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**PHENOMENOLOGY AND ITS HISTORY:
A CASE STUDY ON HEIDEGGER'S EARLY RELATION
TO HUSSERL—AND A PLEA FOR THE HISTORICAL
METHOD IN PHENOMENOLOGY***

ABSTRACT

In order to better understand the notion of history proper to phenomenology, I undertake a brief case study. Namely, I investigate Martin Heidegger's relation to Edmund Husserl in the years preceding Husserl's appointment to Freiburg, with a special focus on an occasional writing by Heidegger from 1912. The application of historical method not only dismantles the teleological constructions which mark Heidegger's own account of his early discovery of Husserl's phenomenology, but also present a young thinker eager to absorb cutting edge, though not necessarily consistent, developments from contemporaneous philosophy. Heidegger's early approach could also be conceived as a window onto an elusive brief period of phenomenology before its transformation into a Movement, thereby illustrating the positive contributions of the historical approach to the history phenomenology.

Keywords: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, early Heidegger, historiography of phenomenology, counterfactuals.

* Institute for Philosophy, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences. My research was supported by grant no. 105101 of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA). Parts of these results were already presented in Chapter 5 of my Hungarian monograph *A fenomenológia keletkezése* [The Origins of Phenomenology] (L'Harmattan, Budapest 2013), resp. a Hungarian paper forthcoming in *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* [Hungarian Philosophical Quarterly] 2014, 58 (4).

I am grateful to all of those who commented on my paper, especially Nicolas De Warren, George Heffernan and Witold Plotka.

INTRODUCTION

Does the history of phenomenology really amount to a history of “heresies issuing from” Edmund Husserl’s philosophy,¹ as Paul Ricoeur has famously formulated it? It seems to me that the tricky part of Ricoeur’s claim lies in the notion of history implied by it. Phenomenology once meant an iconoclastic revolution against past philosophies. “No amount of learning in [...] historical philosophies,” Husserl has once famously declared,² “is able to ease the efforts of penetrating in phenomenology.” On the other hand, phenomenology itself has meanwhile grown to a philosophical tradition that is more than one hundred years old, and historical references, even intense historical engagement with its Founding Fathers, now belong to the mainstream of contemporary phenomenological research, up to the point that many call for a renewed “back to the things themselves.”

In order to better understand the notion of history that is proper to phenomenology, in the first part of my paper, I undertake a brief case study by investigating Martin Heidegger’s early relation to Husserl. My reason for pinpointing this section of the phenomenological lineage is that the relation between the two earliest Founding Fathers is often regarded as one of the key junctures in the history of phenomenology. In the second part, I formulate consequences based on both the lessons of my historical case study and some recent discussions in historiography.

A CASE STUDY ON HEIDEGGER’S EARLY RELATION TO HUSSERL

The biographical circumstances of Heidegger’s life had long been in the shadow; except for few details concerning which Heidegger broke his self-imposed silence on biographical matters.³ One of these details, first mentioned

¹ Ricoeur, P. 1986. *A l’école de la phénoménologie*. Paris: Vrin, 9; English translation (hereafter: ET): 2007. *Husserl. An Analysis of His Phenomenology*. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. Ballard, E. G., L. E. Embree (Trans.). Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 4.

² Husserl, E. 1984. *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Band. Zweiter Teil*. Husserliana, 19/2. Panzer, U. (Ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff (Kluwer), 536; ET: Husserl, E. 2001. *Logical Investigations*. Moran, D. (Ed.). Findlay, J. N. (Trans.). London–New York: Routledge, 2, 179.

³ In one of his university lectures, Heidegger famously glossed over Aristotle’s biography claiming: “our only interest is that he was born at a certain time, that he worked and that he died [*er arbeitete und starb*]. The character [*Gestalt*] of the philosopher, and issues of that sort will not be addressed here.” (Heidegger, M. 2002. *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*. Gesamtausgabe, 18. Michalski, M. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 5; ET: 2009. *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Studies in Continental Thought. Metcalf, R. D., M. B. Tanzer (Trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 4.). It was impossible to overlook that Heidegger conceived the signification of his biography along the same lines. This proclamation by Heidegger had been widely publicized by Hannah Arendt’s anniversary address delivered in 1969, which was broadcast in radio and published both in Germany and the US (cf. Arendt, H.,

by Heidegger in 1963 and published in a widely available form six years later, is an almost accidental circumstance, namely the title of a book lying on his writing desk during his early university years: “[...] both volumes of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* lay on my desk in the theological seminary ever since my first semester there.”⁴ I think it is worth dwelling upon this detail surprisingly revealed to us by Heidegger, especially since he himself appears to have assigned a deeper meaning to it, as a subsequent rhetorical question demonstrates: “These volumes belonged to the university library. The work was obviously of little interest to the students. But how did it get into this environment so foreign to it?” (Ibid.)

For the purpose of recalling the received view of the first juncture of the phenomenological lineage, even at the risk of being faux-naïf, let me further pursue the question as to why a voluminous though neglected philosophical book was lying on the writing desk in one of the rooms of the archdiocesan study house, in a side street behind the Gothic cathedral of Freiburg, a provincial town in South Germany. Heidegger, of course, has a direct answer at hand. He first stumbled upon the doctoral dissertation of Franz Brentano, *On the Manifold Meaning of Being according to Aristotle*, which was submitted by Brentano in *absentia* in Tübingen but dedicated to Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, his “revered teacher” in Berlin.⁵ At that time Brentano was also training to be a priest, and his book was published by Herder, a renowned catholic publishing houses headquartered precisely in Freiburg, so it is understandable that it got in the hands of Heidegger in 1907, who was then a secondary school pupil in Konstanz in South Germany. Ever since then, Heidegger confesses, Brentano’s dissertation “had been the chief help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy. If being is predicated in manifold meanings, then what is its leading fundamental meaning?”⁶ The English translation by Joan Stambaugh conceals the fact that in this passage Heidegger employed a biblical allusion,⁷ which is clearly indicative of the profound significance Heidegger attached to Brentano’s dissertation. Brentano, in turn, led Heidegger to Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, because, as he writes, “I had learned from many

M. Heidegger. 1999. *Briefe 1925 bis 1975 und andere Zeugnisse*. Ludz, U. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 184.). Already Arendt interpreted this anecdote as a sign of Heidegger’s exclusive dedication to the thinking, which set him apart from the academic philosophy.

