NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

A Mind of Her Own

Hélène Metzger to Émile Meyerson, 1933

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ABSTRACT

In May 1933 the historian of chemistry Hélène Metzger addressed a letter to the renowned historian and philosopher of science Émile Meyerson, a *cri de coeur* against Meyerson's patronizing attitude toward her. This recently discovered letter is published and translated here because it is an exceptional human document reflecting the gender power structure of our discipline in interwar France. At the age of forty-three, and with five books to her credit, Metzger was still a junior scholar in the exclusively male community of French historians and philosophers of science. We sketch the institutional setting of higher learning in France at the time, noting the limited openings it offered to would-be *femmes savantes,* and situate Metzger in this context. We also describe the philosophical differences between Metzger and Meyerson. Though Metzger never managed to obtain a post of her own, in her letter to Meyerson she forcefully lays claim, at least, to a mind of her own.

HÉLÈNE METZGER, née Bruhl, was one of the first female historians of science to have left a lasting mark on the discipline. We here publish a recently discovered letter that she addressed to the well-known philosopher Émile Meyerson in May 1933, a poignant *cri de coeur* against Meyerson's patronizing and domineering attitude toward her. Metzger writes that she refuses to be "educated," "modified," or "deformed," adding that she considers as a "'potential' enemy whatever individual (a parent, a teacher, a physician, etc.) who is invested with a little bit of authority and who wants to use his prestige in order to

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One of us (G.F.) learned that Meyerson's *Nachlass* is kept at the Central Zionist Archives (CZA) in Jerusalem during a conversation with Dominique Bourel of the Centre de Recherches Français de Jérusalem (CRFJ) of the CNRS; subsequently, Eva Telkes, also of the CRFJ, confirmed that letters from Metzger to Meyerson were among those papers. Simone Schliachter of the CZA kindly replied to various queries related to these papers, and Esti Micenmacher obtained photocopies of the letters for us. We are sincerely indebted to all of them.

Isis, 2003, 94:477–491

0021-1753/03/9403-0003$10.00

Figure 1. *Hélène Metzger, circa 1940s (photograph courtesy of Gad Freudenthal).*

impose upon me his ideas or way of seeing things." She further writes: "Do not anymore take me for a child, for a student," insisting: "When I read you, I do not feel humble, or like a little girl in the presence of your greatness." For: "In the Republic of the minds, we are all equal."[1] This is plainly a revolt—indeed, a long-contained revolt. The letter is offered to the readers of *Isis* not as a contribution to the history of our discipline in prewar France but as a unique document testifying to the arduous battle women scholars had to win before they could hope to have their work considered and appreciated on its merits. It is a tribute not to Hélène Metzger's scholarly achievement but to her impressive courage as a human being and as a woman. (See Figure 1.)

Hélène Metzger was born on 26 August 1889 in Chatou, near Paris, to an upper middle-class Jewish family.[2] Her father did not allow his two daughters to pursue their studies up

[1] Hélène Metzger's letter to Émile Meyerson, dated 6 May 1933, is found among a collection of some twenty-five letters and postcards Metzger addressed to Meyerson between 1923 and 1933. These are preserved among Meyerson's personal papers at the Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, file number A 408/71. The fact that Meyerson's papers are at the CZA may surprise historians of science; it is a consequence of Meyerson's having held a central position in the Jewish Colonization Association. The Jewish Colonization Association was founded in 1891 as a philanthropic organization that assisted Jews who were persecuted or in depressed economic circumstances to emigrate and settle somewhere (notably in Argentina) where they could find productive employment. See *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972), Vol. 10, pp. 44–49.

[2] Our main source of information on Metzger's life, offering both factual details and insights into how she viewed her situation within the French community of historians of science, is the collection of letters she wrote to George Sarton between 1921 and 1944, preserved among Sarton's papers at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, call number bMS Am 1803 (1032). These letters have been published almost in their entirety as Hélène Metzger, "Extraits de lettres, 1921–1944," in *Études sur/Studies on Hélène Metzger,* ed. Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 247–269 (hereafter cited as **Metzger, "Lettres"**). For a biography see Freudenthal, "Hélène Metzger: Éléments de biographie," *ibid.,* pp. 197–208 (the volume also

to the *baccalauréat* but had them stop at the *brévet supérieur,* which permitted university study for three years only. In 1912 Metzger obtained a *diplôme d'études supérieures* in crystallography, a diploma that ruled out her pursuing studies for a *doctorat d'État,* the qualification necessary to apply for an appointment as a university professor. In 1914, after only a few months of marriage, Metzger was widowed, and she henceforth devoted herself entirely to research in the history of science. In 1918 she submitted a thesis on the "Emergence of the Science of Crystals" and was awarded the unprestigious degree of *doctorat d'université.* During the 1920s and 1930s Metzger, who supported herself on the money from her dowry, pursued her research and published six monographs, notably on the history of chemistry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and a considerable number of papers on problems of method in the historiography of science.[3] After the occupation of France by Nazi Germany in 1940 she at first stayed in Paris, but in late 1941 she went to Lyon (in the so-called free zone). She refused to go into hiding and was arrested there by the Gestapo on 8 February 1944, just a few months before the liberation of France. She was deported from Drancy (near Paris) to Auschwitz on 7 March 1944 and either perished on the way there or was put to death on her arrival.

Émile Meyerson, to whom Metzger's letter is addressed, was her senior by thirty years, an established and well-respected philosopher. Born in Lublin, Poland, in 1859, Meyerson studied chemistry in Germany before moving to Paris at the age of twenty-three. There he worked in the laboratory of the famous chemist Paul Schutzenberger (1829–1897) and then as a chemist in a factory. From 1897 to the end of his life he held a central position in the Jewish Colonization Association, devoting himself in parallel to his philosophical work. Meyerson's voluminous books, based on a remarkable knowledge of sources in many languages and on a mastery of scientific theories, including recent ones, won him the respect and admiration of philosophers and scientists in France and abroad. Although he never married, Meyerson regularly hosted salons attended by the most distinguished philosophers and historians of science of the time, and he was personally acquainted with such scientists as Albert Einstein and Louis de Broglie. His cosmopolitan life, as well as his broad education and outlook, made him more similar to Alexandre Koyré than to Metzger. Meyerson became well known in the English-speaking world subsequent to the publication and wide diffusion of *Identity and Reality* in 1930.[4]

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contains a bibliography of Metzger's work and articles on various aspects of her life and work). A shorter version in English is forthcoming in Paula Hyman and Dalia Ofer, eds., *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia,* CD-ROM (Jerusalem: Shalvi, in press). For a study of Metzger's philosophical project in its social and intellectual settings see Cristina Chimisso, "Hélène Metzger: The History of Science between the Study of Mentalities and Total History," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science,* 2001, *32:*203–241.

