

LOVE THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH ABOUT EVERYTHING AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEF SEIFERT

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Josef Seifert received his doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Salzburg in 1969 and, under Professor Robert Spaemann, his habilitation from the University of Munich (Privatdozent) in 1975. He studied mainly under Balduin Schwarz, the most distinguished German former student of Dietrich von Hildebrand, at the University of Salzburg, and under Gabriel Marcel in Paris. His closest teacher was Dietrich von Hildebrand.

From 1973 to 1980 Seifert was Professor and Director of the doctoral program of Philosophy at the University of Dallas. In 1980 Seifert co-founded and became Director of the International Academy of Philosophy (IAP) in Irving, Texas; he has been Rector of the IAP in Liechtenstein since 1986, and of the IAP at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile en Santiago (IAP-PUC) since 2004. He is currently also Rector and full time Professor of Philosophy at the IAP, and Profesor titular asociado de la Facultad de Filosofía de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile en Santiago.

This is the written text (much enlarged and completely revised by Josef Seifert) of an interview with Rodrigo Guerra, at the Cisav.

GUERRA: I am honored with this interview, both because you are the professor to whom I owe my own personal incursion into Phenomenology and because I have the most joyful chance to encounter you in the Center for Advanced Social Research: thank you for your visit.

I believe that you can help us to discover in Mexico, in Latin America, what may be the importance of Realist Phenomenology. I also believe that there is no better way to that account than trying to recognize it through your person and through the very path you have followed. Therefore, I would like to begin asking you some questions regarding your own philosophical journey. How did you discover Phenomenological Realism? Who were the main teachers that inspired you during your first studies? What are the main philosophical influences that you received?

SEIFERT: Quite a few questions. Well. Let's see. I had the good fortune of getting to know one of the greatest phenomenological realists and philosophers of the last century, Dietrich von Hildebrand, already in 1948, when I was three years old, because long before then my mother had studied with him in Munich and my parents became close friends with him. During his yearly trips to Europe from 1948 on (after his dramatic flight from the Nazis and emigration to the USA), he passed regularly some time in our house in Salzburg. I sat, from my 9th or 10th year of life on, in some of the lectures he gave in our home for an enlarged private circle of family members and guests. He radiated a deep seriousness and love of Philosophy, and most of all an intense love of Christ, but also a quite unique kindness and warmth; these qualities as well as his great sense of humor and the excellent jokes he told in a very witty way, and the many songs and classical melodies he sang, made him quite uniquely attractive for many people including, and especially, children and uneducated persons, whom he enjoyed more than Professors or state dignitaries and treated with the same or even greater warmth and respect. When I was twelve, I decided to study Philosophy and read some of his books. Amongst others, I read

his *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft* (*Metaphysics of Community*), one of his most beautiful but also most difficult books, and was very enthusiastic about it. This work is not yet translated into English or Spanish, only into Russian. At the age of fourteen, I read some dialogues of Plato and Kant's *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that can pretend to be a science* (1783). Reading Kant, I thought: On the one hand, his distinction between analytic and synthetic *a priori* propositions is fantastic and very important. But, on the other hand, I found his position on the subjective origin of the synthetic *a priori* knowledge and his negation of the knowledge of things in themselves to be an attack on the very core of human knowledge, of Philosophy and of man himself. It seemed impossible to me to retain my philosophical and religious realist world view and to avoid the obvious earth-shaking consequences of Kant's rejection of philosophical realism as mere dogmatism, without finding an answer to the tremendous challenge posed by the subjective Copernican turn advocated by him. Just at that time I had the good fortune of becoming acquainted with Hildebrand's and Reinach's stunning discovery and demonstration of an objective synthetic *a priori* rooted in the necessary essences of things themselves and in themselves, a necessity wholly different from the one with which Kant wanted to replace it: a subjective necessity of human thinking. Therefore, I decided to deepen my knowledge of what is much more than a "realist turn": namely a discovery of a lucidly intelligible necessary essence of many "things themselves", a discovery which shatters any relativism and subjectivism that locks the person into his subjectivity and cuts him off the real world. Thus I decided to spend the rest of my academic life fighting against any empiricist Philosophy which Kant had so brilliantly refuted as well as against any Kantian Philosophy which denied the objective truth of synthetic *a priori* propositions so clearly elaborated by phenomenological realists.

I became acquainted with Hildebrand's and Reinach's stunning discovery of an objective synthetic *a priori* rooted in the necessary essences of things in themselves, reading the book of Dietrich

von Hildebrand *What is Philosophy?*, in its earlier German edition: *Meaning of Philosophical Questioning and Knowing*. Studying *What is Philosophy?*, particularly chapter four on the object and nature of philosophical knowledge, was quite a crucial step for me. For it distinguished clearly accidental such-being unities ("essences" deprived of any inner meaningful unity) from meaningful but contingent essences that could be different from what they are and contain other elements in their such-being unity or essence. For the reason of their non-necessity, these essences require the methods of empirical science to be known. Both of these Hildebrand distinguishes from those essences which are absolutely necessary in themselves, supremely intelligible, and thus allow indubitable certainty, as we find them among the objects of mathematical and philosophical knowledge. This object of philosophical knowledge radically differs from the construct of subjective a priori necessities of thought as Kant misinterpreted them. This text and Adolf Reinach's *What is Phenomenology?*, originally conceived as a lecture entitled *Über Phänomenologie (Concerning Phenomenology)*,¹ are a *Magna Carta* of Phenomenological Realism.² And, of course, we must take into account Husserl's *Prolegomena to his Logical Investigations* and his whole fight against the Psychologistic Logic, which is fundamentally a subjectivist and neo-Kantian kind of Logic that dissolves or, better said, negates the absoluteness and objectivity

¹ See: von Hildebrand, Dietrich. 1950. *Der Sinn philosophischen Fragens und Erkennens*, Bonn: Peter Hanstein, ed.; 2001. *Che cos'è la filosofia?/What Is Philosophy?*, Milano, Bompiani Testi a fronte, English-Italian ed. See also: REINACH, Adolf. Spring 1969. "Über Phänomenologie" in REINACH, Adolf. *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Ausgabe mit Kommentar*. Bd. I: *Die Werke*, Teil I: Kritische Neuausgabe (1905-1914), Teil II: Nachgelassene Texte (1906-1917), s. 531-550; Spring 1950. "Concerning Phenomenology" in *The Personalist* 50. WILLARD, Dallas, transl. from German. pp. 194-221. Reprinted in *Perspectives in Philosophy*. 1961 and 1969. New York: Holt, Reinhart, & Winston. Beck, Robert N. ed.

² One might quote here some other works such as Max Scheler's "Vom Wesen der Philosophie. Der philosophische Aufschwung und die moralischen Vorbedingungen", in Scheler, Max. 1979. *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (Erkenntnislehre und Metaphysik), Schriften aus dem Nachlass Band II, herausgegeben mit einem Anhang von Manfred S. Frings. Bern: Francke Verlag. s. 61-99, and many others.

of the laws of Logic.³ It reduces the principle of contradiction, for example, to a mere psychological law which amounts to being the mere impossibility of two contradictory judgments coexisting in the same consciousness, instead of being the objective and necessary truth that of two contradictory propositions not both can be true (in the same sense, at the same time, etc.).

I was persuaded by the arguments of Husserl, by the distinctions he uses in order to show that these logical principles are in no way laws of psychology and empirical laws, but that they are intrinsically necessary truths, of absolute validity, and not just something subjective, depending on our thought. This way, by grasping the truth of what Husserl, Reinach and Hildebrand showed, I started refining and developing my own thought. For we learn to philosophize on our own not primarily by coming up with entirely new discoveries and distinctions, but by knowing ourselves things themselves, regardless of whether or not other philosophers have seen them before us.

I think I also discovered Phenomenological Realism by actually doing it, already very early in my youth, first addressing the questions of the objectivity of beauty, and the essence of forgiveness (on both I have written, when I was about 14, papers which I showed Hildebrand who gave them high praise and with whose content I am still happy today). Through discovering the intelligibility of the essences of things, particularly of the human acts of forgiving and asking forgiveness, I discovered in a very overwhelming and personal way the human capacity to penetrate into some essential structures that are in no way up to our own making, nor can we decree or change or redefine them in any arbitrary way. Rather, we discover them, without using the methods of empirical science and experiment but rather a number of philosophical methods.

³ See: Husserl, Edmund. 1975. *Logische Untersuchungen*. Text der ersten und zweiten Auflage, Bd I: Prolegomena zu einer reinen Logik, hrsg.v. E. Holenstein, Husserliana, Bd. xviii. Den Haag: M. Nijhoff; 1970. *Logical Investigations*, London, Routledge & Keegan Paul. Findlay, J. N., transl.

These intrinsically necessary essential forms characterize things, values, and human acts themselves in their objective essence. Thus Phenomenological Realism constituted a splendid confirmation of Plato's discovery of the eternal forms (ideas) but far more rigorous elaboration of the possibility of knowing them than Plato's obscure theory of *anamnesis* (recollection). In this way I found a deep continuity between Plato's discovery of the eternal forms that I had encountered in Plato's works, particularly in the sixth and seventh book of the *Republic* and in the *Phaedo*, where the discovery of immutable essential forms is linked to the discovery of the human soul, which turned into a second central theme of my philosophical investigations.⁴ That was the beginning of my philosophical journey.