⁴ Heidegger, M. 2007. *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Gesamtausgabe, 14. Von Herrmann, F.-W. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 93; ET: 2006. “My Way to Phenomenology.” In: *Philosophical and Political Writings*. Stassen, M. (Ed.), J. Stambaugh (Trans.). New York: Continuum, 70–76, 70.

⁵ Brentano, F. 1862. “Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles”. Herder: Freiburg dedication on an unnumbered page after the title page.

⁶ Heidegger, M. 2007. *Zur Sache des Denkens*, op. cit., 93; ET: 2006. “My Way to Phenomenology”, op. cit. 70.

⁷ “*Stecken und Stab*” from Psalm 23 (according to the widespread translation of the so-called Luther Bible).

references [...] that Husserl's thought was determined by Franz Brentano." (Ibid.)

Let me pause here for a moment in order to probe the historical plausibility of the above autobiographical claims. Husserl's doctoral dissertation, *Contributions to the Theory of the Calculus of Variations* from 1882, was dedicated to a strictly mathematical topic and remained unpublished until it was discovered by a Husserl scholar in the early 1930s,⁸ and the printed part of Husserl's habilitation thesis from 1887, entitled *On the Concept of Number*, was never sold in bookshops,⁹ so Heidegger apparently had to content himself with Husserl's first major published work, the *Logical Investigations*. It also does not seem probable that Husserl's habilitation thesis on the psychology of presentations of multitudes and numbers, or the version published in 1891 under the title of *Philosophy of Arithmetics*,¹⁰ would have satisfied Heidegger's quest for the "leading fundamental meaning" of Being.

But the *Logical Investigations* apparently did, at least in a certain sense:

"From Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, I expected a decisive aid in the questions stimulated by Brentano's dissertation. Yet my efforts were in vain because I was not searching in the right way. I realized this only very much later. Still, I remained so fascinated by Husserl's work that I read in it again and again in the years to follow without gaining sufficient insight into what fascinated me. The spell emanating from the work extended to the outer appearance of the sentence structure and the title page."¹¹

It is also here, on title page of the second volume, where Heidegger first encountered the word "phenomenology."

Heidegger is honest enough not to say that he read through the 975 pages of Husserl's book, but only to "read in" it ("*darin las*"). This is probably close to the reality, since even Husserl himself was surprised to hear that somebody, namely Edith Stein, has read through the whole second volume (which itself comprises more than 700 pages).¹² But the other aspects of Heidegger's report

⁸ Even Werner Illema, the pioneer scholar of Husserl's early philosophy, was unable to locate a copy of it in the 1920s (cf. 1932 *Die vor-phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserls und ihre Bedeutung für die phänomenologische*, Universität Leipzig, 9. n. 7, esp. 10).

⁹ So Husserl himself: Husserl, E. 1970. *Philosophie der Arithmetik mit ergänzenden Texten (1890–1901)*. Husserliana, 12. Eley, L. (Ed.). Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 5.

¹⁰ See Ierna, C. 2005. "The Beginnings of Husserl's Philosophy, Part I: From Über den Begriff der Zahl to Philosophie der Arithmetik." *New Yearbook for Phenomenology & Phenomenological Philosophy*, 5 (1), 1–56, esp. 24 on the continuity between Husserl's unabridged original habilitation thesis and his book of 1891.

¹¹ Heidegger, M. 1978, op. cit., 93; ET: 2007, op. cit., 70.

¹² See Stein, E. 2002. *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie und weitere autobiographische Beiträge*. Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, 1. Neyer, M. A., H.-B. Gerl-Falkovitz (Eds.). Freiburg: Herder, 200.

are worth further questioning. I do not intend to doubt the factual validity of his claims, i.e. that he stumbled upon Brentano's work before commencing his university studies or that Husserl's *Logical Investigations* belonged to the books he struggled to digest during the first university years. What I intend to skeptically pinpoint is rather the teleological structure of Heidegger's report according to which he was essentially retracing the development of the Phenomenological Movement. The structure that gradually emerges from Heidegger's register of his lectures closely resembles the lineage of phenomenology itself: from Brentano's very first book via Husserl's first groundbreaking book to presumably Heidegger itself. Such a resemblance is implied by Heidegger's other scattered remarks on his intellectual development as well: Brentano's dissertation was "the first philosophical text through which I worked by way, again and again from 1907 on,"¹³ as he wrote to Father Richardson in 1962. Three years earlier, in an inaugural address later adopted as the *Preface* of his early writings, he repeated the claim of how he encountered Brentano's dissertation in 1907 through Conrad Gröber and had been attempting to penetrate into Husserl's *Logical Investigations* since 1909.¹⁴

Given that, until recently, such laconic autobiographical reports served as the only source of Heidegger intellectual biography, the effect of the above teleological structure should not be underestimated. What makes it even more influential is, of course, its projected ending: Heidegger not only belongs to a teleologically conceived lineage, but his relation to the preceding stage of this lineage assumes the figure of overcoming. Such characterization is, furthermore, consistent with Heidegger's own lecturing activity before his succession to Husserl's chair. He aimed at an "immanent critique of the of the natural trend [*Zug*] of phenomenological research itself" (as he formulated it a lecture course in Marburg in the summer term of 1925),¹⁵ and one year later, after the first round of proofreading for the *Being and Time*, Heidegger already told that "if the treatise is written against anyone, it is against Husserl, who saw it immediately."¹⁶

¹³ Heidegger, M. 2006. *Identität und Differenz*. Gesamtausgabe, 11. von Hermann, F.-W. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 145; ET: Richardson, W. J. 1963. *Heidegger. Through Phenomenology to Thought*. *Phaenomenologica*, 13. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, x.

¹⁴ See Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*. Gesamtausgabe, 1. Von Hermann, F.-W. (Ed.). Frankfurt: Klostermann, 56.

¹⁵ Heidegger, M. 1994. *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*. Gesamtausgabe, 20. Jaeger, P. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 124; idem. 1985. *History of the Concept of Time. Prolegomena*. *Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy*. Kisiel, T. (Trans.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 91.