[3] For the published version of the thesis see Hélène Metzger, *La genèse de la science des cristaux* (Paris: Alcan, 1918; rpt., Paris: Blanchard, 1969). The monographs are Metzger, *Les doctrines chimiques en France du début du XVIIe à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses Univ. France, 1923; rpt., Paris: Blanchard, 1969); Metzger, *Les concepts scientifiques* (Paris: Alcan, 1926); Metzger, *Newton, Stahl, Boerhaave et la doctrine chimique* (Paris: Alcan, 1930; rpt., Paris: Blanchard, 1974); Metzger, *La chimie* (Paris: Boccard, 1930); Metzger, *La philosophie de la matière chez Lavoisier* (Paris: Hermann, 1935); and Metzger, *Attraction universelle et religion naturelle chez quelques commentateurs anglais de Newton* (Paris: Hermann, 1938). The essays are collected in Metzger, *La méthode philosophique en histoire des sciences,* ed. Gad Freudenthal (Paris: Fayard, 1987).

[4] On Meyerson's life see André Metz, "Émile Meyerson" [Séance du 26 novembre 1960: "Commémoration du centenaire de la naissance de deux Épistémologues français: Émile Meyerson et Gaston Milhaud"], *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie,* 1961, pp. 98–105; *Encyclopedia Judaica* (cit. n. 1), Vol. 11, pp. 1468–1469; and Yoram Mayorek, "Émile Meyerson and the Beginning of the Involvement of the Jewish Colonization Association in Eretz Israel" [in Hebrew], *Cathedra for the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* (Jerusalem), 1991, *62:*67–79. For his publications see, notably, Émile Meyerson, *Identité et réalité,* 3rd ed. (Paris: Payot, 1908) (the English translation is *Identity and Reality,* trans. K. Loewenberg [London: Allen & Unwin, 1930]);

Although Metzger is one of the few prewar French historians of science whose work is still widely read today, she suffered throughout her life from a lack of recognition of her value as a scholar and never held any academic position.[5] She thus struggled continually on two distinct but related fronts—intellectual and institutional. These provide the twofold setting in which her letter to Meyerson must be read.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

Metzger and Meyerson differed profoundly in their assessments of the nature of scientific knowledge and in the goals of their work. Indeed, Metzger refers in her letter to "our old lively philosophical discussions." A first, rough, approximation of the nature of their differences can be given by saying that Meyerson was primarily a philosopher whereas Metzger was a historian. It is difficult indeed to understand French history and philosophy of science, especially in the interwar period, without considering the simultaneous strong links and conflicting outlooks of the historical and philosophical approaches to the study of science.[6]

Metzger began her work in the history of science in complete isolation from any intellectual or institutional context. When she showed the manuscript of *La genèse de la science des cristaux* to her crystallography professor, he dismissed her work and historical interests altogether. But she soon found her way to a group of Sorbonne philosophers who shared her philosophical interest in the study of the history of science: Gaston Milhaud, Léon Brunschvicg, André Lalande, and Abel Rey. Especially important was her uncle Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, whom she did not mind calling her "professor" and whom she always mentioned with admiration and affection.[7]

Many French philosophers at the time believed that the study of intellectual history would provide a repository of case studies for investigations of the way the human mind works. Émile Bréhier regarded history of philosophy as "the substitute for the experimental method in philosophy," for "it shows thousands of variations of the human reason, in relation with the period, the social milieus, the religions, the states of the sciences [and] of civilizations." Some thought that the history of science provided the best "laboratory" for epistemology. Lalande began a review essay of Meyerson's *De l'explication dans les sciences* of 1921 by saying that "nowadays" everybody agreed that introspection was insufficient for a study of the mental functions. It was necessary to study "intelligence's

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Meyerson, *De l'explication dans les sciences,* 2 vols. (Paris: Payot, 1921); and Meyerson, *Du cheminement de la pensée,* 3 vols. (Paris: Alcan, 1931). The published correspondence between Meyerson and Harald Høffding shows the wide network of Meyerson's intellectual and personal friendships and acquaintances: *Correspondence entre Harald Høffding et Émile Meyerson,* ed. Frithiof Brandt, Hans Høffding, and Jean Adigard des Gautries (1939; rpt., Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 2002).

[5] Meyerson, too, never had an academic post, although to our knowledge this had no detrimental effect on his self-esteem.

[6] There is a persistent misperception that Metzger and Meyerson had kindred philosophical approaches to the study of science. This perception has been nurtured, notably, by the fact that the late Thomas S. Kuhn mentioned Alexandre Koyré, Émile Meyerson, Hélène Metzger, and Anneliese Maier together as authors that had most influenced him; see T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1962), p. vii n 1. The relationship between history and philosophy in the study of science in France in the interwar period is analyzed in Cristina Chimisso, *Gaston Bachelard: Critic of Science and the Imagination* (Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Philosophy) (London/New York: Routledge, 2001), Ch. 5.

[7] Hélène Metzger to George Sarton, 20 June 1922, in Metzger, "Lettres," pp. 249–250 (crystallography professor); and Metzger to Sarton, 18 May 1922, quoted in Freudenthal, "Hélène Metzger: Éléments de biographie" (cit. n. 2), p. 198 (Lévy-Bruhl). In another letter she said that Lévy-Bruhl always supported her research and was always "the first reader" of her work: Metzger to Sarton, 14 April 1927, in Metzger, "Lettres," p. 255.

objective products" through an examination of "facts and sources" in the history of science from its "primitive forms" to the present. Meyerson himself made a very similar point in *Identité et réalité* and at the beginning of *Du cheminement de la pensée.* In the 1960s and 1970s Georges Canguilhem still used the metaphor of the laboratory to explain the role that history played in epistemology.[8]

Meyerson's aim was to provide an account of the mechanism and the value of knowledge that would apply in all times and places. Very generally, he wanted to demonstrate that knowledge is always a process of identification and construction of causal links. Reason identifies what is to be known and what is already known and establishes unity beyond apparent diversity. Causality, for Meyerson, is the principle of identity in time. In his view, to understand reality is to understand identities, which are not a construct of the mind but, rather, belong to reality. Meyerson thus thought that the apparent variety of ways of thinking exhibited by the history of science in truth hides an underlying identity of the fundamental mental mechanisms: it was the task of epistemology to unveil this underlying identity. Thus his epistemology follows the same method he attributed to science: it establishes the identity of apparently different types of logic.