I will omit here mention of an important experience in my personal and philosophical life, a semester I spent in the Spring of 1964 in Paris and an encounter with the philosopher Gabriel Marcel and his philosophical "Friday night circle", a very formative experience of mine of which Rocco Buttiglione speaks at some length in his Introduction to my book *Essere e persona*. Gabriel Marcel was an original thinker whose thought and method had much in common with that of "phenomenological realists" and whose careful studies into community, friendship, "I-Thou relations", restlessness, etc. were greatly inspiring for me.⁵

Then, at the University of Salzburg, from the Fall of 1964 on, I was a student of Balduin Schwarz (who was one of the first disciples of Dietrich von Hildebrand and had been closely associated with Hildebrand from Hildebrand's early Munich years on in the 1920ies until his death). There, I studied together with three other well

4 I dedicated a book to elaborating this affinity already emphasized by Reinach and Hildebrand: Seifert, Josef. 2000. *Ritornare a Platone. Im Anhang eine unveröffentlichte Schrift Adolf Reinachs*. Milano, Vita e Pensiero. Grgenti, Giuseppe, ed., Prefac, and transl. Studi e testi, vol. 81.

5 See especially Marcel, Gabriel. 1970. *The Mystery of Being*. Chicago. 6th ed. HAGUE, Rene, transl.; 1952. *Das Geheimnis des Seins*. 2 Bde.

known phenomenological realists who were my colleagues and friends: John F. Crosby, Fritz Wenisch, and Damian Fedoryka, who were fellow students of Schwarz.⁶ Previous to this, already during my high school years, with Fritz Wenisch and his brother Bernhard and other interested friends, we formed a philosophical circle and met in my parents' house, during vacation times, etc. This "Salzburg Philosophical and Phenomenological Circle" received its most important boost later during our university studies through an extraordinary cycle of lectures, the most profound and striking ones I ever have attended, delivered by Dietrich von Hildebrand at the University of Salzburg in 1964 (at age 75), on the essence and value of human knowledge, and by a seminar he taught on "Spirit and Person" (Geist und Person). The phenomenological circle in Salzburg was also joined for a few years by a student of Scheler and important thinker in his own right, Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg who spent a few years in Salzburg as visiting Professor,⁷ contributing as well to the formation of a living community of many persons who taught or studied at the University of Salzburg and were, in different degrees, phenomenological realists.

This was, so to speak, the concrete historical background of how I came into contact with Phenomenological Realism as a Philosophy that radically broke with the empiricism and positivism of the Vienna circle and other similar schools, as well as with the Kantian and Neo-Kantian subjectivist interpretation of a priori knowledge

⁶ See for instance Crosby, John F. 1996. *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America Press; 2004. *Personalist Papers*. Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America Press. See WENISCH, Fritz. 1976. *Die Philosophie und ihre Methode*. Salzburg: A. Pustet; 1973. *Die Objektivität der Werte*, Regensburg. Habbel Verlag, Josef; "Insight and Objective Necessity—A Demonstration of the Existence of Propositions Which Are Simultaneously Informative and Necessarily True?". 1988. *Aletheia* 4, pp. 107-197. Fedoryka received his degrees from the University of Louvain, Fordham University and the University of Salzburg. His main area of interests are the Philosophy of the Person and Ethics, and, in particular, the thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand and Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II.

⁷ See Hengstenberg, Hans-Eduard. 1966. *Philosophische Anthropologie*. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer; 1950. *Autonomismus und Transzendenzphilosophie*. Heidelberg, F.H. Kerle Verlag; 1969. *Grundlegung der Ethik*. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer.

as being rooted merely in purely subjective forms of human intuition, categories and ideas, barred from any access to things in themselves.

GUERRA: I have a treasured memory of the beautiful lecture pronounced by Dr. Crosby in 2001, where he claimed that the philosophical method of the International Academy of Philosophy in Lichtenstein was the *communio*. The general idea consisted of a Philosophy built in a very communitarian way: sharing and discussing ideas –the so called “Common Seminar” was a very important experience for the students who participated in the Academy–. Please, tell us about how those concerns are related in your experience, as founder and rector of the Academy of Philosophy.

SEIFERT: I think that friendship certainly is a key element to a good and flourishing philosophical community and I am happy to find it here in Mexico at the CISAV and to have found it recently in the IAP-IFES in Granada, Spain, on our new IAP-Campus. At the time I was studying for the first semester, in the Fall of 1963, at the Institut für Philosophie,⁸ this way of doing Philosophy, as a dialogue amongst friends in pursuit of truth, was almost entirely absent. Maybe that's why since very early in my student years, I had always hoped to found some kind of school that would be an actual community of persons in dialogue, but not just any kind of community dedicated to philosophical conversation: it had to be one bound together by a serious search for truth, whose members were not just coming together discussing, but a community of friends united by the unambiguous and unwavering quest for truth, and by certain fundamental values and attitudes inseparable from such a search which include an attitude of fundamental openness to being and truth and a rejection of any kind of ideology. Because of this, we

⁸ This Institute had been, as an independent Pontifical Institute, the only remainder of the old Benedictine University of Salzburg which Josef II closed down; thus this Institute preceded the new founding of the University of Salzburg in 1964.

took seriously (and later modified) the kind of “Hippocratic Oath of Philosophers” sworn at the doctoral graduation ceremony of the IAP, an oath which, like the medical Hippocratic oath, emphasized the inseparability of philosophical knowledge from certain moral virtues such as the love of truth.

If based on such a foundation, even the most passionate philosophical debate would be peaceful, considering that it would spring from a spirit of mutual respect and mutual friendship. I think that such a dialogue is much more fruitful than if philosophical studies and debates occur between opponents with no bonds of friendship and of shared love of truth and wisdom between them, though also such experiences can lead to a philosophical awakening and may render us relatively free from the danger of philosophizing comfortably within a closed circle of friends who do not cope with radical challenges that call for a critical examination of the foundations of Philosophy. The IAP always sought to avoid this danger.

When, after the end of my studies I was named director of the Ph.D. program at the University of Dallas (UD), in 1972, I was 27 years old. There, a lot of philosophical discussions between myself and other colleagues and students occurred that led to public debate, sparked by a philosophical controversy I had with an “existentialist Thomist”, Professor Fritz Wilhelmsen.⁹ The debate style, also used in certain public discussions in the undergraduate program of UD, is rather usual in America and it helped to shape the ideal of the International Academy of Philosophy first founded in 1980 in Texas, then refounded in the Principality of Liechtenstein in 1986. But, all in all, that kind of discussion was something very different from what we understood to be the spirit of our doctoral program of Philosophy at the University of Dallas, and later on of the Academy,

⁹ Particularly about Étienne Gilson, see: Wilhelmsen, Frederick D. 1952. *Being and Some Philosophers*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press. 2nd ed.; 1970. *The Paradoxical Structure of Existence*. Irving, University of Dallas Press.

expressed in the Common Seminar mentioned by you, whose formal structure requires a properly philosophical (not historical) exposition made by a student (who should quote or refer to other authors solely in the footnotes) on a purely philosophical topic, one or two short replies by other students, followed by a general discussion among the entire faculty and students who participate in this seminar. Apart from this more technical structure, the common seminar, still continued in the IAP-PUC in Chile from 2004 to 2012 and now, since 2011, in Granada at the IAP-IFES, embodies what John Crosby said about friendship, but also, by renouncing any discussion of the thought of other philosophers in order to confine oneself rigorously to the discussion of properly philosophical topics, the spirit of pure Philosophy turning to things themselves.

When the University of Dallas, under a new president, turned the Ph.D. program committed to these ideals that we had built up there, into a purely historical one, the frustration of our faculty and students led in 1980 to the foundation of the International Academy of Philosophy in Irving, Texas, in a former house home we were able to buy there. Unlike schools dominated by a merely historical approach to Philosophy, the Academy would have, as its central idea and concern, the pursuit of truth through a *sympilosophein*, a philosophizing together in a genuine love of truth, and its pedagogical goal was to inspire students to philosophize, to become philosophers. To characterize this approach to Philosophy, we chose the motto "Diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus" ("Love the whole truth, and love it in everything"). This motto is almost a literal quote from the sixth book of Plato's *Republic*, and thus expresses a classical and very old ideal, very much present in the Platonic dialogues. This understanding of Philosophy certainly is an experience of more than 2000 years that we all inherited from Socrates and Plato: a dialogue, the sort of conversation with others in which you philosophize about things themselves, receive criticism and must try to respond to it. It is an excellent instrument not to fall into falsehood: to submit one's ideas to others, for them to be criticized in the spirit of a sincere quest for knowledge of

truth. It most certainly helps us to find our errors, to discover our weaknesses and our strengths, and to advance in the knowledge of truth.

The International Academy of Philosophy founded in 1980 in Texas, as well as it was refounded 1986 in Liechtenstein and continued on two further *campi* in Santiago de Chile (2004-2012) and in Granada (Spain, 2011-), was rooted from its beginning in this ideal which already characterized its prehistory in the form of the Ph.D. program in Philosophy instituted at the University of Dallas in 1973.

