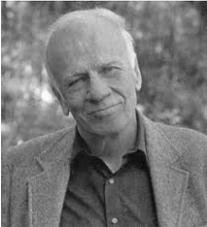# Three Philosophers and Their Wives

by Con Chapman

The chief difficulty which Husserl (not to mention Hegel and Heidegger) encounters is the allowing for the existence of other selves.

Walker Percy, The Message in the Bottle

Walker Percy

Three German thinkers whose last names start with h's
   were in many respects most remarkable sages.
Still, as mortals, they lived in houses
   and for domestic tranquility, got married to spouses.
   Wives, without exception, have birthdays,
   which if forgotten, are much-less-than-mirth days.
Omit a gift from your list of things to do
   and you're likely to be thwarted when pitching woo.
Birthdays are available in any given year,
   but screw just one up and the price is quite dear.

Heidegger

   Anyway, to get back to the *philosophes*
  who are the subject of these *strophes;*
These fellows-all of whom came from mothers-
  nonetheless found it hard to conceive of others.
This is a trait that is less than topping
  when you must remember you ought to go shopping.

When Heidegger needed a gift for Elfriede
  he frequently found himself all-at-sea'd.
"Does she even exist?" he would thoughtfully ask,
  'cause if not, I'm not up for a mall-prowling task."

Hegel
  Hegel, who excelled at things dialectic,
  if confronted by sales clerks would grow apoplectic.
"Try this," one would say, "made from natural fiber."
  "If she ever wore that it would be 'cause I bribed her.
Thesis, antithesis is my stock-in-trade.
  She wears off-the-rack frocks from synthetic threads made."
When Marie tore the gift wrap and started to pout,
  He wished her existence a bit more in doubt.

Husserl: Gesundheit

   As for Husserl, well, the less said the better.
  He'd gift, then he'd re-gift a cable-knit sweater
'til his wife, Malvine, in the throes of insanity
  would demand he explain his persistent inanity.
   "You see, dear," he'd say, "I'm not trying to be funny,
  but if you don't exist we can save lots of money.
I'll give a nice present each year without fail
  And we won't have to wait until things go on sale!"