¹⁶ Heidegger, M., K. Jaspers. 1990. *Briefwechsel 1920–1963*. Biemel, W., H. Saner (Eds.). Frankfurt–Zürich: Klostermann–Piper, 71; ET: Biemel, W., H. Saner (Eds.). 2003. *The Heidegger-Jaspers Correspondence (1920–1963)*. Aylesworth, G. E. (Trans.). New York: Humanity Books, 73.

The latter part of Heidegger's claim was doubted by many, including Stein who believed that, on the contrary, Husserl was the only one in Freiburg not aware of the discrepancy between him and Heidegger.¹⁷ Even Heidegger himself was inclined to add a restrictive clause to his aforementioned report: "but [Husserl] stayed positive [*zum Positiven hielt*] from the very beginning" (ibid.). But this adjustment does not affect the former part of Heidegger's claim: even a delayed recognition on Husserl's part fits well into the teleological picture sketched above (even though it implies a partial overlap of the two stages).¹⁸

What undermine this teleological scheme are newly released biographical documents which testify that Heidegger did not linearly move from a Husserlian stage to a stage of overcoming Husserl, but, already from the very beginning, his relation to Husserl was rather marked by a distance from Husserl. Let me quote just some letters from the recently published edition of Heidegger's correspondence with his wife. Heidegger, already in a letter written in Spring 1917, i.e. at a time when his personal relationship to Husserl was still at a very early stage, claimed that the fact "that I got to see Husserl is just one episode in a process that comes to me largely out of darkness [and] leads on into the darkness."¹⁹ He even compared Husserl to "a logician [...] standing on the insulating stool [*Isolierschemel*]."²⁰ The same tone remains, as Heidegger's personal relationship to Husserl gets warmer and warmer, and even enthusiastic on Husserl's part. In 1919 he wrote:

"Wie Du früher einmal richtig bemerktest, ich bin schon sicher und mit viel weiteren Horizonten u. Problemen über ihn [Husserl] hinaus. [...] Trotzdem hab ich mich zur Zusammenarbeit entschlossen [...] aus *praktischen* Rücksichten[:] mit H[usserl] Auf einem Titelblatt zu stehen dürfte etwas besagen – im engeren Kreis der Fr[ei]b[ur]g[er] Univ. wie überh[au]pt in der

¹⁷ Stein's letter to Roman Ingarden at October 15, 1921 (Stein, E. 2006. *Selbstbildnis in Briefen II (1933–1942)*. In: Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, op. cit., 3. It is worth noting that Stein's letter is dated 1921, i.e. already before Heidegger's commencement of his more independent lecturing activity under the protection of distance in Marburg.

¹⁸ By speaking of Husserl's delayed recognition of the discrepancies between him and Heidegger I side with those analyses which emphasize the (maybe wilful) absence of philosophical communication between the two thinkers during the episodes of their alleged intellectual cooperation (see e.g. Sheehan, T. 1997. "The History of the Redaction of the Encyclopaedia Britannica Article." In: *Edmund Husserl: Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger*. Collected Works, 6. Sheehan, T., R. E. Palmer (Eds.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, 35–68.), against more permissive accounts (e.g. Walter Biemel's classical early exposition: 1950. "Husserl's Encyclopaedia-Britannica Artikel und Heideggers Anmerkungen dazu." *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie*, 12 (2), 246–280, 273 ff.).

¹⁹ Heidegger, M. 2005. "Mein liebes Seelchen!" *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfriede; 1915–1970*. Heidegger, G. (Ed.). München: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 56; ET: 2008. *Letters to His Wife*. Heidegger, G. (Ed.), Glasgow, R. (Trans.). Cambridge: Polity.

²⁰ Ibid., 57.

wiss[enschaftlichen] Literatur. Um die Stetigkeit u. Sicherheit meiner eigenen Entw[i]ckl[un]g ist mir nicht bange."²¹

As if this were not unambiguous enough, two years later Heidegger explicitly wrote that, even though he is "poles apart" from Husserl, he must find a *modus vivendi* with Husserl in order to "survive materially":

"Wir sind doch auf dem Wege zu einer echten, einfachen u. elementareren Ergreifung des Lebens [...]. Das ist es auch—was mich heute so himmelweit von Husserl trennt u. ich muß jetzt die Möglichkeiten finden—lediglich um uns materiell zu erhalten – mit ihm ohne heftigen Widerstreit u. Betonung des selben zusammen zu gehen."²²

Thus it seems that Heidegger's rejection of Husserl, which is manifest in Heidegger's later writings,²³ is not a result of a multi-stage development, but there was rather continuity in this respect between Heidegger's early and later stance on Husserl.

This picture, however, is still not entirely true. It was the irony of scholarly history that Heidegger's proverbial silence on autobiographical matters and, in particular, his controversial political engagement²⁴ in the Nazi Germany led to an extremely intensive biographical research which resulted in Heidegger's biography being one of the most completely reconstructed philosophical biographies of the 20th century. One of the discoveries made during this process in

²¹ Ibid., 96.

²² Ibid., 103.

²³ An instance of it is also to be found in Heidegger's recently published "black notebooks": "Die Phänomenologen (Husserl und Scheler) leisten das eine: sie erwecken das unmittelbare – den Sachen selbst zugewandte Ver-nehmen [...], d.h. etwas von der Haltung der Antike. Aber wurzellos und dem 19. Jahrhundert botmäßig – in dessen Schemata und Problemen." Heidegger, M. 2014. *Überlegungen II–VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931–1938)*. Gesamtausgabe, 94. Trawny, G. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 50.