A rigorous search for knowledge of things themselves in a community of friends is the very spirit of the Common Seminar, which has the mentioned dialogical structure: first, one participant reads a 20 minute paper, then one or two others respond to the presentation and criticizes that paper, for ten minutes each. Following such a *dicitur/contra dicitur*, reminiscent also of the scholastic medieval method, a discussion is started in the hope that all the participants will progress in the knowledge of truth.

But not only the common seminar that gathers all professors and the entire student body of the IAP, also the single classes at the Academy are not mere expositions of philosophers and of their systems. In order to "examine everything", we certainly also offer historical courses and read the work of others, especially of the greatest philosophers. That shouldn't be missed by a good IAP-student and is fully compatible with the educational goal of the IAP: to teach and to learn philosophizing about things themselves. In other words, all philosophical matters discussed are approached from the point of view of pursuing and investigating truth itself, of trying to find out how things really are, not just investigating the opinions of philosophers. This motto could also be expressed in the sentence of Saint Thomas Aquinas inspired by a text of Aristotle that constitutes a perfect formulation of the ideal of Philosophy which the International Academy of Philosophy, now also in Granada, Spain, pursues (Aquinas, 1272-73: I, 22, no 9): "Studium philosophiae

non est ad hoc quod sciatur quod homines senserint, sed qualiter se habeat veritas rerum ("The study of Philosophy does not aim at knowing what people thought but what the truths of things is").

I have just read in Monterrey during a ceremony honoring one of the three first co-Directors of the IAP in Texas, the Mexican philosopher Agustín Basave, the beautiful text I mentioned and that inspired the motto of the Academy, the text from the sixth book of the *Republic* in which Plato describes the virtues of philosophers: philosophers should not care much for money, wealth, life and pleasures; they should even be ready to die rather than forsaking truth and justice. The Platonic Socrates claims that he who wants to be a philosopher must love truth, not only a part of it, but the whole truth, and to love it in everything. That is, so to speak, the core of being a philosopher. The most important thing for him is to love all truth and to hate all falsehood, from youth on onwards. And how can the philosopher pursue wisdom, Plato asks, if he does not love truth, for, he asks rhetorically, is there anything more akin to wisdom than truth? This grandiose vision of Philosophy and of the virtues of the philosopher stands in the heart of the IAP-spirit. and with the quote of this text I wish to conclude this Interview.

Let me tell you what happened to me once, when I was reading this text to young students. One day, after I finished explaining the virtues of the philosopher explained by Plato, a young girl from Tucson in Arizona (who was my freshman student in a "Introduction to Philosophy" course I offered in the undergraduate college of the University of Dallas) stood up, excited, agitated, almost furious. She almost yelled at me in a mixture of enthusiasm and reproach: "But, Dr. Seifert! If that is what a philosopher is, then none of our professors here are philosophers and also you are not a philosopher either!". I replied: "Making this statement, you prove that you understood this text very well, because to pursue truth in such a rigorous and radical way is most difficult. Therefore, none of us should pretend to be a philosopher already. Rather, we should humbly strive to acquire these virtues and become true philosophers".

GUERRA: I think that a realistic approach in the search of truth and the communitarian experience of Philosophy are linked in a particular way. They are, anyway, in the Academy, because it also draws from the tradition following the call “Back to the things in themselves!”, which the realists held against the nominalists and which Edmund Husserl made the maxim of phenomenological Philosophy: “Back to things themselves”. Please, help us to understand what Realist Philosophy can contribute to discovering the authentic meaning of this maxim of Phenomenology and how it differs, if at all, from Husserlian Phenomenology.

SEIFERT: It is difficult to say exactly what Phenomenological Realism is, but I think that perhaps its most decisive characteristic can best be described by contrasting it with Kant and the later Husserl. Phenomenological Realism is born from a discovery: We can participate intellectually in the intelligibility of things themselves, of the essences and intelligible structures of being, and understand that these intelligible first ontological and logical principles and all other laws of classical Logic, but also the essences of love, of forgiveness, of gratitude or of many ethical phenomena and of Law, of beauty, etc., are not, in any way, just pure objects of our intentional acts, but rather are essences and laws rooted in them that characterize being itself. I think that this is one of the central contributions of Phenomenological Realism, which in some ways coincides with the philosophy of Antonio Millán-Puelles and his stunningly complete and brilliant theory of the “pure object” in contrast to reality (though I in no way can share his anti-Platonic stance, banishing necessary “Essences” and *eide* as well as other ideal objects into the same sphere of irreal pure objects as fictions or objects of a dream).¹⁰ Of course, also Roman Ingarden, the great

¹⁰ See Millán-Puelles, Antonio. 1990. *Teoría del objeto puro*. Madrid, Ediciones RIALP; *The Theory of the Pure Object*. Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag. C. García Gómez, Jorge, transl. Seifert, Josef, ed; “Philosophie und Realistische Phänomenologie. Studien der Internationalen Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein”, Bd. 2. See also Seifert, Josef. “Preface” to Millan-Puelles, Antonio. 2001. *The Theory of the Pure Object*; 2001. “El papel de las irrealidades para los principios de contradicción y de razón suf-

Polish phenomenologist, is among the major representatives of Phenomenological Realism.¹¹ Also classical, medieval, and modern philosophers, including René Descartes in some of his insights, fall into that broad notion of Phenomenological Realism and can claim all authentic analyses of things themselves, of which there are many in Descartes, Phenomenological realists have, I believe, in developing a “fourth cogito” argument,¹² freed some of Descartes’ most important insights from serious errors and confusions and also raised the classical epistemological realism of Plato and Aristotle and their schools to a higher level of consciousness and careful analysis.¹³

There are many philosophers in the school of Phenomenological Realism, but I think that the authentic transcendence of human knowledge— which, incidentally, was the title of my doctoral thesis, later published as *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit (The Knowledge of Objective Truth)*—¹⁴ is the fulcrum towards the recognition of a

ficiente” in Seifert, Josef. 2001. *Realidad e irrealidad. Estudios en homenaje al Profesor Antonio Millán-Puelles*. Madrid, RIALP. Ibáñez-Martin, J.A., comp. pp. 119-152.

¹¹ See especially Ingarden, Roman. 1975. *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff. Hannibalsson, Arnór, transl.; 1965, 1965. *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*, Tübingen, Niemeyer Bd. I, Existentialontologie. Bd. II, 1, Formalontologie, 1. Teil Tübingen; 1973. *The Literary Work of Art*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press. Grabowicz, George G., transl.

¹² See von Hildebrand, Dietrich. 1994. “Das Cogito und die Erkenntnis der realen Welt”, Teilveröffentlichung der Salzburger Vorlesungen Hildebrands: ‘Wesen und Wert menschlicher Erkenntnis’. *Aletheia* 6/1993-1994. pp. 2- 27; see also Seifert, Josef. 1987. *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* in “Studies in Phenomenological and Classical Realism”. Boston and London, Routledge and Keegan Paul. 364 pp., re-published as e-book, August 2013. The Hungarian edition represents the most definitive and considerably enlarged edition of the work: 2013. *Vissza a magánvaló dolgokhoz*. Budapest, Kairosz Kiadó. Szalay, Mátyás, transl. and intro.

¹³ See on this SCHWARZ, Balduin. 1970. “Dietrich von Hildebrands Lehre von der Seinserfahrung in ihren philosophiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen” in Schwarz, B. (Hrsg.): *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein. Festgabe für Dietrich von Hildebrand zum 80. Geburtstag*. Regensburg, Habbel. pp. 33-51; Fedoryka, Kateryna. 1993/94. “Certitude and Contuition. St. Bonaventure’s Contributions to the Theory of Knowledge” in: *Aletheia* VI. S. 163197 and Seifert, Josef. 2000.

¹⁴ Seifert, Josef. 1976. *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis*. Salzburg, A. Pustet.

synthetic *a priori* that is not just rooted in our subjective structures of thinking, as Kant thought, but in the nature of things themselves. So, for example, if we understand, in Ethics, that morally good or evil acts and culpability or responsibility for acts are absolutely impossible without free will—moral goodness or evilness without free will being an absurdity—and that, therefore, free will is an absolute condition of any moral goodness or evilness of the person, what we understand is that it is not just the nature of the concept of the morally good or evil acts, but of the thing, of the very phenomenon of good and evil itself, that it is entirely rooted in free will. So—and I think the same applies to a million of other cases—, we understand that these intelligible, essential and necessary structures in the states of affairs are actually rooted in a world that is not at all just due to our subjective necessities of thinking.

Phenomenological Realism means to see this clearly and to understand the reasons for this assertion, to distinguish mere subjective laws of human thinking from intrinsically necessary laws that characterize the object, being itself, to take cognizance of the essential necessity of something that cannot be otherwise. These necessary essences, which allow for mathematical, logical, and philosophical knowledge, differ from contingent, non-necessary essences as that of a lion or of human blood, for example, which only empirical zoological and medical studies can come to know.

An example of states of affairs rooted in necessary essences is, for example, that moral responsibility cannot be without free will. Or, for example, two contradictory states of affairs cannot both obtain at the same time and place, in the same sense, etc. Or two contradictory propositions cannot simultaneously both be true. I think that when we reach such and innumerable other essentially necessary laws, states of affairs, and truths, we reach, in an amazing cognitive transcendence, out of our pure immanent conscious life and stream of consciousness, not only attaining noemata and intentional objects of consciousness, but truly grasping something that itself, in its own inner being and necessity, shows itself to our

minds. And to recognize such intrinsically necessary essences and states of affairs belongs, as Adolf Reinach put it, to the most important things on earth.

