

AUTO-PRESENTATION OF MY PHILOSOPHY

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Philosophical Autobiography. I fell in love with philosophy very early. A decisive event and great gift in my life was that the great philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand, one of the most outspoken intellectual enemies of Nazi ideology,¹ was a close friend of my parents and visited our house regularly from 1948 on, when he first returned to Europe. I was then only three years old.² After having had to flee Germany in 1933 and Austria in 1938, when the Nazis invaded Austria and sent immediately their death squad to his apartment in Vienna, from where he had fought Nazi ideology in Austria 1933-1938, in order to murder him, he emigrated first to Switzerland, then to France, and finally to the US (New York). Due to his unique, kind, brilliant mind, and radiant, loving and joyful personality, I discovered his unique lovability and loved him deeply already as a child. At twelve years of age, when passing through a kind of philosophical and religious crisis due to my contact with young relativists, materialists, and atheists, Hildebrand's philosophical lectures and discussions with young people and adults in our home provided me with a strong antidote against these errors. At the same age, I read Hildebrand's most difficult book *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, and he assured me in our conversations that I had understood it very well.

Although Hildebrand, and his indefatigable quest for philosophical truth, exerted an enormous impact on awakening my philosophical thinking, it was not he alone who stirred my interest in philosophy. I remember at nine years of age spending whole nights being tormented by the seeming incompatibility between my free will and divine foreknowledge; I almost despaired over not finding some ultimate philosophical answer to this profound puzzle that involves such deep

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¹See Dietrich von Hildebrand, *My Battle against Hitler*. Transl. by John Henry Crosby with John F. Crosby, (New York: Image, 2014).

²See Alice von Hildebrand, *The Soul of a Lion: Dietrich von Hildebrand, a Biography* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000).

questions as those about the nature of time, eternity, God, and free will.³ Between age 12 and 14, I was fascinated and deeply moved by Plato's works, especially the *Apology of Socrates* (of which I did dramatic public readings with friends), *Crito*, *Phaedo*, and *Gorgias*. I would say that my love and admiration for Plato clearly outweighs my great admiration for Aristotle - both regarding Plato's epistemology, his philosophy of the soul and its immortality, and his ethics. I also was, and always remained, profoundly impressed by Kant's genius manifested in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, and fascinated by his distinction between synthetic and analytic propositions *a priori*, by his formulation of the fate of metaphysics depending on knowing synthetic *a priori* propositions and by some of his great ethical insights. At the same time, his Copernican turn and subjectivist interpretation of synthetic *a priori* propositions filled me with a deep shock. I felt that this view shook the very foundation of everything I valued and of objective truth. I read at the same time Hildebrand's *Der Sinn philosophischen Fragens und Erkennens*,⁴ a book which defends a realist phenomenology and elaborates the "necessary essences" that cannot be explained as mere subjective categories or as constructs (such as Kant's "transcendental ideas" of God, soul, and world). These essences are intrinsically and absolutely necessary, supremely intelligible, and can be known with absolute certainty. I felt called to serve a philosophy that offers a liberation from what I perceived at age fourteen, and still keep perceiving, as Kant's destructive subjectivist Copernican turn in philosophy.

Around that time, I also read some major works of Hildebrand's main teacher Reinach that impressed me and inspired my epistemology and philosophy of law deeply. At age 14, I wrote my first philosophical essay on forgiveness and asking for forgiveness, an original and still unpublished work, inspired by Reinach's discovery of the social acts (acts such as promising, thanking, or asking, that must

³I addressed this question much later in "To Be a Person – To Be Free," in: Zofia J. Zdybicka, et al. (Ed.), *Freedom in Contemporary Culture. Acts of the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy. Vol I* (Lublin: The University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin, 1998), pp. 145-185; and in other works such as *Where was God in Auschwitz?* (Irving, TX/Gaflei, Liechtenstein/Santiago de Chile/Granada, Spain: The International Academy of Philosophy Press, Create Space, Kindle-Books, 2016).

⁴Later published in English and other languages in a more definitive version: Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Che cos'è la filosofia?/What Is Philosophy?*, English-Italian (Milano: Bompiani Testi a fronte, 2001).

be perceived by their addressee in order to exist). I applied these insights to the acts of asking for forgiveness and forgiving (when the latter does not remain a mere inner act but addresses itself to its addressee, destroying, as it were, a claim or debt the other person has towards him who forgives). In writing this essay on forgiveness, I had the overwhelming experience of the joy and greatness of a philosophical analysis of things themselves. Hildebrand praised this first work very highly, and with its basic results, I still agree 57 years later. Inspired by my great love for beauty and especially for classical music and Renaissance art, another Essay on the Objectivity of the Beauty of Music was born at the same time, in which I drew a lot from two articles of Hildebrand on beauty.⁵

My interest in philosophy wholly overshadowed my dedication to school work, such that I was punished, for example, by my math Professor in high school, because I read a book on Ethics during his class, which he obviously found a particular appalling contradiction between my actions and what I read about. My parents had at that time a hard time keeping me from leaving high school at age 14 to go to New York in order to study philosophy with Dietrich von Hildebrand during the last years of his academic teaching activity at Fordham. At that same time, I also founded a private philosophical circle that met in part during joint vacation and in part in my parents' home where we discussed, with friends that included the later philosopher Fritz Wenisch, many philosophical subjects including central topics of ethics, and confronted Nietzsche's philosophical nihilism, of which some members of our circle were very fond.

Diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus: (To love all truth and to love it in everything as goal). From my earliest youth on, my interest in philosophy was directed to "things themselves," and not centered on the opinions of various philosophers, however fascinating also their study was for me. But my *raison d'être* of philosophizing has always been the search for truth: in the philosophical and realist-phenomenological circle I founded in my youth, the doctoral program I directed at the University of Dallas 1973-1981, and the International Academy of Philosophy I founded in four different locations, always with the generous help of relatives, friends, and foundations. The first site of the International Academy of Philosophy, this school to learn "philosophize about things themselves," was

⁵See Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Die Menschheit am Scheideweg*, (Regensburg: Habel, 1955).

Dallas (Irving).⁶ Then it was transferred and founded anew in Liechtenstein (with the most generous help of Prince Nikolaus of Liechtenstein, Mr. Alphons Horten and many others), thereafter in Chile (with the most generous help of the PUC under its Rector Pedro Pablo Rosso), and now in Granada (IAP-IFES, 2011-), with the generous support of Don Javier Martínez, the archbishop of Granada. It was always inspired by this motto *diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus, to love all truth and to love it in everything*.

Realist Phenomenology and Epistemology - Receptive Transcendence of Knowledge of Things in Themselves and Critique of Relativism, Skepticism, Kant and Later Husserl: Given my prime interest in truth, it was logical that my first major philosophical work, my doctoral dissertation, was entitled *Knowledge of Objective Truth. The Transcendence of Man in Knowledge*, a topic I repeatedly took up in later works.⁷

In these writings, I tried to refute relativism in any of its many forms,

⁶Our first donor there was my mother who left us a large portion of a small inheritance she had received and Mr. Harry John, President and Founder of the De Rance Foundation, who was our main benefactor. Causing great harm to the IAP, Mr. John was later deprived of his money and influence by his wife and Vice-President Dr. Gallagher, which cost us our Princeton Campus directly facing Princeton University, which we had already picked out.

⁷Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis (Salzburg: A. Pustet, ²1976). The title of the dissertation was only Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis. In an abbreviated and revised edition: Unbezweifelbare Wahrheitserkenntnis. Jenseits von Skeptizismus und Diktatur des Relativismus. (Mainz: Patrimonium-Verlag, 2015). Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism (London: Routledge, 1987, 2013), Vissza a magánvaló dolgokhoz, (Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó, 2013). This Hungarian edition of Back to Things Themselves, translated and introduced by Mátyás Szalay, represents the most definitive and considerably enlarged edition of the work. The latest short presentation of its central thoughts or, as I believe, true insights, is the second chapter of my book Wahrheit und Person. Vom Wesen der Seinswahrheit, Erkenntniswahrheit und Urteilswahrheit. De veritate – Über die Wahrheit Bd. I (Frankfurt / Paris / Ebikon / Lancaster / New Brunswick: Ontos-Verlag, 2009) on the truth of knowledge; and my „The Receptive Transcendence of Knowledge and the ‘Fourth Cogito’: Towards a Content-full Notion of ‘Early Phenomenology’.“ Journal of East-West-Thought (JET). Spring Number 1, Vol. 4, March 2014, 1-26.

including the “transcendental relativism” present in Kant and in the late Husserl.⁸ My critique addresses not only, and not even mainly, the inner contradictions of relativism, even though I believe that they, too, constitute a clear refutation that neither Russell nor Heidegger or Gadamer were able to refute in spite of their subtle theories. Rather, above and beyond their contradictions, relativism and skepticism deny what I consider the most profound epistemological datum and essential trait of knowledge: the receptive transcendence of knowledge that allows any person, including the human person, to go beyond the confines of his immanent conscious life and to reach the being and essence of things in themselves. Relativists deny this; and yet, in whatever cognitive claim relativists make, they presuppose this essential mark of knowledge that, when deeply thought through, as by Augustine, overcomes any relativism.

I tried to show that the capacity for a receptive transcendence of human knowledge, reaching *things themselves* and *things in themselves* is so evidently given, that it is even presupposed by any attempt of Kant, Gadamer, and others to deny it. In order to substantiate this claim, I made many distinctions between different notions of “things in themselves,” making it clear that I do not defend the absurd or, as Gadamer puts it, diabolical claim to know the entirety of reality. (Obviously only an omniscient being could possess complete knowledge of things in themselves in the sense of the entirety of their being and the entirety of all their dimensions and aspects). No, I show, not by postulates or empty claims, but by indubitably certain rational cognitions, that in the first place with regard to “necessary essences” and eternal truths, which I call the first Archimedean point of indubitably certain knowledge, we can gain apodictically certain knowledge about certain necessary essences of things in themselves in all areas of being. There is also a second Archimedean point, accessible with equally indubitable knowledge to us: the real existence of my own person, and therefore of one person, in the “cogito”: *cogito; ergo sum; ergo esse est*. I think; I am; therefore being (a person) is. I am speaking of the phenomenological “fourth cogito” that bears many similarities to Augustine’s “first cogito”. Through it, we reach our own