²⁴ A similar assessment is implied by a less-known contemporaneous letter of Heidegger himself, written to Paul Häberlin in August 1933: "Meine philosophische Arbeit im rein spekulativen Sinne muß jetzt ruhen und sich im ‚Praktischen‘ bewähren. Und das ist nicht ganz leicht." (Häberlin, P., L. Binswanger. 1997. *Briefwechsel 1908–1960. Mit Briefen von Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Frank und Eugen Bleuler*. Luczak, J. (Ed.). Basel: Schwabe, 381.) It is not my aim here to fully assess this episode of Heidegger's biography, but it must be noted that—which, I think, is not yet properly taken into account by every participant of the apparently perpetual debate on Heidegger's political engagement—the baseline of this debate has meanwhile been moved, because Hermann Heidegger, Martin Heidegger younger son and the executor of his literary estate, in 1999 openly conceded at least Heidegger's error of political judgment: „die Aussagen meines Vaters [...], die deutlich zeigen, wie auch ein bedeutender Denker sich politisch irren kann." (Heidegger, M. 2000. *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges 1910–1976*. Gesamtausgabe, 16. Heidegger, H. (Ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 835.)

the mid-1980s by Hugo Ott and Thomas Sheehan²⁵ consisted in the recognition that Heidegger apparently had an early relation to Husserl, which predated Husserl's appointment to Freiburg in 1916 and Heidegger's "youthful phenomenological apprenticeship between the years 1919 and 1926,"²⁶ and thus cannot be framed in the terms of the teleological scheme sketched above.

This different narrative also originates from Heidegger's earliest university years. Heidegger indeed started his studies at the Faculty of Theology in 1909, but he remained there only until 1911. At the beginning of the semester in 1911 Heidegger was already discussing his plans to change the course of his studies. His friend, Ernst Laslowski (1889–1961), however, warned Heidegger against doing so, not only because abandoning theology would involve financial worries for Heidegger, who could not count on the financial support of his family, but also because Heidegger is too apologetic (in the Christian sense of the word) to become a "professional philosopher" (*Fachphilosoph*).²⁷ Heidegger, however, did not obey to this brotherly advice and transferred to the *Faculty of Natural Sciences* in the next semester (WS 1911/12). Besides courses on mathematics and physics, Heidegger also registered for a lecture course and a seminar held by Art(h)ur Schneider (1876–1945), who later became Heidegger's doctoral advisor.

What makes Heidegger's connection to Schneider intriguing is that Schneider himself had studied at Husserl in Halle before the turn of the century.²⁸ This lateral connection between Husserl and Heidegger already exhibits a certain level of contingency, since Schneider had only arrived from Munich to Freiburg in this very year (1911) and left to Strasburg already in 1913.²⁹ In the year 1911, Heidegger, according to his recollection quoted above, must already have been struggling with Husserl's *Logical Investigations* for two years, so it is reasonable to think that he have sought advice from his teacher Schneider, who attended both lectures and seminars of Husserl.

Unfortunately, nothing but a vague anecdote is known from this very early period of Heidegger's interest in Husserl. According to this anecdote, Heidegger intended to move to Göttingen in order to study personally at

²⁵ Sheehan, Y. 1988. "Heidegger's Lehrjahre." In: *The Collegium Phaenomenologicum. The First Ten Years*. Phaenomenologica, 105. Sallis, J. C., G. Moneta, J. Taminioux (Eds.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, 77–137; Ott, H. 1988. *Martin Heidegger. Unterwegs zur seiner Biographie*. Frankfurt: Campus, 81 ff.

²⁶ Buren, J. V. 1990. "The Young Heidegger and Phenomenology." *Man and World*, 23 (3), 239–272, 239.

²⁷ Denker, A., H.-H. Gander, H. Zaborowski (Eds.). 2004. *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*. Heidegger-Jahrbuch, 1. Freiburg: Alber, 29.

²⁸ See Schneider's own account in the doctoral vita affixed to the end of his dissertation: 1900. *Beiträge zur Psychologie Alberts des Grossen*. Münster: Universität Breslau.

²⁹ For biographical data see: Wirbelauer, E. (Ed.). 2006. *Die Freiburger Philosophische Fakultät 1920–1960. Mitglieder, Strukturen, Vernetzungen*. Freiburger Beiträge zur Wissenschafts- und Universitätsgeschichte (N. F.), 1. Freiburg: Alber, 995–996.

Husserl. This anecdote was first circulated by Herbert Spiegelberg (without specifying any source),³⁰ and it is also to be found in the *curriculum vitae* Heidegger sent to Georg Misch when he was applying for a position in Göttingen in 1922.³¹

Even though it is advisable to exercise a certain caution here, since the cv stem from a time when Heidegger had good reasons to demonstrate his commitment to Husserl, let us contemplate for a moment what Heidegger's move to Göttingen would have meant for the course of the history of the phenomenology. The years immediately before the First World War were the heyday of the Phenomenological Movement. Stein, Roman Ingarden, Max Scheler, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Theodor Conrad, Jean Hering, Alexander Koyré, Hedwig Mar-tius, Winthrop Bell, Hans Lipps, to mention only the few most known of them, were participating at Husserl's classes or in the discussions of the Göttingen Philosophical Society, and Adolf Reinach was already lecturing independently. It is exciting to imagine how the young Heidegger would have interacted with these philosophers – and at the same time, a far-fetched idea, since we now very little about Heidegger's own position during these years. It seems thus that this counterfactual question is not well posed, i.e. it merely constitutes a piece of wishful thinking.

Heidegger's friend, Ernst Laslowski gave another advice to Heidegger that Heidegger did obey: namely to secure himself the support of benefactors (*Fürsprecher*).³² In the next year, when the *Görres-Gesellschaft*, an influential Catholic academic society, held its general assembly in Freiburg, Heidegger apparently succeeded in establishing a connection to the philosophical section of the society.³³ It is the journal of this section where Heidegger published his first scholarly paper in philosophy.³⁴ This study, entitled "The Problem of Reality in Modern Philosophy," takes the adjective "modern" very seriously and barely mentions Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (only in a cursory footnote),³⁵ since Husserl's book was, after all, already more than a decade old at that time.

³⁰ 1960. *The Phenomenological Movement. A Historical Introduction*. Phaenomenologica, 5–6. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, I: 276.

³¹ See Heidegger, M. 2000, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse*, op. cit., 41.

³² Denker, A., H.-H. Gander, H. Zaborowski (Eds.). 2004, op. cit., 29.

³³ Ott, H. 2005. "Martin Heidegger und seine Beziehung zur Görres-Gesellschaft." *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 125, 167–173, 171; this fact was apparently unknown to Ott at the time of writing his biography of Heidegger, cf. *ibid.*, 76.