Phenomenological Realism, I think, proceeds from the discovery that human knowledge, particularly when it reaches an indubitable certainty about necessary or eternal truths, achieves an authentic transcendence. We are not solely confronted by pure intentions of objects, or *noemata*, which stand in front of our consciousness, as Brentano and Husserl showed: No, the objects of our intentional acts can be things themselves, of which we understand that they are quite autonomous with respect to our consciousness. (This is the result of extensive investigations laid down by Adolf Reinach, Dietrich von Hildebrand and many others, including myself in different works.¹⁵

GUERRA: For many contemporary phenomenologists, authentic Phenomenology is outlined by the first book of Husserl's *Ideas*. Such an approach is mostly based in a transcendental understanding of Phenomenology and, for many of those who stand for this conception, the so called *Prolegomena* of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* are not a main source of Phenomenology, but a series of pre-phenomenological considerations that have not yet reached a transcendental understanding of knowledge. The sort of Phenomenology you work in is mostly inspired in the *Prolegomena*, or in Reinach's *Concerning Phenomenology*. What would you say to transcendental phenomenologists: is your Philosophy, strictly speaking, a Phenomenology? Should we call your Philosophy differently, or add another name to it, like Realist Phenomenology?

SEIFERT: How we define Phenomenology depends, of course, both on how we understand Phenomenology and on how much authority we assign to Husserl in order to determine what it is. He was, in a certain way, the father of the Phenomenological

¹⁵ See Reinach, Adolf. 1969. pp. 194-221; 1993-1994 (1994), pp. 2-27; Seifert, Josef. 1987.

Movement, although this is not quite undisputed, since Alexander Pfänder and Max Scheler, both Realist phenomenologists, developed very similar ideas at the same time. So, it is not a totally clear case that it is Edmund Husserl who is supposed to tell us what Phenomenology is, although he certainly was the one who used the term most systematically and developed it as a theory that many of his disciples originally thought to be a new version of a neo-Platonic objectivist Philosophy. Many of his students, like Reinach and Hildebrand, left the Munich School and the psychologistic philosopher Theodor Lipps to study with Husserl in Göttingen, because they had discovered in Husserl a kind of renovator: he had developed a Philosophy that transcended Kantianism, Neo-Kantianism, psychologist, historical and many other forms of relativism. Those students were completely disillusioned when they witnessed, in 1913, what Husserl had done already in 1905 (in posthumously published lectures):¹⁶ Husserl had abandoned the kind of objectivism and recognition of absolute truth that had motivated them to be his students. Many interpreters say that this later Husserlian position is a simple consequence of his *Logical Investigations*. I disagree entirely with this view. At any rate, the principal reason why many students went to study with Husserl was his maxim expressed in the phrase: "Back to things themselves!", which, as you well know, since you wrote a beautiful book about it, should also be understood as a "Back to the person!"¹⁷

¹⁶ See Husserl, Edmund. 1950. pp. 81-83: "Unklar ist die Beziehung der Erkenntnis auf Transzendenten. Wann hätten wir Klarheit und wo hätten wir sie? Nun, wenn und wo uns das Wesen dieser Beziehung gegeben wäre, daß wir sie schauen könnten, dann würden wir die Möglichkeit der Erkenntnis (für die betreffende Erkenntnisartung, wo sie geleistet wäre) verstehen. Freilich erscheint diese Forderung eben von vornherein für alle transzendenten Erkenntnis unerfüllbar und damit auch transzendenten Erkenntnis unmöglich zu sein". See also: Husserl, Edmund. 1950, p. 84: "Wie Immanenz erkannt werden kann, ist verständlich, wie Transzendenz, unverständlich". The English translation fails to include these *Beilagen*: 1964. *The Idea of Phenomenology*. The Hague. Nijhoff, Martinus, William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian, transl.

¹⁷ See Guerra López, Rodrigo. 2002. *Volver a la persona. El método filosófico de Karol Wojtyla*. Madrid, Caparrós Editores, Colección "Esprit". Seifert, Josef, prologue.

Husserl's claim of our incapacity to go cognitively beyond the intentional act and its *noemata*, i.e., its immanent intentional objects, implies the (in my opinion completely uncritical, unfounded and contradictory) thesis that we cannot cognitively go through our acts to being itself and, therefore, according to Husserl, not say anything about things in themselves as they are in reality: we just have the possibility of grasping our *noemata* and the objects of our experiences, which depend on our acts, as the late Husserl claims. He contradicts with such a claim, his own *Logical Investigations*, especially the *Prolegomena*.¹⁸

Moreover, this claim of the absolute immanence of consciousness and its relation to intentional objects is self-contradictory, for in the same breath in which one negates a transcendent knowledge of things in themselves that are not purely intentional objects, one presupposes it: because one claims that it is in itself so that one

18 There he says for instance (Husserl, Edmund. 1970. Vol. I, ch. 8, § 51, p. 193); in my translation:

Evidence is, rather, nothing other than the "experience" of the truth. The truth is experienced, of course, in no other sense than in that in which something ideal can at all be an experience in a real act. In other words: Truth is an idea, the individual occurrence of which in the evident judgement is an actual experience. The evident judgement, however, is a consciousness of original data. The non-evident judgement is to the evident judgment analogous to what the arbitrary positing of an object is to its adequate perception. That which is adequately perceived is not merely something that is meant in some way, but rather is given originally in the act as what it is meant, that is to say, as itself present and grasped in its originality.....The analogy, which binds together all experiences that are given in this immediate way, leads then to analogous formulations: one calls the evidence a seeing, recognizing, grasping of the ("true") state of affairs that is given itself, that is to say, in a natural equivocation, of the truth.

Elsewhere, he states (Husserl, Edmund. 1970. Vol. 1, ch. 7, § 36, p. 125, line 9-15):

What is true, is absolute, is true "in itself;" the truth is identically one, whether it is grasped in a judgment by humans or non-humans, angels or gods. The logical laws and all of us speak of truth in this ideal unity, as opposed to the diversity of races, individuals, and experiences, if we are not confused, for instance, by relativism.

See also: Cajthaml, Martin. 2003. *Analyse und Kritik des Relativismus*. Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag.

is incapable of knowing being that is not merely an intentional object of consciousness, a *noema*. Asserting this state of affairs presupposes that this fact at least is not constituted as a mere object of intentional consciousness. For example, the later Husserl's claim that we are given to know *only* objects of our intentional consciousness (that are not more than this or of which we can at least not know that they are more than this) already presupposes that Husserl herewith asserts a state of affairs of which he believes (wrongly) that it is neither created nor constituted by the subject. To claim that we just know purely intentional objects of our consciousness is itself to assert that this is absolutely: so that things are truly that way and therefore that we do know at least one state of affairs that is *not just* an object of human consciousness. Not just Husserl's, but any kind of Idealism already implies the authentic transcendence of human knowledge, even when denying it.

So, I see true Phenomenology being entirely free from this immanentism of the later Husserl, and would reformulate it as not depending on these later Husserlian ideas but as standing only in an essential relation to the accomplishment of a going "back to things themselves", and thus would see Phenomenological Realism as the only kind of authentic Phenomenology that goes back to things themselves as they give themselves to us in their objective essences and real existence.¹⁹ If going back to things themselves is our goal, what we need is a method capable of avoiding premature systems and constructions, violations of the intelligible structures of being by all kinds of theories that deviate from the given. Moreover, if the fundamental essence of Phenomenology lies in its faithfulness and rigor of going back to things themselves, then with respect to

¹⁹ See: Seifert, Josef. 1977. "Essence and Existence. A New Foundation of Classical Metaphysics on the Basis of 'Phenomenological Realism,' and a Critical Investigation of 'Existentialist Thomism'" in *Aletheia* I, pp. 17-157; I, 2 (1977), pp. 371-459; 1996. *Sein und Wesen. Philosophie und Realistische Phänomenologie/ Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology. Studien der Internationalen Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein/Studies of the International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality Liechtenstein.* Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C. Buttiglione, Rocco and Josef Seifert, hrsg. ed. Band/Vol. 3.

Phenomenological Realism we are not in face of a particular new school within the broader school of Phenomenology, but in face of Philosophy pure and simple. If Phenomenology is supposed to use a method, or rather methods (in the plural),²⁰ of essential analysis, essential intuition, of insight into states of affairs, deductive logical arguments, different forms of knowing existence and really existing beings—as part of methods and forms of philosophical knowledge that lead back to things themselves, then we have every right in the world to criticize Husserl's idealist turn of thought; if the latter misconstrues the given. Then Transcendental Phenomenology is quite unphenomenological, regardless of whether it is undertaken by historically speaking the founder of the Phenomenological School. The principle "*Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas*" also applies here.