Metzger subscribed to the philosophical view of the history of science, whose goals she defined as being to improve our knowledge of the human mind and, in consequence, to use our intelligence more wisely and less empirically than we have done so far in formulating scientific, philosophical, and historical theories at random. Yet unlike many epistemologists, and Meyerson in particular, Metzger focused her research on well-circumscribed periods and fastidiously examined alchemists' and chemists' texts. Her immediate questions concerned how, say, Lémery, Étienne de Clave, Stahl, or Boerhaave thought, how they organized knowledge, and, most important, what their implicit assumptions and worldviews were. In examining doctrines that modern chemistry, and indeed modern "common sense," deemed absurd, her main question was: How did these theories seem perfectly reasonable to seventeenth-century scholars and the lay public? Far from aiming to establish conclusively how human reason works in all times and places, Metzger regarded that ambition as philosophy's "strange mania," consisting in the wish "to pose definitive concepts either *a priori* or *a posteriori.*"[9] She believed that this "mania" stemmed from a psychological need for certainty, and she thought that history could provide the cure for it. Here lies the core of the different attitudes to philosophical and historical research held by Metzger and Meyerson.

Thus, where Meyerson saw identities, Metzger confronted the utter "otherness" of the ways of thinking of her alchemists and aimed at grasping their way of proceeding "from within," without seeking to reduce the originality of their thought to mere "mistakes" or confused anticipations of what was to come. Her approach to the history of science prevented her from minimizing differences and led her to reach conclusions opposite to those of Meyerson on the philosophical issue of the day, that of different "mentalities."

[8] [Émile Bréhier], "Notre programme," *Revue d'Histoire de la Philosophie,* 1927, *1:*1–4, on p. 4; André Lalande, "L'épistémologie de M. Meyerson et sa portée philosophique," *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger,* 1922, *47:*259–280, on p. 259; Meyerson, *Identité et réalité* (cit. n. 4), pp. xiii–xiv; Meyerson, *Identity and Reality,* trans. Loewenberg (cit. n. 4), pp. 7–8; Meyerson, *Cheminement de la pensée* (cit. n. 4), p. viii; Georges Canguilhem, *Études d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences* (Paris: Vrin, 1968), p. 12; and Canguilhem, *Idéologie et rationalité dans l'histoire des sciences de la vie* (Paris: Vrin, 1977), pp. 12–13.

[9] Hélène Metzger, "La méthode philosophique dans l'histoire des sciences," in *Méthode philosophique,* ed. Freudenthal (cit. n. 3), pp. 57–74, on p. 59 (goals of history of science); and Metzger, "Tribunal de l'histoire et théorie de la connaissance scientifique," *ibid.,* pp. 23–39, on p. 38.

Lucien Lévy-Bruhl was responsible for sparking the discussion about what he called mentalities—and particularly about "primitive mentality," the focus of his *La mentalité primitive.*[10] Lévy-Bruhl, professor of history of philosophy at the Sorbonne, shared the interest of many of his colleagues in determining the mechanisms of thought. Like them, moreover, he thought that an empirical study of the different products of intellectual history was needed. But whereas most of his colleagues found their epistemological "laboratory" in the study of the past, Lévy-Bruhl turned to Melanesian and African cultures. Instead of investigating another time, he elected to investigate other places. He reached the conclusion that the Melanesians' and Africans' way of thinking differed in important respects from that of Westerners—that their frame of mind was a different "mentality." The thesis that perhaps provoked the most heated discussions was that the thinking of so-called primitive peoples did not follow the law of noncontradiction.

Lévy-Bruhl's theories had a tremendous impact on many disciplines from the 1920s onward. The study of past texts or other civilizations acquired great epistemological relevance given its direct bearing on the question of whether people in different times and cultures thought differently. The position that scholars took vis-à-vis Lévy-Bruhl's views had immediate implications for the way in which they regarded their own disciplines.[11]

Lévy-Bruhl's stance was clearly the opposite of that of Meyerson, who did not fail to react. Chapter 2 of *Du cheminement de la pensée,* entitled "Le physicien et l'homme primitif," seeks to demonstrate that there is no difference between the physicist's logic and what Lévy-Bruhl called "laws of participation," which allegedly governed "primitive" thought. Meyerson thought that he had found the pattern underlying all human "intellect," not only that of "the civilized man, which one can suppose to be influenced by science and philosophy."[12] With respect to the history of science, his chief aim was to demonstrate that there was no significant difference between common sense and science, or indeed between science and past investigations into nature.

Metzger rejected this view. Central to her interests were the differences in ways of thinking, which seemed so dramatic to her, between alchemists and modern chemists. But she did not simply adopt Lévy-Bruhl's theory: her view was a sort of "third way" between those who saw radical differences in ways of thinking and those who denied them altogether. Metzger held that all human beings, in every time and place, shared what she called "expansive thought": by this she meant thought in its spontaneous and creative phase, not yet disciplined by formal logic. A crucial characteristic of this way of thinking was seeking analogies between objects, which she held to be instinctive. While she analyzed different types of analogy, the one that interested her most was what she termed "active analogy" (*analogie agissante*), the action of similar on similar. She found a wealth of examples of active analogy in her sources, and she identified this analogy "in its pure state" with Lévy-

[10] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *La mentalité primitive* (Paris: Alcan, 1922).

[11] Metzger pointed out that "[Lévy-Bruhl's doctrine] has immediately gone beyond the small circle of the specialists which it seemed to address: it has been read, discussed, commented on, employed, not only by ethnologists, travelers and colonial administrators; but also by philosophers, psychiatrists, psychologists, pedagogues, sociologists and historians": Hélène Metzger, "La philosophie de Lucien Lévy-Bruhl et l'histoire des sciences," in *Méthode philosophique,* ed. Freudenthal (cit. n. 3), pp. 113–124, on p. 117. The controversy about "primitive mentality" that took place in Paris in the 1920s cannot be separated from the institutional restructuring that took place in the same period and that saw sociology, psychology, history of science, and ethnology acquire or strengthen their independence from philosophy. See Cristina Chimisso, "The Mind and the Faculties: The Controversy over 'Primitive Mentality' and the Struggle for Disciplinary Space at the Inter-War Sorbonne," *History of the Human Sciences,* 2000, *13:*47–68.