³⁴ Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 1–15. This is far from being Heidegger's first published writing, or even his first purely philosophical publication (see Heidegger, M. 2000. *Reden und andere Zeugnisse*, op. cit., 11–14; cf. Denker, A., H.-H. Gander, H., Zaborowski (Eds.). 2004. op. cit., 459 ff., but it constitutes the first piece of writing published by Heidegger in a professional scholarly journal.

³⁵ See Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 8 n. 12.

But Husserl's name comes to the fore in a series of articles Heidegger published under the title "Recent Research in Logic" (*Neure Forschungen über Logik*).³⁶ According to a letter written by Heidegger in early 1912,³⁷ the article series was intended by him as the groundwork for an ambitious project that is supposed to explicitly address the developments on contemporary mathematical logic and physics, which Heidegger curiously planned to combine with the "general theory of objects"—the latter probably referring to Alexius Meinong's *Gegenstandstheorie*. Even though this plan might only reflect the initial enthusiasm of his studies in the natural sciences, in the second part of his tripartite series he indeed gave ample room to the volume on *Gegenstandstheorie* published by the Meinong³⁸ on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the pioneering Austrian psychological laboratory in Graz (besides mentioning Bertrand Russell at the end of the third part). But Husserl's name already appears at the beginning of the first installment,³⁹ the manuscript of which was delivered by Heidegger already in August of the same year.⁴⁰

Heidegger begins his discussion by summarizing the contemporary psychologism debate on the question as to whether the philosophy of Kant should be conceived as a "transcendental logic" or as a "psychology."⁴¹ In the German philosophy after the turn of the century, Husserl was regarded as the protagonists of the psychologism debate, although for the Marburg Neo-Kantians Husserl's attack on psychologism was, as Natorp formulated in a private letter on the occasion of the publication of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, already "an already obsolete thing [...] which still necessary for the actual situation in Germany."⁴² Heidegger quotes a similar formulation from a lecture by Natorp published just few months before Heidegger's own article.⁴³ Heidegger, however, did not adopt the Neo-Kantian stance: "we ourselves are inclined to attribute a far-reaching significance to Husserl's penetratingly profound and very propitiously formulated [*tiefbohrenden und äußerst glücklich formulierten*] *Investigations*, for they have [...] brought the above-mentioned clarification of princi-

³⁶ Ibid., 17–43. It is also worth looking at the originals (Heidegger, M. 1912. "Neuere Forschungen über Logik." *Literarische Rundschau für das katholische Deutschland*, 38 (10–12), 465–472, 517–524, 565–570), since the edition in Heidegger's writings failed to reproduce Heidegger's changes in font sizes, which were presumably intended to differentiate between main and subordinated portions of the text.

³⁷ Denker, A., H.-H. Gander, H. Zaborowski (Eds.). 2004, op. cit., 58.

³⁸ A. Meinong (Ed.). 1904. *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*. Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth.

³⁹ Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 19.

⁴⁰ Cf. Denker, A., H.-H. Gander, H. Zaborowski (Eds.). 2004, op. cit., 59.

⁴¹ Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 19.

⁴² Holzhey, H. (Ed.). 1986. *Der Marburger Neukantianismus in Quellen: Zeugnisse kritischer Lektüre, Briefe der Marburger, Dokumente zur Philosophiepolitik der Schule*. Basel: Schwabe, 261.

⁴³ Natorp, P. 1912. "Kant und die Marburger Schule." *Kant-Studien*, 17 (2), 193–221, cf. 198.

ples into play."⁴⁴ This appreciative remark sounds very promising, and the fact that Heidegger did not share the Neo-Kantian rejection of Husserl's significance makes it compelling to interpret his article series as a document of his proximity to Husserl. Since these articles were not unknown—after all, they appeared in print in 1912, although they were omitted from the first edition of Heidegger's early writings published during his lifetime in 1972⁴⁵—the view that his earliest writings attest his proximity to Husserl gained a certain currency. In the following I am going to briefly reckon those aspects of Heidegger's text that support such an interpretation and those which speak against it.

Heidegger indeed claims that the argument against psychologism "has been thoroughly substantiated and widely applied by Husserl."⁴⁶ Moreover, Heidegger takes sides with Husserl against "extreme Neo-Kantians" (ibid.). However, Heidegger also offers a positive solution: he draws a distinction between the "psychic act," which is a "real occurrence of thought in the course of time," and the "logical content," which is an "ideal, extratemporal, identical sense [*Sinn*]; "in short, the distinction between what 'is' and what 'holds' with binding validity" ["was ist" versus 'was gilt'] (ibid.). Commentators have pointed out that this binary structure "[has] the character of a Platonic two-world theory, which Heidegger would sharply criticize throughout the twenties."⁴⁷ Heidegger's "early adherence to the anti-psychologistic perspective" thus marks "the zero point" of his philosophical development (ibid.). Furthermore, it has been also pointed out that the first step of this development is already manifested in the article series itself, insofar as Heidegger wrote that "the sharp separation of logic from psychology perhaps cannot be maintained."⁴⁸ Psychologism in the sense of founding the validity of logical principles on psychology—the so-called foundational psychologism—must indeed be rejected, Heidegger acknowledged, but it should not lead us to overlook the fact "that the logical is embedded in the psychological."⁴⁹ According to the commentators, "it is at this point that Heidegger announces his first tentative doubt about the sharply dualistic perspective proper to anti-psychologism. This critical stance will be developed in the twenties and will underlie both his criticism of the transcendental outlook and his own autonomous perspective growing out of such criticism."⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Heidegger, M. 1978 *Frühe Schriften*, 19; ET: 2007. *Becoming Heidegger. On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings, 1910–1927*. Kisiel, T. J., T. Sheehan (Eds.). Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 33.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 22; ET: 2007. *Becoming Heidegger*, op. cit., 34.

⁴⁷ Fehér, M. 1994. "Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Lebensphilosophie: Heidegger's Confrontation with Husserl, Dilthey, and Jaspers." In: *Reading Heidegger from the Start. Essays in His Earliest Thought*. Kisiel, T., J. van Buren (Eds.). Albany: SUNY, 73–89, 77.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 29; 2007. *Becoming Heidegger*, op. cit., 39.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 30; ET: 2007. *Becoming Heidegger*, op. cit., 39.