Expressed in still another way: I don't think that Husserl's *Ideas* as a whole work stand under the dictate of the strict Return to things themselves. On the contrary, I think that what Husserl passes, from 1913 on, as phenomenological Return to things themselves, is largely a huge construction that culminates in his Transcendental Phenomenology as expounded in his *Cartesian Meditations*. I am convinced, and have tried to show it in other works, that Husserl leaves in these works his original inspiration and is not at all really going back to things themselves.²¹

I don't feel forced to say: "Well, I am not a phenomenologist if I don't follow the transcendental turn of Phenomenology". Conceiving the essence of Phenomenology as seeking a faithful Return to

20 See Seifert, Josef. 2009. *Discours des Méthodes. The Methods of Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology*, Frankfurt/ Paris/ Ebikon/ Lancaster/ New Brunswick. Ontos-Verlag; 2008. *Discurso sobre los métodos. Filosofía y fenomenología realista*. Madrid, Encuentro.

21 See: Seifert, Josef. 2004-2005. "The Significance of Husserl's Logical Investigations for Realist Phenomenology and a Critique of Several 'Husserlian Theses' on Phenomenology. In Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Publication of Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1901/01-2001/2)", in: *Seminarios de Filosofía*. Santiago de Chile, Instituto de Filosofía. Vols. 17-18, pp. 133-190.

things themselves, I am entirely free to reject Husserl's claim that Phenomenological Realism is naïve or dogmatic, asserting the opposite: If any Phenomenology is naïve and uncritical, it is transcendental and any other Phenomenology that makes claims that are contrary to the self-given data, entangling itself in inner contradictions and deviating from the data. Identifying Phenomenology with Transcendental Phenomenology and looking down on realist phenomenologists as naïve has become a source of insults directed by followers of the "later Husserl" against phenomenological realists, but in no way proves that Phenomenological Realism is naïve or uncritical. On the contrary, the latter has offered refined distinctions and analyses that have shown that achieving its goal its possible and its rejection contradictory.

If someone disagrees, he should have to argue in order to show, by means of reasoning, of distinctions, of arguments, whether the attacks launched against Phenomenological Realism are justified or not. And I think that they are clearly not justified. Transcendental Phenomenology and the transcendental Kantian Philosophy both imply fundamental contradictions and, therefore, do not deserve the adjective Kant gave to his own Philosophy being a "critical Philosophy".

Instead of Realist Philosophy, Transcendental Philosophy could be called both naïve and dogmatic—but I don't want to hurl insults back to other philosophers. Yet I do think that it is profoundly unfair to call any Realist Philosophy "Dogmatism", as Kant does, while he believes that his own Philosophy would be "Critical" by definition. To call one's own Philosophy "Critical" and the Realism one attacks "Dogmatic", if such a naming is founded on confusions and misinterpretations, instead of on a critically examined truth, is itself a kind of "dogmatism" in a negative sense, a position which is blindly held and followed by many; such a "dogmatism" in the negative sense is found also in Kantianism and other schools. In fact, it is found in all traditions and schools when its members cease

to draw their Philosophy from a careful investigation of the given. To pretend to be a “critical philosopher” implies that there is an authentically speaking critical examination of its basis at its root. If Kantian Philosophy and the transcendental phenomenological turn are rooted in a *lack of distinctions*, they are not critical. (I tried to show this in a number of works).²²

There are all sorts of uncritically assumed contradictions in Kant as well as in Transcendental Phenomenology. One thing is certain: one must not operate in Philosophy with such slogans and catchwords as “Dogmatic” and “Critical” but, if designating a Philosophy in such terms, show why such adjectives are justified. And I think a careful and objective investigation shows that the “Return to things themselves!” is far more rigorously followed in realist Phenomenology than in Husserl’s transcendental turn that constitutes, much rather, a deviation from the “principle of principles” of Phenomenology:²³

GUERRA: As far as I understand, Phenomenological Realism responded to a very concrete challenge from a very peculiar

²² See, among others, Seifert, Josef. 2008; 2009); 2001. *Überwindung des Skandals der reinen Vernunft. Die Widerspruchsfreiheit der Wirklichkeit – trotz Kant*. Freiburg/ München, Karl Alber; 2007. *Superación del escándalo de la razón pura. La ausencia de contradicción de la realidad, a pesar de Kant*. Biblioteca filosófica El Carro Alado. Madrid, Ediciones Cristianidad. Rogelio Rovira, transl.; 1970. “Kritik am Relativismus und Immanentismus in E. Husserls *Cartesianischen Meditationen*. Die Aequivokationen im Ausdruck ‘transzendentales Ego’ an der Basis jedes transzendentalen Idealismus” in *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* XIV; 2009. *Wahrheit und Person. Vom Wesen der Seinswahrheit, Erkenntniswahrheit und Urteils wahrheit. De veritate – Über die Wahrheit*. Frankfurt/ Paris/ Ebikon/ Lancaster/ New Brunswick, Ontos-Verlag. Bd. I; 2009. *Der Streit um die Wahrheit. Wahrheit und Wahrheitstheorien. De Veritate – Über die Wahrheit. The Fight about Truth. Truth and Truth Theories*. Frankfurt/ Paris/ New Brunswick. Bd. II.

²³ See: Husserl, Edmund. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie in Husserliana*, vol. III/1, I. Karl Schuhmann, ed.; 1. Buch, text of 1.-3. edn, 1. Buch, 1. Abschnitt, § 24: „Doch genug der verkehrten Theorien. Am Prinzip aller Prinzipien: daß jede originär gebende Anschauung eine Rechtsquelle der Erkenntnis sei, daß alles, was sich uns in der ‘Intuition’ originär, (sozusagen in seiner leibhaften Wirklichkeit) darbietet, einfach hinzunehmen sei, als was es sich gibt, aber auch nur in den Schranken, in denen es sich da gibt, kann uns keine erdenkliche Theorie irre machen. Sehen wir doch ein, daß eine jede ihre Wahrheit nur aus den originären Gegebenheiten schöpfen könnte.“

situation of the Twentieth Century. Neo-Kantian, neo-Hegelian and neo-Marxist schools were spreading all over the world. In that context appeared Husserl's motto "Back to things in themselves!". Many of his students followed it in a programmatic and systematic way that helps us rediscover the truth. But it seems that those topics rooted in Realism are now placed in the past, enclosed in last century's discussions about, let's say, Critical and Transcendental Realism, or the kind of Thomist Realism that Etienne Gilson and others sustained.

Contemporary controversies, though, are linked to a Postmodern way of thinking, with a new kind of sensitivity and understanding of the human nature. A lot of questions have arisen in this new context—I am thinking, for instance, of the Analytical Philosophy and the contemporary French Philosophy—, questions about desire, pleasure, gender, liberty or subjectivity. Those discussions do not follow Kant any more, but Nietzsche, or at least a suspicious attitude towards reality, as if suspiciousness could be a valid methodological tool to face things themselves. What may the role of Phenomenological Realism be, then, in the contemporary debate, one which is very different from that of last century? What about our historical context, the beginning of the Twenty-first Century?

SEIFERT: You are calling me "old fashioned"? Well, I am not afraid of being old fashioned... But, jokes apart, your question is very interesting. It seems to me that the greatness or importance of a philosopher must not only be measured by whether at a certain historical time or at present he is or is not, was or wasn't, followed by many people. There are certain towering figures in the history of Philosophy who deserve to be critically examined at any time: quite a few. And if anything of what they said is true, it is so at any time; and if it is false, it is so at any time; and if it is important, it is always so. Nonetheless, you are no doubt right that, inasmuch as a philosopher living at a certain time is able to do so without diverting from his mission, he should consider what others think at his own time.

At the beginning of the Husserlian Phenomenology, as you have pointed out well, the big enemies fought against by Husserl, were the philosophies of neo-Kantians and psychologistic logicians. Now, certainly since then many other movements came up, already at the time of Husserl. There was, for instance, Wilhelm Dilthey's historicism and radical historical relativism. Later on, Heidegger and the Hermeneutical School, and many others posed new questions and advanced new positions. The "other side" to any philosophical knowledge, let's say "its opponent", changes a lot about which problems one tackles, how one proceeds and expresses oneself. In the second part of the last century and the beginning of the third millennium, there are, no doubt, different movements, different schools, new French philosophies, and so on. Some of them are very similar to previous positions in new garments, as it were.—I am a believer in the Old Testament word "*Nil sub sole novum*"²⁴ ("Nothing is new under the sun"). For instance, some forms of contemporary constructivist Philosophy and of the Philosophy of Language engage in positions very similar to what in the last century neo-Kantians, psychologists, and historical relativists held. They commit a very similar reduction of properly logical and ontological laws to subjective, linguistic laws or cultural factors. It is true that there are always new names, new authors, and new TV shows for those authors. Many things appear to be quite new. But I think that many of those ideas are really very old: most of those newest brands of relativism are already embraced by the Sophists in Plato's *Gorgias*, for instance.

I think that there are certain prominent issues—for example, true knowledge as opposed to erroneous claims—that reappear in many forms, under different garments, but they are basically the same things against which authentic philosophers of all times ought to struggle. Therefore, I don't think that we have to be changing

²⁴ Vulgate translation of Ecclesiastes 1:10, from the Hebrew אין כל מה ש מתחת תחת השמש (*en kol chadash tachat hashámesh*: "There is nothing new under the sun"); *nihil* ("nothing") *sub* ("under, beneath") *sóle* (ablative singular form of *sól*: "[the] sun") *novum* (neuter nominative singular form of *novus*, "new"): "Nothing new under the sun".

