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Max Scheler and Hedwig Conrad-Martius on the Experience of Reality

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The two early phenomenologists Max Scheler and Conrad-Martius hold the view that an originary experience of reality cannot be described in terms of intentionality, i.e., as the experience of intentional objects. Instead, a more primitive experience of reality is that of resistance or pressure. I discuss this phenomenological suggestion in problematizing how both authors have understood resistance to mark our non-conscious experience of reality and its relationship to consciousness most fundamentally. A decisive difference between the two accounts is identified as the role that phenomenality plays in conceiving of the experience of reality. While Scheler views resistance as preceding the sensual encounter with the world, for Conrad-Martius the phenomenon of reality is primarily constituted as the direct contact with a sensible object. One thus finds a non-intentional phenomenological approach to the experience of reality in early phenomenology that has not, as of yet, been discussed as a common concern.