⁵⁰ Fehér, M. 1994, op. cit., 77.

It might be perfectly true that Heidegger's rejection of the "Platonic two-world theory" constitutes his first move from the "zero point". The only problem is, however, that this step was already taken by Husserl, who had written to Paul Natorp in 1897: the psychologists "distort the meaning of the logical principles. [...] The pure logic advances a correct thesis, but fails in its proof,"⁵¹ precisely because it fails to explain how processes of thought are regulated by psychology without being founded upon it. In other words, logic also has to account for the fact that, as Husserl has formulated in a lecture course in the previous semester, "the logical principles [...] are not unrelated to the phenomena or the psychological."⁵² Thus Husserl's aim is not merely to refute psychologism—which was already pronounced dead by the Neo-Kantians—but also to account for precisely the embeddedness of the psychological into the logical (without falling back into psychologism). The fact that Heidegger overlooked this apparent similarity of aims raises serious concerns about the depth of his three year-long reading of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

These concerns also have a philological side. If one looks at the textual basis of Heidegger's presentation of Husserl in the article series, it turns out that Heidegger's references are confined to the first volume of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, which contained Husserl's refutation of psychologism, but he never refers to the second, more extensive volume, which presented Husserl's phenomenology understood as descriptive psychology. Even when Heidegger shortly cites Husserl's critique of evidence as an "accessory feeling", he refers to a section of the first volume, rather than to the more appropriate *Fifth or Sixth Investigation*. Heidegger mentions the term phenomenology,⁵³ but he conceives it as a theory of meanings (*Bedeutungslehre*), rather than as a theory the pure consciousness and its correlates, and he refers the term to Husserl's 1911 manifesto *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*,⁵⁴ rather than to its proper place, the second volume of the *Logical Investigation*.

In short, I fail to perceive any serious proximity of Heidegger to Husserl in the article series of 1912. It must be also taken into account that Heidegger's knowledge of Husserl in this article series is mediated by two obscure sources: First, by a book of the eclectic Catholic philosopher Joseph Geyser (1869–1948).⁵⁵ Geyser was at that time already a professor in Münster and he was go-

⁵¹ Husserl, E. 1994. *Briefwechsel*. Husserliana Dokumente, 3. Schuhmann, K., E. Schuhmann (Eds.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, V, 52.

⁵² Husserl, E. 2001. *Logik. Vorlesung 1896*. Husserliana Materialien, 1. Schuhmann, E. (Ed.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, 19.

⁵³ Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 30.

⁵⁴ Husserl, E. 1910. "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft." *Logos*, 1 (3), 1910/1911, 289–341 (the journal issue carrying Husserl's essay was published in 1911); critical edition: idem. 1987. *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921)*. Husserliana, 25. Nenon, T., H. R. Sepp (Eds.). Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff (Kluwer), 3–62.

⁵⁵ Geyser, J. 1909. *Grundlagen der Logik und Erkenntnislehre*. Münster: Schöningh, 23, 51; the latter passage was quoted by Heidegger in *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 34.

ing to be appointed in Freiburg in 1917 (a position to which Heidegger was also aspiring) before ascending to the highly renowned chair of the Munich University in 1924.⁵⁶ Even though Geyser was firmly committed to the official teaching of the Catholic Church, he tried to absorb as many modern philosophical and psychological developments as possible, including elements from Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl himself had read this book as well, but he was disappointed to find Geyser's book be just "like the other systematical-philosophical writings by German Catholics: [...] enormous scholarship, without any trace of serious scientific research."⁵⁷

The other source of Heidegger's knowledge about Husserl was apparently an article written by the barely known Hans Schmidkunz (1863–1934),⁵⁸ who had been a disciple of Brentano and personal friend of Husserl around the mid-1880s. By the first decade of the 20th century, however, his relation to Brentano and Husserl has considerably deteriorated, so it comes as no surprise that Schmidkunz's article makes only a very superficial use of Husserl's works. Interestingly, precisely this textual basis is what recurs in Heidegger's article.⁵⁹

All these traces speak against the hypothesis of Heidegger's non-trivial engagement with Husserl's phenomenology in 1912 that would warrant placing him among the early phenomenologists of Göttingen and Munich. In the terms of the counterfactual possibility highlighted above, had Heidegger moved to Göttingen to study at Husserl in the early 1910s, he would have had serious difficulties accommodating Husserl's phenomenology.

It is still possible, however, to establish a more proper characterization of this piece of Heidegger's *juvenalia*. In this respect it is very illuminating to see how Heidegger described his article vis-à-vis Heinrich Rickert one year later. At that time, Heidegger was still far from pledging loyalty to a non-denominational professor of philosophy professor and he remarked at the beginning of his letter

⁵⁶ For a reliable biographical information see: Wirbelauer, E. 2006. (Ed.), *Die Freiburger Philosophische Fakultät 1920–1960. Mitglieder, Strukturen, Vernetzungen*, 924.

⁵⁷ Husserl, E. 1994. *Briefwechsel*, V, op. cit., 175.

⁵⁸ Schmidkunz, H. 1912. "Grundzüge einer Lehre von der logischen Evidenz." *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 146 (1), 1–64; quoted by Heidegger: 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 39. The cover date of the issue carrying Schmidkunz's article was May 21, 1912, so Schmidkunz's piece belonged to the cutting edge of research at the time when Heidegger was composing his work (cf. above).

⁵⁹ It is remarkable that Schmidkunz presents Husserl's theory of evidence based on the *Prolegomena* (see Schmidkunz, H. 1912, op. cit., 2.), equates Husserl and Bolzano (p. 6) and also refers to Geyser (p. 10). It comes as no surprise that exactly the sections around these bibliographical references—which contain a vague and eclectic summary of "the classification of the psychical," a usual topic in the School of Brentano—are those which receive Heidegger's extraordinary praise: Heidegger, M. 1978. *Frühe Schriften*, op. cit., 39, n. 9; missing from ET: cf. idem. 2007. *Becoming Heidegger*, op. cit., 43.

that “his basic philosophical convictions are different;”⁶⁰ but he went great lengths to clarify the intentions of his article series.