[12] Meyerson, *Cheminement de la pensée* (cit. n. 4), p. 31.

Bruhl's "law of participation," which he held to govern the thought of non-Western people. She found this mode of thinking in magical practices, in Renaissance medicine, and in primary sources such as Stahl's writings—for instance, when he argued that two substances can combine if some of their parts are similar.[13]

Unlike Lévy-Bruhl, Metzger held that "expansive thought" was not lost to modern people, not even to scientists. Indeed, she believed that it was at the basis of the "most beautiful discoveries [and] the most admirable inventions." In order for these intuitive discoveries to become scientific, however, "clear, limpid, and logical thought" had to discipline and order "spontaneous thought."[14] In other words, those first intuitions needed to be elaborated and tested according to the logic of modern science. Yet although all spontaneous thought is at bottom one, still different historical periods exhibit different ways of thinking. In Metzger's terminology: for every historical period, the historian can isolate different "*a prioris*"—that is, conceptual structures—governing the thought of that period. Metzger's "*a priori*" is very close to Lévy-Bruhl's "mentality."

The implications of this debate for the history of science are clear. In Metzger's view, the "philosophers of metal" believed that they could turn lead into gold because they based their reasoning on the analogy according to which lead was to gold what a child is to an adult; the former is an imperfect version of the latter, which already contains the perfect version as a potentiality. Accordingly, the alchemists do not look to be irrational or simple dreamers. On the other hand, in Meyerson's view, which allows for no differences between the alchemists and modern scientists and presupposes that they all proceed by a process of identification of different elements, the only possible conclusion is that the "philosophers of metal" made gross mistakes about the elements that they chose to identify with one another.

Metzger and Meyerson were thus fundamentally divided: they agreed that the most basic theoretical concept at the focus of their work was the "human mind," but they held opposite views of its nature and, consequently, of the object and methods of their study of the history of science.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

A superficial reading of Metzger's letter to Meyerson suffices to make clear that her vehemence could not have been due to philosophical differences alone. The letter is personal, the tone is emotional, and no allusion whatsoever is made to the contents of philosophical discussions. To understand it we must take a closer look at the relationship between Metzger and Meyerson, set in the context of Metzger's institutional position in Paris academic life in the interwar period.

The feelings of resentment and opposition so clearly and forcefully aired in the letter had been building up for a long time. We do not know exactly when Metzger and Meyerson first met, but in all probability it was in early 1923.[15] Only four years later, Metzger already

[13] Metzger, *Doctrines chimiques en France* (cit. n. 3), p. 348; Metzger, *Attraction universelle et religion naturelle* (cit. n. 3), p. 8; and Metzger, *Concepts scientifiques* (cit. n. 3), p. 43.

[14] Metzger, "Philosophie de Lucien Lévy-Bruhl" (cit. n. 11), p. 121. We of course refer to Lévy-Bruhl's views before the revision of his theory expressed in the posthumously published *Carnets* (1947); this revision is irrelevant for a comparison with the work of Metzger, who died in 1944.

[15] In 1929 Metzger wrote: "I did not become acquainted with him [Meyerson] personally and I did not study his books until after I had done much work and published two volumes." Hélène Metzger, "La philosophie d'Émile Meyerson et l'histoire des sciences," in *Méthode philosophique,* ed. Freudenthal (cit. n. 3), pp. 95–106, on p. 95. Metzger's second monograph, *Les doctrines chimiques en France,* was published in 1923. The first

sensed that she was considered Meyerson's disciple; and in a letter to George Sarton she protested vigorously:

> I once or twice saw again M. Meyerson, who chose to ignore my little book and to be very friendly; he absolutely wants me to compile an index for his next book, which is on nearly the same topic; I am looking for a way to refuse politely and without offending him. I greatly admire his endeavor; if he wishes so, I will declare myself his pupil or his disciple (although everything that I have published has been written outside his influence), but I refuse to be the slave of [even] the greatest philosopher in the world, for nature has endowed me with a brain.[16]

In 1929 Metzger said much the same thing in her public address to the Comité International d'Histoire des Sciences, which met in the framework of the first International Congress for the History of Science, held in Paris. Metzger chose Meyerson's philosophy as the topic of her talk, which opened with these telling words:

> It is a pleasure for me to begin my report today by paying a personal tribute to M. Meyerson, who took a lively interest in my work in the history of chemistry, putting at my disposal a friendly and continuing devotion, as well as his great erudition and his philosophical meditation. I cannot say that he was my teacher—and I am sorry for this—for I did not become acquainted with him personally and I did not study his books until after I had done much work and published two volumes. Nor can I describe myself entirely as his disciple, for the problems that interest me most are not quite those that his epistemological work has tried to clarify. But I wish to thank him publicly for his valuable advice and encouragement, and to assure him of my gratitude.[17]

Both the private letter and the public speech carry a clear message of denial: no, Metzger says, Meyerson was not my teacher; although I occasionally discuss my work with him, I am not intellectually indebted to him. To drive home the point that she is not Meyerson's "disciple," Metzger goes so far as to detail the chronology of her work and the beginning of her acquaintance with Meyerson. In the Paris academic milieu, in which patronage was very important, intellectual lineage was often emphasized and played important real and symbolic roles. Certainly many scholars would have been happy to declare themselves Meyerson's "disciples," and Alexandre Koyré, for one, did not hesitate to call Meyerson his "teacher." Metzger clearly intended to set the record straight and disavow the lineage that in some people's minds linked her to Meyerson. Indeed, her 1930 dedication of *Newton, Stahl, Boerhaave et la doctrine chimique* to Meyerson may in part have been a move intended to reinforce her position in the Paris academic setting by claiming his patronage, while yet refusing to be considered his "disciple."[18]

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item in the collection of letters that Metzger addressed to Meyerson is a postcard dated 6 Mar. 1923. Interestingly, almost as soon as Metzger became acquainted with Sarton she alerted him to the publication of Meyerson's *De l'explication dans les sciences* and offered to write a review, thereby putting herself in the position of the master's messenger even before she came to know him personally: Metzger to Sarton, 21 July 1921, in Metzger, "Lettres," p. 248. This review was published in *Isis,* 1922, *4:*382–385; for her subsequent reviews of Meyerson's books see *ibid.,* 1925, *5:*517–520; 1927, *9:*470–472; 1932, *17:*444–445.

