so that through passive observation that is devoted to the plane of appearing, one perceives descriptively the directly obvious phenomenal differences, and be it also down to the finest nuances. On the other hand, from this “surface-appearance’ [...] only the present essence-holdings (Wesensbestände) that are present de facto, to which the surface-appearances lead through a respective precise analysis as to its own foundation must also emerge.” (HCM, 1916, 353–354).*

*To Ben A. Hecht*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been published with the support and encouragement of many dear people and institutions. It originated in a post-doctoral study supported by the Minerva Fund, which I conducted at the universities of Munich, Frankfurt am Main, and Cologne in 2002–2003. After about a decade, during which I focused on other topics of research, I returned to study Hedwig Conrad-Martius. These two periods are connected by an almost random meeting with Prof. Ruth Hagengruber at Cologne University in 2002. This encounter was preserved in our shared memory, and it received new life in 2016 at Paderborn University, Germany, at a conference held at the Center for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists, which Ruth established and manages. Ruth was among the very few who were familiar with Hedwig Conrad-Martius, and was immediately excited by the study I wanted to carry out. She gave me invaluable impetus and encouragement at the first stage of my study into an almost anonymous philosopher, whose value and importance to the history of philosophy was hardly known to anyone. I give her my deep gratitude for her true friendship, her unending enthusiasm, and her exemplary commitment to revealing the legacy of women philosophers and scientists. All this was accompanied by many invitations to her Center, enabling me to use its archive and to share the fruits of my research with colleagues and students from Paderborn University in concentrated courses as part of the Erasmus Program, and in international summer schools held between 2017 and 2019. I also wish to thank the Center's always helpful team, particularly Christian Meineke and Julia Mühl. My very special gratitude to Eberhard Avé-Lallemant, who generously shared with me his knowledge and rare texts of Conrad-Martius's writings. I deeply regret that he did not live to see the fruits of this research.

My warm thanks to Prof. Mary Ellen Waithe for the shared work on the manuscript of this volume. The deep reading of the text by a scholar of her stature gave me an unforgettable lesson in proper philosophical work. My



sincere gratitude also goes to Prof. Antonio Calcagno for true friendship, limitless giving, a thorough reading of drafts, wise comments, helpful advice for translating German terms into English, and much more. I would also like to thank Rodney Parker, who generously shared with me many materials of phenomenological thinking. Special thanks to Burt Hopkins for the metaphysical brotherhood and to George Heffernan for the knowledge he shared with me and for his friendship.

Many thanks to my colleagues at Bar-Ilan University for the support and trust they gave a study about an anonymous philosopher whose name they had never heard. The Rector of Bar-Ilan University, Prof. Miriam Faust, is a paragon of a leader guided by the unconditional value of academic research that is an inseparable part of the life of the spirit. Prof. Elda Weizman, the Chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Unit at Bar-Ilan University, and Prof. Edward Greenstein, the Head of the Program for Hermeneutics and Cultural Studies at Bar-Ilan University, gave valuable support and appreciation for the study during their years in office. My thanks and affection also to my students in the phenomenological seminars, and especially to my Ph.D. students who took up my enthusiasm for the unfamiliar philosopher, took it upon themselves to study the early phenomenological thinking, and joined my travels overseas and wherever they could hear about the thinking of Conrad-Martius and other female phenomenologists. Through them, I was able to relive the spirit of group philosophizing established by the members of the Munich Circle, of which Conrad-Martius was the living spirit.

Many thanks to Ruth Ludlam, who devotedly and professionally undertook the editing and preparation for print of the book's chapters.

Finally, my gratitude goes to my family members, my children Shira, Noa, Itamar, and Neta, and my partner Ben Hecht, who supported my many overseas travels, and who was the first to listen to my lectures about Conrad-Martius, to comment, to encourage, and to rejoice in every advance in my study of her thinking.