“Ich versuchte letztes Jahr in der ‘Literarischen Rundschau für das katholische Deutschland’ [...] eine Übersicht über neuere Forschungen in der Logik zu geben. Den ‘Philosophen’ war das meiste eine *terra incognita*. [...] Ich weiß zu gut, daß man auf der anderen Seite sehr wohl die von Katholiken geleistete wissenschaftliche Arbeit beachtet—aber erst dann, wenn sie sich sehen lassen kann.”⁶¹

Heidegger’s claim of the ignorance among traditional philosophers towards the modern developments in mathematics and natural sciences is probably an overstatement best understood as a manifestation of Heidegger’s own ambitious aims, which he declared in a letter in early 1912, studied above. What makes this passage interesting is the second part where Heidegger portrays himself as a catholic philosopher seeking contact to the cutting edge of contemporaneous philosophy and recognition by non-denominational thinkers. The name that immediately comes to one’s mind here is Geysler, and it is compelling to say that, given Heidegger’s undeniable philosophical talent, he would have been made into a more successful incarnation of the same type, had he executed his plan.

The point is that this scenario remained counterfactual, because Heidegger was forced to abandon his plans and reorient himself towards medieval philosophy in order to comply with the wishes of his ecclesiastic benefactors. This constraint is particularly clearly chronicled in a diary that recorded a conversation that took place between Heidegger’s friend and Heidegger’s doctoral advisor already before Heidegger’s aforementioned letter to Rickert:

“[I]ch [brachte] die Rede auch auf Heidegger. [...] [Arthur] Schneider: Er soll sich habilitieren. Bis zur Habilitation bekommt er, dafür habe ich beim Weihbischof vorgesprochen, das 1000-Mark-Stipendium der Schaezler-Stiftung. Dann übernimmt ihn das Privatdozenten-Budget der Görres-Gesellschaft. [...] Aber, meinte Schneider, so gut es ist, daß er Systematiker ist, er muß jetzt sich noch einarbeiten in die Philosophen des Mittelalters.”⁶²

Heidegger’s behavior during the subsequent months has been controversially discussed, mainly because he delayed his reorientation as long as possible,

⁶⁰ Heidegger, M., H. Rickert. 2002. *Briefe 1912 bis 1933 und andere Dokumente*, op. cit.; Denker, A., H. H. Gander, H. Zaborowski. (Eds.). 2004, op. cit. 11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶² First quoted in: Ott. H. 1986. “Der Habilitand Martin Heidegger und das von Schaezler’sche Stipendium. Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftsförderung der katholischen Kirche.” *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv*, 106, 141–160, 145.

thereby diverting the ecclesiastic funds he received for research on scholastic philosophy from their intended use. This proved to be only the first of the many episodes of Heidegger’s controversial relation to the Catholic Church (including his mixed-denomination marriage,⁶³ and his subsequent secession from the Catholic Church). What I intend to highlight here is rather a less known episode, namely that Heidegger tried to maintain his relation to Husserl as late as 1913–1914. More specifically, he was working on a treatise on Husserl,⁶⁴ and he even corresponded with Husserl himself. These letters are, unfortunately, not preserved, but Heidegger mentioned this fact in a letter written to Rickert in July 1914: “Herr Professor Husserl hat mir geschrieben, der II. Teil des II. Bandes der »Logischen Untersuchungen« verzögere sich bis Ostern, weil er sich entschlossen habe, einen ganzen III. Band zu schreiben.” If we combine Heidegger’s remark with the recent results of the scholarship on Husserl’s reworking of the *Logical Investigations*,⁶⁵ it turns out that Heidegger must have written to Husserl between December 1913 and middle-April 1914: In the *Preface* to the second edition of the *Logical Investigations*, dated October 1913, Husserl claimed that the third volume was already “in print [*im Druck*].”⁶⁶ This remark of Husserl is what must have prompted Heidegger to enquiry about the forthcoming third volume. Husserl, however, had grossly overestimated the level of completion of his manuscript (maybe by a conscious decision in order to “put himself under pressure”⁶⁷). At the latest from December 1913,⁶⁸ Husserl decided to compose an entirely new text, rather than amend the old one by means of piecemeal changes. It is not only that Husserl’s work ended inconclusively in the summer of 1914, but, as the recent edition of his drafts demon-

⁶³ This episode is finally elucidated by a recently published primary source: Heidegger, M. 2013. *Briefwechsel mit seinen Eltern (1907–1927) und Briefe an seine Schwester (1921–1967)*. Martin Heidegger Briefausgabe, I/1. Heidegger, J., A. Denker (Eds.). Freiburg: Karl Alber.

⁶⁴ Even as late as July 1914, Heidegger seems to have been working on Husserl: “Meine Ferien muß ich opfern, da mir Husserls Phänomenologie ordentlich viel zu schaffen macht in den letzten Partien und ich nicht den Vorwurf des Mißverständnisses mir zuziehen möchte wie neuerdings Messer und Cohn. Meinen Aufsatz über die Frage hoffe ich Ende des Monats wegschicken zu können.” Denker, A. H. H. Gander, H. Zaborowski (Eds.), *Heidegger und die Anfänge seines Denkens*, 61; first published: Ott, H. 1988. *Martin Heidegger*, op. cit., 83.) Unfortunately, a recently published text on a similar topic (Heidegger, M., H. Rickert. 2002. *Briefe 1912 bis 1933*, op. cit., 80–90.) does not reflect this plan of Heidegger.

⁶⁵ See e.g. Melle, U. 2002. “Husserl’s Revision of the Sixth Logical Investigation”. In: *One Hundred Years of Phenomenology. Husserl’s Logical Investigations Revisited*. *Phaenomenologica*, 164. Zahavi, D., F. Stjernfelt (Eds.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, 111–123; Husserl, E. 2002. *Logische Untersuchungen. Ergänzungsband. Erster Teil*. *Husserliana*, 20/1. Melle, U. (Ed.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, xiii–liii.