[16] Metzger to Sarton, 14 Apr. 1927, in Metzger, "Lettres," p. 255. She is referring to *Les concepts scientifiques,* published in 1926. Meyerson was to cite that "little book" in footnotes to *Du cheminement de la pensée* (pp. 806, 811); presumably he read it only after meeting with Metzger about the index. Metzger did not mind compiling the indexes for Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *L'âme primitive* (Paris: Presses Univ. France, 1927) and *Le surnaturel et la nature dans la mentalité primitive* (Paris: Presses Univ. France, 1931); see p. xiii of the latter.

[17] Metzger, "Philosophie d'Émile Meyerson" (cit. n. 15), p. 95.

[18] For Koyré's reference to Meyerson as his "teacher" see Fondation "Pour la science," Centre International de Synthèse, Section d'Histoire des Sciences, "Communications officielles: Séance du 23 Janvier 1935," *Archeion,* 1935, *17:*81–84, on p. 83. Metzger's dedication was certainly also motivated by the fact that Meyerson was involved in the writing of the chapter on Stahl; see Metzger to Sarton, 10 Aug. 1925, 29 Mar. 1926, in Metzger, "Lettres," p. 253.

In the letter we publish here, Metzger finally expresses directly to Meyerson himself her feelings of impatience—indeed, exasperation—with his imposed patronage and patronizing attitude. This letter should not be read simply as the result of a personal or philosophical conflict between the two scholars. Rather, it is such a remarkable document because it expresses Metzger's suffering over the lack of recognition that she had to endure—despite the value of her work and her continued service in running institutions devoted to the history of science—as the consequence of women's inferior status in French academia.

Metzger was sharply aware of the difficult position of women in the community of scholars in Paris in the interwar period. Her letters to Sarton reveal how much she longed for a proper academic position and how frustrated she was by her repeated inability to obtain one. Her failure was not due to the inferior quality of her publications or to their not receiving recognition. The "little book" to which she referred in her 1927 letter to Sarton, *Les concepts scientifiques,* won the Bordin Prize of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, on Lalande's recommendation. But she continued to remain on the institutional margins, never moving within. She taught at the Institut d'Histoire des Sciences et Techniques, had responsibility for the coordination and direction of studies there, and was the administrator and treasurer of the Comité International d'Histoire des Sciences. Yet although she apparently had been promised, and very much hoped for, an appointment as secretary of the Institut d'Histoire des Sciences (which was, even so, not an academic position), the young Pierre Ducassé received preference.[19] For a semester in the academic year 1937/1938 she replaced Koyré at the École Pratique des Hautes Études—the same Koyré whom she had introduced to the Centre de Synthèse's Unit for History of Science, of which she was the secretary—but no permanent appointment followed.

A woman in French academia was, indeed, a rarity at that time. In the 1920s there were only two women professors at the University of Paris, both in the Faculty of Sciences—and one of them was Marie Curie. In the whole of France there were only four other women lecturing at the university level, all in junior posts. Metzger did not express views on this general sociological reality in her writings—even in her letters to Sarton—but she was aware that her sex had limited her opportunities indirectly. She commented that her education had not been of the academically prestigious kind. The fact that—bound by her father's decision—she did not attend a *lycée* leading to a *baccalauréat* and thus attained only a *diplôme d'études supérieures* determined the type of degree course to which she could be admitted and the doctorate she could earn: the *doctorat d'université* she eventually gained was a second-class degree, inferior to the *doctorat d'État,* and did not qualify her for a career in French academia. Not coincidentally, that degree was pursued mainly by foreigners and by women; only in 1914 were the first two *doctorats d'État* awarded to women.[20] Note, however, that Koyré—who moved to France from Russia and Germany—did not have the prestigious state doctorate either; but this was no obstacle to his appointment at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, where positions were awarded on scholarly merit rather than based on formal qualifications.

Metzger was very aware of the social meaning of the "right" education. In a letter to Sarton, she strongly criticized a new educational reform whereby qualifications in ancient languages were essential for university admissions. She immediately realized that this

[19] Metzger to Sarton, 1 Nov. 1937, in Metzger, "Lettres," p. 260, expresses her disappointment over Ducassé's preferment.

[20] Edmée Charrier, *L'évolution intellectuelle féminine* (Paris: Mechelinck, 1931), pp. 407–408, 212.

reform was to create gender and class barriers: as she explained, access to higher education would be blocked to those who (like herself) did not attend a *lycée* and thus *de facto* to most women—even those who did attend a *lycée,* for girls' *lycées* as a rule did not teach Latin and Greek. She concluded that the elite would be chosen from those whose parents could afford to provide a *lycée* education for their sons.[21]

Metzger perceived her lesser academic qualifications as due to her father's prejudices. She opined that he had prevented his "socialist (or almost)" daughters from having independent professions, but had given them dowries so that they could marry young men "of intellectual and moral value" whose only resource was their own modest earnings.[22] Hélène herself married a historian—Paul Metzger, professor of history at the University of Lyon. By contrast, her father allowed his son to pursue the best education available: Adrien Bruhl attended the École Normale Supérieure and eventually became the dean of the Faculty of Arts of the Université de Lyon.

Metzger's reading of her father's plans for his daughters is consistent with the findings of later sociological studies. Christopher Charle has pointed out that class boundaries were weaker among Jews than among Catholics and that it was relatively common for Jewish intellectuals to marry wealthy Jewish women. His archetypal case study is Durkheim's marriage to the wealthy Julie Dreyfus, but many other examples can be noted.[23] Henri Bergson, the son of a musician of Polish origin, married the daughter of an executive of the Rothschild bank; Léon Brunschvicg, of humble background, married into a wealthy merchant's family. Lucien Lévy also married into a prosperous merchant family, the Bruhls, becoming Lucien Lévy-Bruhl.

Thanks to her dowry, as the offspring of a family dedicated to commerce rather than scholarship, Metzger had her own means of subsistence. In this she was similar to many other Jewish scholars in that period, such as Durkheim, Brunschvicg, Bergson, Lévy-Bruhl, and Marcel Mauss. But in her case the prejudice against parvenus in the intellectual classes was greatly reinforced by her gender. Her late husband's academic colleagues looked down on her as a wealthy amateur rather than a proper scholar. Metzger strongly resented their denigrating attitude, especially because the lack of an academic position was so painful to her and was certainly not due to any shortcomings of her work.[24] Indeed, the lack of an academic post was more readily forgiven in male scholars: Émile Meyerson himself enjoyed high prestige even though he had no formal position in French academia.