## EARLIER VERSIONS OF SOME CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK WERE PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE FOLLOWING PLACES<sup>1</sup>

1. The Introduction was written for this volume and has not been previously published.
2. From the “Still Covered” to the “Pure Primordial”: The External World in Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ Phenomenology. *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 63, 2014, 407–429. Revised and translated from Hebrew for this volume and the revised version is printed with permission.
3. The Realism of the Transcendence: A Critical Analysis of Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ Early Ontology. *The International Journal of Literary Humanities* 11 (3), 2014, 37–48. The revised version is printed with permission.
4. The External World—“Whole” and “Parts”: A Husserlian Hermeneutics of the Early Ontology of Hedwig Conrad-Martius *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy XVI*, 2018, 299–316. The revised version is printed with permission.
5. The “Gate of Reality”: Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ Idea of Reality in *Realontologie. Phänomenologische Forschungen*, 2014, 59–82. The revised version is printed with permission.
6. The Vocabulary of Reality. *Human Studies* 38 (3), 2015, 331–347. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-015-9345-5> (the previous version was printed by Springer).
7. The Phenomenology of the Nothing: The Hidden Dialogue with Heidegger. Chapter 7 was written for the second edition of this volume and has not been previously published.

<sup>1</sup> An early version of some of the chapters included in this volume were published as journal articles or chapters in books in the places listed. All the translations from German to English have been checked and edited, some previous phrasings have been improved, and slight updates have been introduced in the notes.

8. The Phenomenal Experience of the “I”: The Idea of the “I” in Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ Early Phenomenology. *The Irish Philosophical Society Yearbook*, 2014/15, 99–123. The revised version is printed with permission.
9. The Ontological Exclusivity of the “I”. *Phänomenologische Forschungen*, 2017, 97–116. The revised version is printed with permission.
10. The Duality of the “I”. *Phänomenologische Forschungen*, 2019, 71–98. The revised version is printed with permission.
11. A Philosophical Resonance: Hedwig Conrad-Marius versus Edith Stein. *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood. Essays on Edith Stein’s Phenomenological Investigations*, Elisa Magrì and Dermot Moran (eds.), 2017, 193–216. (The previous version was printed by Springer).
12. In the Midst of Being: A Journey into the Internality of Being in Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ Metaphysics. *Phenomenological Ontologies: Individuality, Essence, Idea*. A special issue of the Italian philosophical journal: *Discipline Filosofiche* 26 (1), 2016, 217–244. The revised version is printed with permission.
13. Essence, Abyss and Self: Hedwig Conrad-Martius on the Non-Spatial Dimensions of Being. *Women Phenomenologists on Social Ontology*, Sebastian Luft and Ruth Hagengruber (eds.), Women in the History of Philosophy and Sciences Series, Cham Switzerland: Springer, 2018, 147–167. (The previous version was printed by Springer).
14. The Metaphysical Absolutizing of the Ideal: Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ Criticism of Husserl’s Idealism, *The Idealism-Realism Debate in the Early Phenomenological Movement*, Rodney K. B. Parker (ed.) (Contribution to Phenomenology 112), Springer, 2021. The revised version is printed with permission.
15. Appendix: Faith, Individuality, and Radicalism: A Jewish Perspective on Edith Stein. Revised version of: Faith and Individualism—Edith Stein and Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Daat: A Journal of Jewish Philosophy & Kabblah* 82, 2016, 33–57 (Hebrew). Revised and translated from Hebrew for this volume and reprinted with permission.

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PART I

---

# Introduction



# Introduction

## 1.1 “DIE FRAU IN DER PHILOSOPHIE VORAN-!”

### 1.1.1 *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,

<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. See: Avé-Lallemant, 1959b, 24.

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 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

<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 into 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).

<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 and unusual usage, 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. Undoubtedly, 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 chapter 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.

been written by a brilliant young professor from Leipzig [*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 Töchtertschule*) as a “sudden... passionate desire to study” (HCM, 2015b, 60). After completing her grammar school studies, she attended courses in 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:

<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.

<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 Bad 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> The notes in this volume were composed by the editor, 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

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>

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> HCM’s arrival to Göttingen was well prepared by Geiger. 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>

to Theodore Lipps and included August Gallinger, Aloys Fischer, Fritz Weinmann, and Max Ettliger. 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 Lippsean 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).