⁶⁶ Husserl, E. 1975. *Logische Untersuchungen. Erster Band*. *Husserliana*, 18. E. Holenstein (Ed.). Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁶⁸ Cf. Husserl, E. 1994. *Briefwechsel*, III, op. cit., 531.

strates,⁶⁹ he must have been aware of being in a blind alley, so the promise made in his lost letter to Heidegger constitutes a palliating overstatement vis-à-vis an unknown young doctor. Thus this episode constitutes a reverse counterfactual situation, in which it was Husserl who jeopardized an opportunity for an interaction between his phenomenology and Heidegger at a time when Heidegger was apparently actively looking for and he was presumably also susceptible to such encounters. When the two thinkers actually met in person two years later, Husserl was initially hostile towards Heidegger precisely because Heidegger had meanwhile successfully reoriented himself towards the Mediaeval Philosophy following the wishes of his ecclesiastic benefactors and thus looked like a denominational philosopher.⁷⁰ This irony of this lost earlier chance might help explaining the intensity of Heidegger's subsequent siege to capture Husserl's benevolence—even at the price of not being entirely honest.

CONCLUSIONS

A closer look, thus, reveals that the notion of history employed in phenomenology more closely resembles the Ancient doxographical tradition (as practised e.g. by Diogenes Laertius) than the modern methods of writing the history of philosophy. The history of phenomenology, as it is usually told, is marked by phenomenologists overcoming their predecessors, in virtue of concepts deployed by them to characterize the necessary insufficiencies of previous stages (e.g. Heidegger's way of interpreting Kant or his notion of *das Ungedachtes*, Eugen Fink's *operative Begriffe*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *l'ombre* etc.). What is overlooked here is, I think, the essential difference between reconfiguring elements of a philosophical tradition for the purposes of an own philosophical agenda—a legitimate part of any philosophical endeavour in continental philosophy—and directly ascribing these constructions to the past phenomenologists themselves.

The historical method is definitely not the only viable way of doing contemporary phenomenology, especially when it comes to actual collaboration with the natural sciences. However, if phenomenology is to unlock its rich heritage, it must resist the temptation of historical naivety, and it shall embrace the modern historiography of philosophy as it is practised in other sub-disciplines of

⁶⁹ Husserl, E. 2005. *Logische Untersuchungen. Ergänzungsband. Zweiter Teil*. Husserliana, 20/2. Melle, U. (Ed.). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

⁷⁰ That these considerations were the decisive factors for Husserl not to support Heidegger's application for the position left vacant by Schneider is clearly shown by a letter of Husserl to Paul Natorp, his long-term correspondence partner: "[Heidegger] [steht] szs. unter Obhut des Collegen Fincke [recte: Finke], unseres 'katholischen Historikers' [...]. [Seine Habilitationsschrift] ist sicherlich ein vielversprechender Anfang für einen Historiker mittelalterlicher Philosophie." (Husserl, E. 1994. *Briefwechsel*, V, op. cit., 131; a different view of the same faculty meeting: Denker, A., H.-H. Gander, H. Zaborowski (Eds.). 2004, op. cit., 71.

modern European philosophy. What it implies is not only the use of the toolbox of modern historical methods, but also the requirement to account for the constitutive role of historical contingency. Regarding the latter aspect it is worth highlighting the counterfactual question,⁷¹ delineated above, on how Heidegger's position in the Phenomenological Movement would have looked like, had he not performed the re-orientation towards Catholic mediaeval philosophy he was forced to do before Husserl's arrival. I have identified two such counterfactual situations: (1) Heidegger's intention to move to Göttingen to study at Husserl; (2) Heidegger's intention to seriously engage with phenomenology from the point of view of a denominational thinker. While former episode is nothing more than an occasion for daydreaming, the latter one could be regarded as a relevant counterfactual hypothesis, namely of Heidegger becoming a "better Geyser." This scenario not only satisfies the criteria recently proposed to identify fertile counterfactual approaches,⁷² but it could also help envisage the situation not realized by the subsequent course of history. One might wonder, on the one hand, how a Catholic modernism of an exceptionally gifted thinker might have looked like. On the other hand, Heidegger's approach to phenomenology in 1912 could, in contrast to his subsequent writings, be conceived as a possible window on an elusive brief period of phenomenology before it became a Movement through the so-called Munich invasion of Göttingen.

It is precisely the possibility of such questions what shows that the contribution of the historical approach to phenomenology is not merely negative (i.e. the destruction of common myths), but it could also help to recover the paths of thinking subsequently not taken or obscured.

⁷¹ Counterfactual questions were long considered inadmissible in serious historiography (a recent vocal critic: Evans, R. J. 2014. *Altered Pasts. Counterfactuals in History*. London: Little, Brown.), but in the recent years they are gaining acceptance as a method of a non-deterministic historical understanding that tries to recapture the past alternatives available to the historical actors, "a future of bygone times" (Ferguson, N. 2011. "Virtual History: Towards a 'chaotic' theory of the past." In: *Virtual History. Alternatives and Counterfactuals*. Ferguson, N. (Ed.). London: Penguin, 1–90, 85; for an earlier attempt see: Demandt, A., 2011. *Ungeschehene Geschichte. Ein Traktat über die Frage: Was wäre geschehen, wenn ...?*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.).

⁷² "We should consider as plausible or probable only those alternatives which we can show on the basis of contemporary evidence that contemporaries actually considered." (Ferguson, "Virtual History," 86.) This was precisely the case regarding Heidegger, as a contemporaneous letter demonstrates: "Im Sommer 1913 promovierte hier bei Schneider ein Junger Mathematiker und Philosoph Martin Heidegger, ein sehr tüchtiger Mensch Er arbeitet zur Zeit an einer Habilitationsschrift über die Logik des Zahlbegriffs Finke [...] hat ihn nun aufgefordert, eine philosophiehistorische Arbeit ausgesprochen zum Zwecke der Habilitation zu machen [...]. Unklar ist zur Zeit 1. Ob Heidegger vor Sommer 1915 überhaupt sich habilitieren kann, 2. ob er mit der historischen oder der logischen Arbeit sich habilitiert, die letztere gedeiht vorzüglich, an die erstere will er nicht recht heran [...]" (quoted by: Ott in "Der Habilitand Heidegger," 147.).