The conflict between Metzger and Meyerson, far from being merely a clash of personalities or of different philosophical outlooks, stemmed essentially from structural problems of society and from what we would today call "institutional sexism." Throughout her life, and much against her will, Metzger remained an outsider, "a perpetual junior member in the groups she frequented."[25] The relationship with Meyerson was one element in this larger social picture.

Perusal of the small collection of messages that Metzger sent Meyerson during the years of their acquaintance confirms that their relationship was never symmetrical and, specifically, that Meyerson never accepted Metzger as an equal. Metzger often visited Meyerson at his home, and occasionally he paid her visits as well—a fact that explains why there

[21] Metzger to Sarton, 20 June 1922, in Metzger, "Lettres," p. 250.
[22] Metzger to Sarton, 22 Apr. 1926, in Metzger, "Lettres," pp. 254–255.
[23] Christopher Charle, "Le beau marriage d'Émile Durkheim," *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales,* 1984, *55:*45–49.
[24] Metzger to Sarton, 22 Apr. 1926, in Metzger, "Lettres," pp. 254–255.
[25] Chimisso, "Hélène Metzger" (cit. n. 2), p. 231.

are only about twenty-five documents, usually postcards sent when Metzger was away from Paris on vacation or attending a meeting. In his messages Meyerson sometimes asks for—and gets—bibliographical references.[26] In a letter dated 25 October 1924 Metzger writes: "I am at your disposal to work for you to the extent of my abilities. I feel well now and capable of efforts." But the work in question was anything but a collaboration. In a postcard dated 22 April 1925 Metzger writes: "Unless you tell me otherwise, I will come to prepare the catalogue of your library on Friday 24, at about 3 [P.M.]." There were also intellectual exchanges, with Metzger on the receiving end. On 6 March 1923, just after the publication of *Les doctrines chimiques en France,* Metzger writes that she would like to call on Meyerson and ask him for some "information or advice" to help her resolve difficulties she had encountered in her work. Similarly, in a letter dated 16 October 1925 she says that she has been studying Boerhaave's chemical theory and would be happy if Meyerson could "find a moment" to discuss it with her before she writes the corresponding chapter of her book. On another occasion—called once again to serve as Meyerson's mouthpiece—she reports on the reaction to his message that she read to the second International Congress of History of Science, held in London between 30 June and 4 July 1931.[27]

Meyerson took Metzger's respect as his due and granted her little acknowledgment. There was no ambiguity as to which of them was the senior scholar: not only was Meyerson thirty years older than Metzger, but he was more erudite. Still, what Metzger sought was not absolute equality but, rather, some recognition of her value and, above all, of her independence. This is precisely what Meyerson could not or did not want to offer, leaving Metzger feeling that she was being treated as "a little girl." Although Metzger apparently assisted Meyerson in his work on *Du cheminement de la pensée,* published in 1931, her name does not appear in the list of acknowledgments.[28] Nothing better bespeaks Meyerson's attitude than his request, in 1927, that Metzger—who had already published three books herself—prepare the index for his book, just as she had prepared the catalogue of his library two years earlier. Meyerson wanted Metzger to be a pupil and his assistant—and to stick to that role. She thought otherwise.

Metzger was not alone in her view that Meyerson was an exceptionally impressive, indeed intimidating, personality. On the commemoration of the centenary of Gaston Milhaud's and Meyerson's births, the philosopher André Lalande (1867–1963), one of the leading lights of contemporary French academic philosophy, observed that whereas Mil-

[26] All the documents mentioned in this paragraph are in the collection described in note 1, above. In a postcard dated 13 Mar. 1925 Metzger gives the bibliographical details of a book by Stahl, obviously in response to a request from Meyerson. Similarly, in a postcard dated 2 July 1926 she supplies a couple of references to her *La genèse de la science des cristaux* and continues: "désirez-vous que je recherche quelque document sur ce sujet?"

[27] Apparently Meyerson's health did not allow him to travel. (Indeed, concern about Meyerson's health is recurrent throughout Metzger's messages to him.) Metzger writes from London (1 July 1931): "Your message, which I read in front of 300 or 400 persons, was applauded and it made a welcome contrast with the Bolsheviks' discourse on capitalist science and on economic history." At this memorable congress, the sudden appearance of a Soviet delegation, including Nicolai Bukharin, N. I. Vavilov, Boris Hessen, and E. Colman, left a lasting impression. The "Bolshevik"—Marxist—contributions were gathered and published in an influential volume under the title *Science at the Cross Roads* (London: Kniga, 1931; rpt., London: Cass, 1971). Meyerson's address read by Metzger was published in *Archeion,* 1932, *14:*106.

[28] The list of acknowledgments mentions Koyré, Lalande, Lévy-Bruhl, Lichtenstein, Metz, I. Meyerson, Parodi, Roustan, de Broglie, Einstein, Langevin, and Meyerson's two secretaries, Marguerite Alexandre and Suzanne Babled. Note that Koyré was still a junior scholar at this stage (the first part of his *Études galiléennes,* the first of his history of science writings, would be published in 1936; the full work, dedicated to the memory of Meyerson, appeared in 1939).

haud was remarkable for his finesse, Meyerson stood out for the "strength" and "robustness" of his writing, his conversation, and even his physical appearance (Lalande likened him to a "bearded Jupiter"). More outspoken than Lalande, who addressed an official ceremony in honor of Meyerson, was Moritz Schlick (1882–1936), in a private letter written on 21 July 1929 to the philosopher of science Herbert Feigl: "In Paris I visited old Meyerson. He is immensely self-conceited [*kolossal eingebildet*]; unfortunately Einstein has confirmed him therein, by mentioning him favorably on different occasions. Still, this is an interesting and independent mind, immensely knowledgeable."[29]

In the letter published here, written in May 1933, Metzger tells Meyerson what has been on her mind for some ten years. The two must have had an altercation not long before, because she begins the second sentence "If you still harbor some friendship for me." Indeed, what follows allows us to gather that Metzger had opened her heart to Meyerson about what she considered her "weaknesses and certain failings and fatigues, and concerning [her] defective education," and that Meyerson in response had said things that appeared to Metzger as a demand for her "to go back to school, to learn anew what [she] was not allowed to be taught in [her] childhood." The circumstances behind the letter are poignant: the seventy-four-year-old man had just undergone what Metzger knew to have been a "a painful and disagreeable surgery"; indeed, he was to die about half a year later, on 2 December 1933. Perhaps it was Meyerson's weakened physical condition that at long last gave Metzger the courage to speak up; she may also have sensed that she had best seize the occasion, before it was too late. In any event, it is the directness and forcefulness of her statement of independence, the outspoken and uncompromising insistence that she be allowed to pursue her own course as she sees fit, that make this letter an exceptional document. Metzger emphatically asks—nay, demands—Meyerson's adherence to her conviction that "Heaven has bestowed upon each of us" intelligence and will and that "in the Republic of the minds, we are all equal." The letter is thus published here because of its value as a human document, an early expression of women's ongoing struggle for equality of rights and of consideration.