<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

### 1.1.2 “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” 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

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), Fréchette (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).

<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> Maria Amata Neyer and E. Av-Lallemant noted that also Johannes Daubert (1887–1947) was “an important mediator between the Munich phenomenological circle and Husserl” (Stein, 2001, 151 n. 5; 2005, 204 n. 5; most references to this source use the English translation). The students’ admiration for Reinach is also indicated in the obituary Husserl composed about him after he fell during the First World War (16 November 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, 1984, 191–192). After Reinach’s death, his students published his writings, and HCM wrote two introductions to his essays. See: HCM (1921b, 1951b).

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 (Rosenward, 1989, 16, 21–22); The Göttingen Movement; The Göttingen School (Conrad, 1953/1954N; Schmücker, 1956, 7); The Munich-Göttingen Phenomenologists; The Munich Circle; The Munich-Göttingen Phenomenology (Conrad, 1954N)<sup>21</sup>; The Munich Phenomenology; The Munich-Göttingen School (Rosenward, 1989, 19); 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>22</sup>; The First Phenomenological School (Landgrebe, 1963, 22); The Old Phenomenology (Rosenward, 1989, 13); The Older Phenomenological Movement (Spiegelberg, 1960, 168f.)<sup>23</sup>; “The oldest generation” (Spiegelberg, 1985); The Early Phenomenology (Rosenward, 1989, 13); the Original Phenomenological Movement (Spiegelberg, 1984, 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, 2001, 151; 2005, 203). Whatever the terminology, it denoted the first generation of phenomenologists active during and immediately after Husserl’s time.<sup>24</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

<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, 195/1984, 192), Schuhmann and Smith (1987, 16/1989, 618), Feldes (2015, 55).

<sup>21</sup> Cited from: Smid (1982, 112).

<sup>22</sup> See here also: Spiegelberg (1959, 60).

<sup>23</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, 2001, 144; 2005, 193).

<sup>24</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).

Hildebrand, Alexandre Koyré, Roman Ingarden, Edith Stein, and Hedwig Conrad-Martius.<sup>25</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>26</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 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>27</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

<sup>25</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, Alexandre 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>26</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).

<sup>27</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). For HCM's approach to animals and plants, see: HCM, 1939; 1941 [1939].



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 brainstorms, 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>28</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, 1984, 166/1960, 196).<sup>29</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, 1952, §9/2012a, §9) and consolidate "the *highest and most inclusive generic unity belonging to a concretum*" (Husserl, 1952, §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).

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,

<sup>28</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, 1921b/1951) and received two English translations (Reinach, 1968, 1969). The related ethos, to be acknowledged later also by Husserl (Husserl, 1970b, §47 163; Husserl, 1976, §47 166) is further discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>29</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, 196/1984, 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, 168–169/1984, 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).

as it is pursued in Munich, has its roots in Husserl” (Reinach, 1907N).<sup>30</sup> Likewise, shortly<sup>3</sup>, the *Ideas* appeared in Husserl’s *Yearbook*.<sup>31</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>32</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.

<sup>30</sup> Reinach’s letter is mentioned also in: Smid (1982, 116), Fréchette (2012, 150).

<sup>31</sup> Husserl’s *Ideas* first appeared in the first volume of Husserl’s *Yearbook* (Husserl, 1913).

<sup>32</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, 1952/2012a). 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, 1965b, 395). Avé-Lallemant also indicated the gap between the two volumes of *Logical Investigations*. See Avé-Lallemant (1971, 14ff.). Avé-Lallemant shares this view about *Logical Investigations* 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, 74/1984, 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.).

### 1.1.3 *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 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>33</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>34</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>35</sup> The official reason was that her matriculation was of the *Realgymnasium Abitur* type, which did not include learning Greek,

<sup>33</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 (1965c, 371). HCM employs this simile also in her theological discussions. See: HCM (1965d, 189; 1965j, 222; 1965k, 196).