Philosophy all the time, due to the new ideas coming up, because, in fact, the essence of those ideas is nothing more than a newer version of a very old discovery or of an equally old error.

The idea of going “back to things themselves” means precisely that we must not just read the books of the great realist phenomenologists who called themselves thus and repeat what they have said, but that we ought to go and investigate “things themselves” on our own and always anew: we must only draw out, so to speak, new aspects of a reality that always was there, make new distinctions, analyze *phenomena* in a constantly growing way, whose newness however, does not contradict the fact that both the investigated data themselves, at least the most fundamental ones (prescinding from such things as cloning, organ transplantations, etc.), were always there, and that also some expression and some negation of them are very old.

But the richness of what is itself not new, demands that we always draw from this treasure old and new things. Otherwise, we shall become stagnant. It is a task of the philosopher to be in dialogue with the ideas (potentially a myriad) prevalent at his time, many of which are false but in all of which some truth is hidden and presupposed. To address both aspects of them is helpful and a very important part of a serious and critical realist phenomenological movement.

Your research center, Cisav, for example, does a precious work in that way. The research done here is a very important part of this movement, examining critically current philosophical movements and ideas and entering into dialogue with them.

GUERRA: Phenomenological Realism was linked to Personalism from the very beginning, already in Max Scheler, in Edith Stein and in Roman Ingarden’s works. We may, for instance, recognize in Edith Stein’s studies on the structure of the human person a very deep understanding of the human person as an entity of dignity, and so

on. How can we relate the insights of this philosophical method, Phenomenological Realism, with the anthropological conviction about the person as an end in itself, and Personalism?

SEIFERT: You are quite right. From the beginning, Scheler's Philosophy is conceived as Personalistic, just as Stein's, Hildebrand's, and many others. Max Scheler, for instance, helped to shape the ideal of a Personalistic Philosophy, for he unfolded powerfully his own understanding of the central place of the person, one that was, in some respects, present, in other respects, missing, in Kant's Philosophy and Ethics. Anyway, I think that authentic Personalism is already implicit in the demand to "return to things themselves and in themselves". For such a Return to things themselves also entails a particular return to the most important "beings" and things in themselves. The being of the person is the highest form of being, not only on earth, but also in the entire Universe, in reality itself. Therefore, a philosophical exploration of being certainly demands an exploration of the person, which is somehow the archetypical being. In comparison to the person, other beings are kinds of shadows, almost non-existing, to use Plato's Myth of the Cave. I think that it is clear that if you want to return to things in themselves, you should above all return to that being which has the highest place in the hierarchy of beings, namely the person, both the finite and absolute person. There is no justified doubt about this. There can be many arguments to support such a personalistic form of Realist Phenomenology, some of which I tried to develop in my book *Essere e Persona*.²⁵ Thus, in reply to your remarks, I think that there is a strict logical connection between the maxim *back to things themselves* and Personalistic Philosophy.

But, of course, there is also a historical explanation of their connection, which in my own life's history, has to do amongst other things with our International Academy of Philosophy in

²⁵ Seifert, Josef. 1989. *Essere e Persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica*. Mailand.

the Principality of Liechtenstein and at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (in Chile, it existed 2004-2012) and now in Granada, Spain, as IAP-IFES (2011 onwards). I discovered Wojtyła's book *The Acting Person*, and articles of many of the Polish Personalist ethicists of the same school, in 1979, and this encounter greatly inspired the founding of the IAP, particularly after Karol Wojtyła, Pope John Paul II, invited me to see him in 1980, a few months for the founding of the IAP in Texas, to speak about an article I had written about his *The Acting Person*.²⁶ We later read and discussed many of these works in the Academy, and invited them to teach there. Tadeusz Styczeń, possibly the most excellent student and disciple of Karol Wojtyła, became one of the first three co-directors of the International Academy of Philosophy at its very beginning of operation in 1980. These and others personalist philosophers, such as Professor Rocco Buttiglione, who was Prorector of the International Academy of Philosophy in Liechtenstein from 1986 on, were closely related to the IAP. Buttiglione wrote a book on the Personalistic Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła,²⁷ and his close collaboration with the IAP was a strong support of the Personalistic Philosophy in the Academy and its aspiration towards the ideal of a complete and well-rounded personalistic Philosophy, including not only a Personalistic Ethics but also a Personalistic Metaphysics and a Metaphysics of God.²⁸ Of course, long before the collaboration with the Polish school

26 Karol Wojtyła, 1979. *The Acting Person*. Boston, Reidel; see also the corrected text, authorized by the author, unpublished. The official copy is in the Library of the International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality Liechtenstein, Schibbogga 7 B-C, Bendern, Liechtenstein, and at the IAP-IFES.

27 See Buttiglione, Rocco. 1982. *Il Pensiero di Karol Wojtyła*. Milano, Jaca Book; 1997. *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of a Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*. See also Rocco Buttiglione's "Introduction" to my book *Essere e persona*.

28 See Buttiglione, Rocco. 1985. *Metafisica della conoscenza e politica in S. Tommaso d'Aquino*. Bologna, CSEO. To a personalistic metaphysics of God I dedicated a number of papers and two books: 1996. *Gott als Gottesbeweis. Eine phänomenologische Neubegründung des ontologischen Arguments*. Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C; 2010. *Erkenntnis des Vollkommenen. Wege der Vernunft zu Gott*. 2010. Bonn, Lepanto Verlag; 2013. *Conocimiento de Dios por las vías de la razón y del amor*. Madrid, Encuentro. With author's notes. Teruel, Pedro de Jesús, transl.

of Personalists Philosophy, the profoundly personalist thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand, Edith Stein, Max Scheler, and others was present in the IAP. The personalism in the Academy also led to collaborations and exchanges with groups that were not originally Phenomenologist Realists, but nonetheless were very close to this method and to this whole way of thinking.²⁹

GUERRA: In the Twentieth Century, there was a very intense controversy on whether there is, or not, a Christian Philosophy. But such discussions are now absent almost in every place. Is it possible to reintroduce the idea of Christian Philosophy in the new context we are living in, as Catholics, in the middle of the Year of Faith? What would you say?

SEIFERT: The notion of “Christian Philosophy” was indeed very much debated in the 1930’s. It was the theme of the French philosophical Society, with contributions by Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson and Emile Brevier, and others. Recently, I tried to bring some clarity to this notion, to distinguish the good and desirable forms of Christian Philosophy from the “bad ones”. In the end, I distinguished five bad or insufficient ways in which Philosophy may be called Christian and eleven good senses of Christian Philosophy.³⁰

The first almost meaningless sense of “Christian Philosophy” would be to call the Philosophy of any Christian “Christian Philosophy”. It is an over simplistic assumption to think that by confessing the Christian faith, the Philosophy of an author may be called “Christian Philosophy.” I think that this is a very weak, insignificant and useless

²⁹ Also the relation to distinguished philosophers such as John Finnis and bioethicists led to such relations between Realist Phenomenology and other personalists. See also for example, my article: 2013. “Sobre el libro de Juan Manuel Burgos *Introducción al personalismo*” in *Persona. Revista Iberoamericana de Personalismo Comunitario*. N°22, año VIII. pp- 12-21.

³⁰ See: Seifert, Josef. 2013. *Filosofia cristiana e libertà*. A cura di Gian Paolo Terravecchia. Brescia, Morcelliana. This book will be published, in a larger version, 2014 by St. Augustine Press.

sense of "Christian Philosophy", because Christians have defended all sorts of ideas, many of which, often without them noticing it, are quite incompatible with Christianity.

Another wrong understanding of Christian Philosophy would be fideism. Some reformed philosophers defended the notion of a reason so corrupt by original sin that they concluded that we simply cannot achieve any rational knowledge of reality, of God, of Ethics, and so on—perhaps apart from logic and linguistic Philosophy—, unless we made the Christian faith the basis for all Philosophy. I think that this is quite mistaken and I reject it for many reasons. I developed many arguments against this kind of understanding "Christian Philosophy" and I think it entails an ultimately unjustified kind of complete distrust of the capacity of human reason to know truth. It denies to human reason the capacity to know reality. Besides, what a Christian philosopher says as such, and least of all a fideism that denies that non-Christians possess a natural ethical and other philosophical knowledge, is never simply based on what Scriptures say. Fideism is thereby also contradictory because the position it takes precisely is nowhere contained in the Scriptures and therefore cannot be defended upon its own premises. Above and beyond that, it is diametrically opposed to important parts of Scripture, such as Romans which insists that all men were able to know God from the beginning of the world and therefore the pagan worshippers of idols have no excuse for their atheism and superstitious religions.

Then, you have the opposite of this fideistic interpretation of Christian Philosophy: a radical form of Rationalism, for example Hegelian Philosophy that, paying a lip-service to them, turned the basic tenets of Christian faith into something totally different by completely reinterpreting all contents of Revelation—Incarnation, Creation, etc.—and making them fit into a purely human rational system that has very little to do with Christianity, except for some analogies and terms borrowed from Christian Theology. After having re-interpreted and rejected the clear sense of the contents

of Christian faith, Hegel and other philosophers called their Gnostic reinterpretation of Christianity "Christian Philosophy", a step so harshly and justly criticized by Kierkegaard.³¹ There are some other senses in which the idea of Christian Philosophy or the content of Christian Philosophy are something quite wrong.