Meyerson apparently never responded, for on 18 September 1933 Metzger took the opportunity offered by the Jewish New Year to write from Strasbourg: "On the occasion of the New Year, I send you my best wishes for a prompt and rapid recovery. If you have not forgotten me completely, accept my respectful friendship [*mes amitiés respectueuses*]."[30] The tone is grave: never before had Metzger used the very formal term "respectful" in her correspondence with Meyerson; the word "friendship," rarely used in combination with "respectful," is deliberately deployed to recall to mind the old warm feelings.[31] Metzger clearly understood that the earlier letter had completely undone her

[29] André Lalande, "Lettre" [Séance du 26 novembre 1960: "Commémoration du centenaire de la naissance de deux Épistémologues français: Émile Meyerson et Gaston Milhaud"], *Bull. Soc. Franç. Phil.,* 1961, pp. 53–54, on p. 54; and Morris Schlick to Herbert Feigl, 21 July 1929, in Wiener Kreis Stichting, Moritz Schlick Nachlass, Amsterdam, Inv.-Nr. 94, p. 9. The latter is published with the kind permission of the Wiener Kreis Stichting and of the Philosophisches Archiv of the University of Konstanz. We are grateful to Michael Heidelberger of the University of Tübingen for calling our attention to the phrase describing Meyerson and for supplying us with a copy of the letter.

[30] Postcard dated 18 Sept. 1933: " . . . je vous envoie à l'occasion de la nouvelle année mes meilleurs voeux de guérison prompte et rapide. Si vous ne m'avez pas tout à fait oubliée, agréez mes amitiés respectueuses." Only once before had Metzger sent Meyerson wishes on the occasion of the Jewish New Year: in a postcard dated 6 Sept. 1926 she wrote, "Mes meilleurs voeux pour 5687." The Jewish element is almost entirely absent from Metzger's letters to Meyerson. Except for these two New Year wishes, there is only one card (undated, postmarked Oct. 1932), written to Meyerson from Germany by Metzger's friend Bertha Bessmertny, to which Metzger added three words in Yiddish (in Latin script): "Meseltov. Gut Jontef."

[31] More often than not, Metzger concludes her messages with the informal, friendly "meilleur(s) souvenir(s)."

former relationship with Meyerson and that nothing else had grown up in its place. For this, indeed, Metzger's revolt came too late.

The epilogue came a few months later, after Meyerson's death. In a short review of his *Réel et déterminisme dans la physique quantique,* a small volume apparently written at the request of Louis de Broglie, Metzger apologized for not discussing the book's theses. She explained that her grief—presumably intensified by guilt feelings—was too great for her to do so, and instead she preferred "to talk about that which unites us, rather than that which divides us."[32] She could neither feign support for Meyerson's conception of the mind nor criticize him openly. Their conflict was to remain unresolved.

* * *

Hélène Metzger's letter to Émile Meyerson is handwritten on four pages, the first of which carries the letterhead *Club de la FONDATION UNIVERSITAIRE.*[33] It is published here unaltered, with only a couple of slips of the pen silently corrected. Metzger's characteristic punctuation is upheld (with only some commas added) and carried over to the English translation that follows. Note that Metzger frequently uses suspension periods, which thus do not here indicate any deletions.

HÉLÈNE METZGER TO ÉMILE MEYERSON: THE FRENCH ORIGINAL

Bruxelles, le 6 mai 1933
11, Rue d'Egmont

Cher Monsieur,

J'ai appris par mon oncle que vous aviez dû subir une opération douloureuse et pénible; je pense bien à vous, j'espère que vous irez mieux. . . . S'il vous reste encore un peu d'amitié pour moi, faites-moi signe et j'irai vous distraire en reprenant nos vieilles et animées conversations philosophiques.

En ce qui me concerne, j'ai eu occasion hier soir au cours d'une conférence que je ne vous demande pas d'approuver entièrement, de vous rendre un hommage public et de dire à quel point j'admirais votre œuvre. Et non seulement votre œuvre; vous même qui avez su avec une ténacité inlassable résoudre le problème qui a été toute votre vie l'objet de votre méditation . . . . . .

Bien que vous ayez eu, je ne sais quelle déception sur moi, j'espère que vous serez sensible à ce témoignage d'absolue sincérité, d'affection profonde, de dévouement et de respect.

Mais, je vous en prie, n'essayez pas de me modifier, de me changer, de me former, de me [p. 2] déformer ou dans un sens purement scolaire d'être mon "maître". j'ai toujours considéré comme un ennemi "en puissance" tout individu (parent, professeur, médecin etc.) qui possède une parcelle d'autorité et qui veut se servir de son prestige pour m'imposer ses idées ou sa manière de voir. . . . je suis démocrate née, et en ce qui concerne l'usage de l'intelligence et de la volonté que le Ciel a départies à chacun de nous, je voudrais que nous ne soyons responsable que de nos fautes, non de celles que les autres nous imposent; que de nos erreurs, aussi; si je me trompe montrez-le moi, mais ne vous servez pas de votre supériorité, du fait que vous êtes un grand philosophe, comme argument. . . . Dans la République des esprits nous sommes tous égaux et vous devez démontrer que vous avez la raison pour vous, non l'imposer par la force ou l'intimidation.

La seule vue d'une belle œuvre excite mon émulation non un besoin de soumission envers elle ou son auteur. Quand je vous lis, je ne me sens pas modeste ou petite fille en présence de

[32] Hélène Metzger, rev. of Émile Meyerson, *Réel et déterminisme dans la physique quantique* (Paris: Hermann, 1933), *Archeion,* 1933, *15:*483–484.