<sup>34</sup> Kuhn testified to the “long painful lack of teaching activity” (Kuhn, 1966).

<sup>35</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.

without which, they argued, it would be impossible to write a doctoral dissertation.<sup>36</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>37</sup>

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>38</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>39</sup> HCM described the process of writing the new elaborated and enlarged essay, which took only four weeks,<sup>40</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>41</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*

<sup>36</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>37</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 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 Goettingen”, Hart (1972, 12 n. 1). However, it is still difficult to accept this state of affairs at face value.

<sup>38</sup> The first part of the dissertation, “The Entire Phenomenon of the Real External World” (HCM, 1916, 345–397), is based on the first chapter of the “prize essay”. The second part of the dissertation “Sensory Givenness: Feeling and Appearing” (HCM, 1916, 397–542) is entirely new and anticipates the subsequent book, *Realontologie* (HCM, 1923b).

<sup>39</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>40</sup> During these weeks, HCM was in Munich, and not as Spiegelberg wrote: “her main work having been done at Gottingen” (Spiegelberg, 1985, 253).

<sup>41</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).

*External World* (*Die erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen des Positivismus. Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Außenwelt*) (HCM, 1913N).<sup>42</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>43</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” (*Zur Ontologie und Erscheinungslehre der realen Außenwelt. Verbunden mit einer Kritik positivistischer Theorien*) (HCM, 1916).<sup>44</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).

<sup>42</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).

<sup>43</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). So far, Schuhmann has written the only article to date that is wholly dedicated to Husserl’s *Yearbook* (Schuhmann, 1990). However, a few references to the *Yearbook* have appeared here and there. Thus, for example, Spiegelberg states that while the development of phenomenology, including in Germany, usually happened in circles, they “had better be described as clusters”. In contrast, the co-editors of the *Yearbook* created a “more definite and stable ‘nucleus’” (Spiegelberg, 1984, 4). See also *ibid.*, 158 n. 88; 241. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka also stresses the *Yearbook*’s importance to the historical development of phenomenology, describing it as such that “served as the medium in which the most important advances in the new philosophical field of phenomenology saw the light of day. When in 1930 the *Jahrbuch* came to an untimely end, phenomenology had lost its central organ of communication” (Tymieniecka, 1970, v). Later, three journals sought to make phenomenology accessible to English readers, declaring themselves explicitly as successors of the historical *Yearbook*, and noting this unmistakably in their titles. The first was *Journal of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, whose first issue appeared in 1940, edited by Marvin Farber. Schuhmann would later write that “Farber’s title implied that the new journal was to continue Husserl’s famous *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, the last volume of which had been published only a decade earlier” (Schuhmann, 1990, 1). The second appeared from 1970, entitled *Analecta Husserliana—The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research* (ANHU), edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. In the introduction to the first issue, she described it explicitly as “The reviving of Husserl’s own *Jahrbuch*” (Tymieniecka, 1970, VII). 2001 saw the first publication of *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* (NYPPP). The editors, Burt Hopkins and Steven Crowell, deliberately chose the original name (with the addition of the word New), and described it as a journal that “will provide an annual international forum for phenomenology and phenomenological philosophy in the spirit of Edmund Husserl’s groundbreaking work” (Hopkins & Crowell, 2001, front page).

<sup>44</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 chapters 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.

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>45</sup>

### 1.1.4 *Bad Bergzabern—The Domestication of Phenomenology*

#### 1.1.4.1 *The Conrads’ Place and the Bad Bergzabern Circle*

In 1912, HCM married the philosopher Hans Theodor Conrad (1881–1969) and left Munich for his hometown Bad-Bergzabern.<sup>46</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>47</sup> HCM 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*

<sup>45</sup> Gerda Walther also described the difficulties women encountered when seeking to enter the university’s lecture halls. See: Walther (1960, 17).

<sup>46</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 (2001, 147 n. 3; 2005, 198 n. 3).

<sup>47</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, 2001, 140; 2005, 187). Walther, who was invited to the orchard farm in 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).