But then again, there are also many senses in which Christian Philosophy refers to a thought validly so named. In the first place, a Philosophy may be called Christian if it is compatible with the faith. Although this is a minimal condition for deserving being called "Christian", I think that this kind of Philosophy is most rare. There is actually not a single Philosophy known to me that would be *entirely compatible* with Christianity. In every of the greatest Christian philosophers you find certain errors, which are ultimately opposed to faith. For example, in Saint Thomas, the most famous and venerable of them, there are quite a few things which the Blessed Duns Scotus already criticized as being incompatible with Christianity. For example, certain things that Saint Thomas said about the principle of individuation and the individuation of the soul through matter (which in the last analysis, without Aquinas' seeing this, contradicts the individuality of angelic and divine persons as well as the life of the soul after death), or about delayed ensoulment, as well as some things about the supreme goal of all human actions consisting in happiness (the contradiction of such a *eudemonism* to love and the first commandments of love of God and of neighbor was shown by Duns Scotus), and so on.³² Of

³¹ See Kierkegaard, Søren. 1957/58. *Abschließende Unwissenschaftliche Nachschrift zu den philosophischen Brocken*. Düsseldorf/Köln. Ges. Werke 16. Abteilung. Teil I und II; or his 1951. *Das Buch Adler*, in: S. Kierkegaard, *Einübung im Christentum und anderes*. Köln und Olten, J. Hegner. W. Rest, ed. pp. 393-652.

³² See Scotus, Duns. 1962, *Philosophical Writings*. New York, 4th ed. Wolter, Alan, transl.; Hoeres, Walter. 1962. *Der Wille als reine Vollkommenheit nach Duns Scotus*. München, 1962; see also Styczeń, Tadeusz. 1979. "Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik" in Wojtyła, Karol, Andrzej Szostek and Tadeusz Styczeń. 1979. *Der Streit um den Menschen. Persönlicher Anspruch des Sittlichen*. Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker. s. 111-175; see: Seifert, Josef. 1994. "Essere Persona Come Perfezione Pura. Il Beato Duns Scoto e una nuova metafisica personalistica" in *De Homine, Dialogo di Filosofia* 11. Rome, Herder/Università Lat-

course, there are philosophies that, like that of Aquinas, taken as a whole, are deeply and largely compatible with faith even though they as well get quite a few things wrong and in that regard say things that are not compatible with Christian faith. In this sense, Augustine, Aquinas, Scotus, Bonaventure, Edith Stein, Hildebrand, and many other philosophers or their philosophies may be called "Christian". So, this is a first positive sense of Christian Philosophy: a human reason that philosophizes in a way that is compatible with Christianity. In that sense, it is even possible that a Philosophy compatible with faith is not developed by a Christian, but by a great Muslim or Jewish or non-believing philosopher, who may present a Philosophy compatible with Christian faith, even if he himself is not Christian. In contrast, there are many "Christian philosophers" who defend philosophies wholly incompatible with Christian faith, and of course many more other philosophers, like those of Marx, Nietzsche, Kant or Hegel, or materialist and deterministic philosophers, whose teachings are totally incompatible with faith, even if some of them call their Philosophy "Christian."

There is another valid sense of "Christian Philosophy" which Alvin Plantinga proposed in a speech he delivered during a Congress the IAP sponsored in Texas in 1983. A Christian Philosophy in this second sense would deal with those very fundamental topics which are presupposed or implied by faith: for example, it would deal with the soul and its immortality, the freedom of the will, the existence of God, etc., and not just with some logical and linguistic questions that are not relevant for faith. Plantinga argued that Christians must not allow themselves to be told by their contemporaries which are the important issues that deserve philosophical discussion.

eranense. pp. 57-75; and: 2005. "A vontade como perfeição pura e a nova concepção não-eudemonística do amor segundo Duns Scotus" in *Veritas. Philosophische Fakultät, PUCRS, Porto Alegre, Brasilien*. Hofmeister Pich, Roberto, transl. pp. 51-84; 2013. "Dietrich von Hildebrand on Benevolence in Love and Friendship: A Masterful Contribution to Perennial Philosophy" in *Journal of Philosophical Inquiry and Discussion: Selected Papers on the Philosophy of Dietrich von Hildebrand, Quaestiones Disputatae 3*, no. 2. pp. 85-106.

Another legitimate sense of Christian Philosophy is that of a Philosophy of Christian virtues or of other religious data such as the forgiving of sins as distinct from interhuman pardoning. This sense of Christian Philosophy we encounter in Hildebrand's chapter 11 of his book on the essence of love, or in a more directly religious context, in his *Transformation in Christ*. There, Hildebrand analyzes the virtues that are enjoined on us in Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*, and contrasted by Jesus in their newness with the virtues of pre-Christians (of the "ancients"). The *Transformation in Christ* is a religious book. But, at the same time, it is a philosophical work that contains a superb analysis on the essence of humility, of mercy, and of many other specifically Christian virtues. In the light of Christian faith, many very new virtues become possible as responses to the object of Christian faith. Take *caritas*. Christian charity is built on the faith that God is Love in Himself and that He loves us first and loves us so madly that He sent his only-begotten divine Son to redeem us and to undergo the most cruel Passion and Crucifixion, out of love for men ("*propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem*") in order to redeem us, and that he rose from the dead, inviting us to possess eternal life in heaven. If you have this vision of God and of the human person, another quality of love of God and of human persons is possible. This can be perceived clearly by somebody who does not believe in Christ. For example, the non Christian Henri Bergson in his book *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*³³ analyses the virtues of the Christian mystics as the highest forms of moral virtues, even though he, until his deathbed when he converted to Christian faith, didn't believe in the basis for those virtues, the overwhelmingly new revelation of the love of God and lovability of man. You can penetrate into the essence of the virtues of Christian charity and other specifically Christian moral phenomena even "from the outside". For me personally, it has been one of the deepest reasons to preserve my faith at a time of crisis in my youth to discover that attitudes and virtues which presuppose Christian faith to be real, like Christian charity, are nevertheless intelligible,

³³ Bergson, Henri. 1932. *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*. Paris, F. Altan.

understandable by the human mind in their inner necessity and intelligible beauty and superiority over purely natural virtues of the pagan. This struck me at the age of twelve and thirteen, when I underwent a crisis of faith, although I never abandoned the faith or left the Church. It was a wonderful discovery for me then, that you can penetrate philosophically and phenomenologically into the essence and beauty of these Christian virtues, which, in order to be motivated and hence in order to exist, presuppose the vision of God and man that is revealed in Christ, and yet have such an inner intelligibility, necessary essence and superior rationality that allows you to analyze them and to distinguish them clearly from such pseudo-virtues as false humility and many others. I owe this knowledge to Dietrich von Hildebrand and, to a far lesser extent, to Max Scheler and to Søren Kierkegaard. I think that understanding the *phenomena* of the specific new attitudes towards the possession of which all Christians should strive and which some saints already possessed and lived, is certainly a task for a Christian Philosophy.

Another positive sense of Christian Philosophy is the consideration that reality is better approached from both lights, faith and Philosophy. If Philosophy searches the truth, and the most central part of Truth is revealed to us by God, then the Christian philosopher can look at the same reality as illuminated by two lights, and *thereby improve* his purely rational philosophical understanding of things. For example: let us take Personalism. I think that you actually start to see certain things about the nature and dignity, as well as about the rights, of each human person, much more clearly when human reason cooperates with faith. Things like the value and dignity of each and every human person, the horror of slavery, etc., while they are accessible to reason as such and do not need faith to be known and knowable, still can be far better and more easily seen by human reason if the philosopher uses his reason to look upon a world that is also illumined by faith. There are many things that Plato and Aristotle could have seen about man and God, but they did not, at least not clearly, for example, the personhood of God. I think that human reason could always have seen that, but, as a

matter of fact, only when the two lights illumined the one reality, reason, so to speak, grew. It became more capable of detecting things by its own means, by its own methods, things that before had been overlooked by philosophers, even by the greatest philosophers of ancient times. Therefore, I think that this is an important sense of Christian Philosophy. In other words, basing my remarks on a beautiful image of Bonaventure: We see less well with one light (the light of human reason), as long as the other one (revealed truth) is absent. When we see the forest during the night, by means of nothing but the light of the moon, many things, forms and contours of the trees and landscape will be unclear to us. We could very easily mistake a concrete object of our perception for something else. But if we see the same forest in the light of the sun, then, even if the sun goes down, we still have the light of the moon, and we see now in the pure light of the moon many things that we didn't notice before. In the same way, if you have two lights, faith and reason, *ceteris paribus*, reason can see more than if you had one light only.

Finally, the last sense of Christian Philosophy I will mention today would designate with this term a Philosophy that is perfected by the Christian virtues of the philosopher. Ideally speaking, Christian virtues can purify the mind and, therefore, lead a Philosophy closer to the truth than one who is lacking in these virtues, for example that degree of humility which only saints possess, or an unwavering love of truth, even if the recognized truth condemns our actions or previous ideas. If, given two philosophers who have equal gifts, one is a saint and another is a great sinner, the saint will see much more likely and clearly the truth than the sinner, who may be ethically value-blind and, for example through his pride or wish to defend his evil actions, be blind in many other ways for reality.

