



## *Fulfillment and Capability (Können) in Hedwig Conrad-Martius (1888–1966)*

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Hedwig Conrad-Martius establishes that the aspect of the self of reality embodies an element of fulfillment that is inherent in the real being as such. In her view, the “elevation” (*Erhebung*) of the real from the formal abstraction towards real existence, in which an essence is positively “operated”, might already be regarded as fulfillment of the belonging essence. The aspect of fulfillment illuminates the capability for “movement” and “activity” (*Gewirktsein*) of the real being, thanks to which “the empty idea of reality achieved its perceptible fullness”. (1924: 174). Conrad-Martius establishes that whatever “by itself cannot” is incapable of anything else, as against the real, which is the only thing that “essentially can” (*Die einzig Könnende*). Thus, reality is first fulfilled where the operation of being proclaims the power-stream of the being discussed. Indeed, this feature of capability that is inherent in the real being is based already in its being “a factual bearer” of the essence that is operated in it, and it exists as much as the real being itself exists.

Conrad-Martius was aware of the scholastic flavor that encompasses her thinking and clarified that the difference between her thinking and the scholastic approach is based on the detachment from the aspect of actual fulfillment. She writes: “we are dealing here with contents or essences that possibly are not only ideal or exist as poetic content or mathematical entities *but also* are real, and we envisage them as such” (1924, 161-162). Later on, she clarifies that her investigation of reality does not invade the realm of the physicist or proclaim ancient and medieval speculation but focuses on the question “wherein exists the essence [of reality]—not the power [*Kraft*] of (something like physical) but—*out of ‘power’ as such!* This little twist of the question already says very much” (1965, 340). She clarifies that here “power” and “dynamic relations” are not physical definitions that as such must a positive material substrate to which the dynamic power-relation is addressed, rather it concerns beings that should be able to exist also outside the physical dimensions of the real thing.

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### Keywords:

essence, being, reality, matter, material substrate