[33] Followed by two printed lines:
Téléphones club 11.97.89; secrétariat: 12.24.22
Chèques postaux: N° 1039.46

votre grandeur; j'ai envie de plus et de mieux travailler. Comme de Corrège ou [p. 3] Montesquieu j'ai envie de m'écrier "Et moi aussi je suis peintre".

Ne me prenez plus pour une enfant, une étudiante, mais pour une femme d'âge mûr qui a beaucoup souffert par des deuils épouvantables et une maladie fort grave. À certains égards vous me trouveriez vieillie avant l'âge . . . mais au fait j'ai 43 ans; je pourrais être grand-mère comme quelques-unes de mes amies. C'est un fait que je ne suis pas une jeune femme; c'est un fait aussi que je souffre de crises cardiaques, et que par un excès de sensibilité que je reconnais exagérée mais qui résulte de ma tachycardie que l'émotion aggrave, après avoir entendu certaines choses, je suis malade pendant toute une journée et je ne puis travailler. . . .

Vous savez que toute ma vie, toute la joie et tout l'effort de ma vie est méditation philosophique; il est abusif de me demander sans motif valable de me remettre à l'école, de réapprendre ce qu'on m'a refusé de m'enseigner étant enfant . . . du moins, je veux être le seul juge de l'effort à fournir dont je n'ai à rendre compte à personne et mener à bien suivant mes propres directions l'œuvre que je veux accomplir et que j'ai commencée. Les confidences que je vous ai faites sur mes insuffisances, sur certaines défaillances et fatigues, sur mon éducation défectueuse prouvent mon amitié pour vous, ma confiance aussi.—Ne vous en servez jamais pour m'écraser ou me diminuer . . . je ne dois au public que mon œuvre; la préparation de cette œuvre ne regarde que moi.

Et maintenant, je trouve en relisant ma lettre que je ne vous ai pas témoigné assez toute mon admiration qui a d'autant plus de valeur qu'elle ne provient d'aucune subordination ou esclavage ou soumission envers plus grand que moi! Je vous laisse; je rentrerai à Paris mardi et espère que vous irez mieux et pourrez reprendre votre labeur.

Hélène Metzger

HÉLÈNE METZGER TO ÉMILE MEYERSON: AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Brussels, 6 May, 1933
11, Rue d'Egmont

Dear Sir,

I have learnt from my uncle[34] that you had to undergo a painful and disagreeable surgery; I am thinking of you, and I hope you will be better. . . . If you still harbor some friendship for me, please drop me a line and I will come to distract you by resuming our old lively philosophical discussions.

For my part, yesterday evening I had the occasion, in the course of a talk of which I do not ask you to approve entirely, to pay you a public tribute and to say to what extent I admire your work. And not your work alone; you yourself as well, who knew with unflagging tenacity to resolve the problem that throughout your life has been the subject of your reflection . . . . . .

Although you have experienced I know not what disappointment with respect to me, I hope you will be sensitive to this expression of absolute sincerity, of deep affection, of devotion, and of respect.

But, I pray you, do not try to modify me, change me, educate me, deform me, or, in a purely school-like manner, be my "schoolmaster." I have always considered as a "potential" enemy whatever individual (a parent, a teacher, a physician, etc.) who is invested with a little bit of authority and who wants to use his[35] prestige in order to impose upon me his ideas or way of seeing things . . . I am an inborn democrat, and with respect to the use of the intelligence and the will which Heaven has bestowed upon each of us, I wish that we[36] be responsible for our own faults only, not for those that others impose upon us; and also for our errors alone; if I err—show it to me, but do not use your superiority, the fact that you are a great philosopher,

[34] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857–1939).

[35] The French does not distinguish between "his" and "her." To write "his or her" would have been anachronistic; and Metzger clearly had men in mind.

[36] Perhaps the correct translation is "I," with the rest of the sentence in the first person singular as well. Metzger wrote "responsable" in the singular and may have intended the "pluriel de modestie," often used in French academic writing.

as an argument . . . In the Republic of the minds, we are all equal and you must prove that reason is on your side, not impose it by force or by intimidation.

The view of a brilliant work suffices to arouse my emulation, [it does] not [arouse] a need to submit to it or to its author. When I read you, I do not feel humble, or like a little girl in the presence of your greatness; [rather] I desire to work more and better. Like Correggio or Montesquieu, I want to cry out: "I, too, am a painter."[37]

Do not anymore take me for a child, for a student, but for a woman of a mature age, who has very much suffered by repeated awful mourning and by a very serious illness. From certain aspects, you could find that I have grown old too quickly . . . but in fact I am 43 years old; I could be a grandmother, like some of my friends. It is a fact that I am not a young woman; it is also a fact that I suffer from heart attacks and from hypersensitivity, which I know is exaggerated, but which is a result of my tachycardia which any emotion aggravates; after hearing certain things I am ill for a whole day and cannot work. . . .

You know that throughout my entire life, the entire joy and the entire endeavor of my life have been philosophical reflection; it is abusive to ask of me, without a valid reason, to go back to school, to learn anew what I was not allowed to be taught in my childhood . . . or at least, I want to be the only one to judge the effort I have to make and for which I am not accountable to anyone and [I want] to carry to its end, following my own directions, the work that I wish to accomplish and which I have begun. What I confided to you concerning my deficiencies and certain failings and fatigues, and concerning my defective education, provide the proof of my friendship for you, and of my confidence too. —Do not ever use these in order to crush me or diminish me . . . I owe to the public nothing except my work; the preparation of that work concerns me alone.

Now, rereading my letter, I find that I have not enough displayed all the admiration I have for you and which is all the more valuable as it does not come from any subordination or enslavement, or submission to someone who is greater than I am! I must take leave; I will come back to Paris on Tuesday and hope you will feel better and will be able to resume your labor.

Hélène Metzger

[37] The sentence alludes to the Italian painter Antonio Allegri, known as "Il Correggio" (1489–1534), who, after receiving a painting by Raphael, said "Anch'io son pittore!" ("I, too, am a painter"). This is the last sentence in the preface of Montesquieu's *L'esprit des lois* (1748): "If this work meets with success, I shall owe it chiefly to the grandeur and majesty of the subject. However, I do not think that I have been totally deficient in point of genius. When I have seen what so many great men both in France, England, and Germany have said before me, I have been lost in admiration; but I have not lost my courage: I have said with Correggio, 'And I also am a painter.' " Quoted from Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws,* trans. Thomas Nugent, rev. by J. V. Prichard (London: Bell, 1914).