I wish to add that the wholesome influence of faith on Philosophy only exists if the philosopher is really doing Philosophy. If he is only a believer but a lazy thinker, then his faith can even damage his Philosophy, because when some philosophical questions that

address themselves to human reason also receive a religious answer from faith, and when the given philosopher is lazy in his reasoning and argumentation, his faith will replace instead of inspiring his Philosophy, and thus deteriorate it. Also for this reason, apart from their genius, many ancient philosophers were much better philosophers than Christians who very piously say what the Bible and the Church teach us, but do not think anymore on their own.

Answering your question in one word: let us hope that the discussion about Christian Philosophy did not end with the debate of the 1930ies, and that we will see a study and promotion of the valid senses to which the somewhat misleading term "Christian Philosophy" refers.

GUERRA: There are several trends and movements in Contemporary Philosophy. Some of them could be recognized as Christian. But, it seems to me that, for instance, the so-called Thomistic School is going through a moment of crisis right now, for we cannot clearly identify any big figures among Thomist philosophers, like Cornelio Fabro or Etienne Gilson, who were very important in the XXth century .

On the other hand, I think that Contemporary Philosophy has discovered a new interest in authors such as Duns Scotus, Saint Bonaventure and Saint Augustine. There is a great number of people currently devoted to the study of saint Augustine, even if they are not Catholics, because they have encountered important truths for our time in his works. Do you think we are living a kind of revival of Augustinian Studies? Do you think this responds to our postmodern context?

SEIFERT: There have been various forms of Christian Philosophy throughout history and we cannot simply identify Christian with Thomistic Philosophy, even if the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII *Aeterni Patris* sounded a little like that (though Leo XIII did not intend this and even sharply criticized those Thomists who interpreted

him in this manner).³⁴ I think, such an absolute recommendation of Thomism as if it were the only truly Christian Philosophy and entirely free of any error would be a mistake. Even if some Popes really had made such assertions, which is subject of doubt, a believing Catholic would not be obliged to believe all any Pope said. Although Saint Thomas' Philosophy has a most impressive universality and, apart from Aquinas' own original insights into many data such as existing (*esse*) and countless truths, contains an overwhelming number of true insights of previous philosophers, it can neither be claimed that everything other philosophers had seen before and after Thomas, was contained and integrated in his thought, nor that his Philosophy was free of errors and confusing statements. And the task of a philosopher includes that of a critique of erroneous claims of Thomas as well as of other great thinkers. This does not diminish the importance of Thomistic Philosophy for the Church, nor the role Thomas' work has had in the fight against the great threat of the dissolution of Christianity in the 13th century and against modernism in the last one. No doubt Thomas was a towering figure in many regards, and not least because of the systematic and comprehensive character of the philosophical and theological work he left, with the *Summa theologiae* as its peak. His positive attitude towards Aristotle and the incorporation of the many truths Aristotle's work contains, and their separation from the Averroistic pantheist and otherwise deficient interpretations of Aristotle was a great deed, perhaps a uniquely great intellectual deed in the history of the Church, as Balduin Schwarz has pointed out.³⁵

34 See Seifert, Josef. 2003. *Aeterni Patris do Fides et Ratio*. Bezwarunkowe zobowiązanie katolickiego filozofa w stosunku do prawdy oraz wielkość i ograniczenia 'epoki tomizmu' w Kościele", in *Jan Paweł II, Fides et Ratio, Tekst i komentarze*, Redaktorzy Tadeusz Styczeń SDS and Wojciech Chudy. Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, Instytut Jana Pawła II, Lublin. pp. 331-344. See also: 1979-80. "La Philosophie et la Foi. La Tache du Philosophe Chrétien d'aujourd'hui"; "La filosofia y la fe. La labor del filósofo cristiano de hoy" in *La Filosofia del cristiano, hoy*. Cordoba, Argentina, Primer Congreso Mundial de Filosofia Cristiana).

35 "And at the same time, the unity of the living spiritual stream was preserved throughout the centuries.... The golden chain of history linked the present with the past.

Nevertheless, I think that to identify Christian Philosophy just as Thomistic Philosophy is historically and systematically speaking wrong. We must not forget that during the first twelve hundred years of Christianity—when Saint Thomas was not yet around—, we had many great philosophers and thinkers in the Church. The encounter with Aristotelian Philosophy—which first came through the Arabic Muslim philosophers Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd—had not yet happened and even later on not all the philosophers shared Thomas' partly justifiably, partly unjustifiably completely positive attitude towards Aristotle. For example, Bonaventure was an Augustinian who thought that Plato was incomparably superior to Aristotle, and considered Aristotle in many respects as an enemy of Christianity. He thought rightly that Aristotle committed many grave errors about God, the immortality of the soul, and so on. Thus a more balanced attitude towards Aristotle would include both insights of Aquinas and of Bonaventure.

Or take Augustinian Philosophy, for instance; it is immensely rich. His Philosophy of the mind is one of the deepest, as well as his analysis of memory, of time, etc. And it is a great thing to draw on these authors and treasures of the history of Christian Philosophy,

"Thomas may be regarded as the classical type of the genuine liberator from a spiritual crisis. He represents in the history of the mind the good and truly living forces, which a man awakens in himself when he integrates in his life something which he encounters at first as something threatening, or fascinating, but at any rate as something revolutionary and disruptive. Condition [of such an integration] is that he leads the line of life upward, uniting in his vibrant vigilant strength force, audacity and reverence, does not reject anything valuable, but lets it become stronger, does not anxiously repress anything new, but confronts it, resists its assault, banishes its power to fascinate, transforming it into the force of truth and making it part of himself and of his world. One ought to look onto Thomas, to the silent audacity of his spiritual deed, and not on any one of the overbearing revolutionaries without sense of responsibility in the sphere of the intellect, in order to get a sense of the significant truth of the famous saying of Nietzsche: "How much truth does a mind bear, how much truth does he dare? This became for me more and more the real criterion of value. Error is not blindness, error is cowardice... Every achievement, every step forward in knowledge follows from the courage, from the harshness against himself, from the clarity vis-à-vis oneself" (Schwarz, Balduin. 1937. *Ewige Philosophie. Gesetz und Freiheit in der Geistesgeschichte*. Leipzig, Verlag J. Hegner; 2000. 2. Aufl. Siegburg, Schmitt. pp. 120-123. Translation is mine).

above and beyond Thomism. This I see as an enrichment, though it has led in many to a loss of the kind of systematic form and foundations of Thomist philosophical education.

Above all, and herewith I touch the most central ideal of the International Academy of Philosophy: we should not content ourselves ever with the simple study of Thomas and of other great philosophers. We should use them as instruments and tools to enrich our understanding of reality and truth, of things themselves.

Although I don't know now of any towering contemporary Thomistic figures comparable to Fabro or Gilson,³⁶ I think that quite independently of that, i.e. even if towering Thomist minds are alive today, a renewed interest in Augustine, Bonaventure, Suarez and Duns Scotus, especially if the interest is more than historical and an appropriation and if instead the many treasures of truth in their works is sought, is not only quite understandable but is a very good thing at any time and therefore also in our current situation. If you "love all truth and love it in everything", you should seek for "truth" in every philosopher, not only in every Christian philosopher. Any ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary philosopher who opens our mind to truth should be welcomed as source of our knowledge. This follows from loving all truth, even the smallest fraction of it, as Plato stated so beautifully, thereby sketching the great ideal of a school of authentic learning to philosophize, which the International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality of Liechtenstein and at the Instituto de Filosofía Edith Stein (IFES) seeks to be. Let me conclude this Interview by reading the magnificent text from Plato's *Republic* (6.485a and ff.) that inspired the motto and maxim of the IAP: "*Diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus*" ("Amar toda verdad y amarla en todas sus partes"; "Alle Wahrheit lieben und sie in allem lieben"):

³⁶ With the latter I entered a critical dialogue in several works. For example: "Essence and Existence", cit.; *Sein und Wesen*, cit.; 1984. "Esse, Essence, and Infinity: a Dialogue with Existentialist Thomism" in *The New Scholasticism*.

"In the first place, as we began by observing, the nature of the philosopher has to be ascertained. We must come to an understanding about him, and, when we have done so, then, if I am not mistaken, we shall also acknowledge that such an union of qualities is possible, and that those in whom they are united, and those only, should be rulers in the State".

"What do you mean?"

"Let us suppose that philosophical minds always love knowledge of a sort which shows them the eternal nature not varying from generation and corruption".

"Agreed".

"And further", I said, "let us agree that they are lovers of all true being; there is no part whether greater or less, or more or less honourable, which they are willing to renounce; as we said before of the lover and the man of ambition".

"True".

"And if they are to be what we were describing, is there not another quality which they should also possess?"

"What quality?"

"Truthfulness: they will never intentionally receive into their mind falsehood, which is their detestation, and they will love the truth".

"Yes, that may be safely affirmed of them".

"'May be', my friend", I replied, "is not the word; say rather 'must be affirmed:' for he whose nature is amorous of anything can not help loving all that belongs or is akin to the object of his affections".

"Right", he said.

"And is there anything more akin to wisdom than truth?"

"How can there be?"

"Can the same nature be a lover of wisdom and a lover of falsehood?"

"Never".

"The true lover of learning then must from his earliest youth, as far as in him lies, desire all truth?"

"Assuredly".

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