⁸See my „Kritik am Relativismus und Immanentismus in E. Husserls Cartesianischen Meditationen. Die Aequivokationen im Ausdruck ‘transzendentes Ego’ an der Basis jedes transzendentalen Idealismus.“ Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie XIV, 1970. Der Widersinn des Relativismus: Befreiung von seiner Diktatur. (Mainz: Patrimonium-Verlag, 2016).

being as a being that is entirely autonomous with respect our human knowledge of it (in this sense a “thing in itself”), even though this being is our own and we can only know it through our own conscious acts and within the limitations of our cognitive powers. The rediscovery and further phenomenological development of the cogito-argument that combines insights into eternal truths with the immediate mental perception of really existing being in its highest form, the person, was another tremendous experience for me of philosophizing on my own, on Augustine’s and on Descartes’ shoulders. Fascinated by the original Augustinian texts, I later developed this realist “fourth cogito” further, showing that the Cartesian claim that only knowing “I exist” is indubitable while all eternal truths could be doubted is contradictory and that both kinds of indubitable knowledge (of general essences and of existing being) must be fully recognized. In addition, that this fourth Cogito completely refutes the subjectivist and relativist interpretation of Husserl’s “third cogito”.⁹

The real existence of God and the necessary divine essence can likewise be known by human reason with indubitable certainty. I shall call this the “third Archimedean point” of philosophical knowledge and will explain it below.

Philosophy of Truth and of Being: Logic and Metaphysics. Another related main interest of mine lies in a philosophy of being and of truth in a very comprehensive sense. Such a philosophy of truth that entails metaphysics, epistemology, and logic, includes a philosophy of ontological truth (truth of

⁹Dietrich von Hildebrand, during guest lectures at the University of Salzburg in 1964, expounded this realist version of the Cartesian insights (quite contrary to Husserl’s Cartesian Meditations) that I called the “fourth cogito”. See Dietrich von Hildebrand, „Das Cogito und die Erkenntnis der realen Welt. Teilveröffentlichung der Salzburger Vorlesungen Hildebrands (Salzburg, Herbst 1964): ‘Wesen und Wert menschlicher Erkenntnis’: (7. und 8. Vorlesung), *Aletheia* 6/1993-1994 (1994), 2- 27. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, hrsg. u. eingel. von S. Strasser, in: *Husserliana: Gesammelte Werke E. Husserls, auf Grund des Nachlasses veröffentlicht vom Husserl-Archiv (Louvain) unter der Leitung von H. L. Breda*. (Den Haag, Nijhoff 1950 – 1962), Bd. 1, 1950, and Josef Seifert, „Kritik am Relativismus und Immanentismus in E. Husserls Cartesianischen Meditationen. Die Aequivokationen im Ausdruck ‘transzendentes Ego’ an der Basis jedes transzendentalen Idealismus.“ *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie XIV*, 1970, as well as Josef Seifert, *Der Widersinn des Relativismus: Befreiung von seiner Diktatur*. (Mainz: Patrimonium-Verlag, 2016).

being),¹⁰ of cognitive truth,¹¹ of logical truth (the truth of judgments).¹² Above and beyond this, the metaphysical status of the comprehensive truth of all judgments including ideal judgments no man can think of,¹³ and of the absolute Truth as Person, is a topic of metaphysics and philosophy of religion at once that interested me passionately.¹⁴ There is also a clear need for extensive studies into the nature of the truth of propositions (judgments) and critique of many false truth theories. Some of these identify the truth of the judgment with the object of a consensus. Some are reached by rational discourse (Habermas), others with usefulness, still others with coherence, and again others with the correspondence of our judgments with those of a subject who judges with evidence, etc. I try to show that all efforts to substitute the fundamental essence of the truth of propositions as the adequation between judgments and states of affairs fail. They fail because they are intrinsically contradictory, and they cannot liberate themselves from the archdatum of truth as a peculiar correspondence between judgment and being (state of affairs). This contradiction presupposes in each affirmation or negation. I show this by means of an extensive critique of many truth theories and forms of relativism, which reinterpret truth in terms of what it is not.¹⁵ This critique gains weight if we elaborate the positive insights hidden in such false and flawed theories of truth and explore the many truly existing

¹⁰See my *Wahrheit und Person*, ch. 1.

¹¹*Ibid.*, ch. 2.

¹²*Ibid.*, ch. 3, and *Der Streit um die Wahrheit. Wahrheit und Wahrheitstheorien. De Veritate – Über die Wahrheit, Bd. II/The Controversy about Truth. Truth and Truth Theories* (Frankfurt / Paris / New Brunswick: 2009).

¹³See "Is the Existence of Truth dependent upon Man?" in *Review of Metaphysics* (March 1982); *Wahrheit und Person*, ch. 4.

¹⁴See my *Wahrheit und Person*, ch. 4 and 5. In the latter, I present a detailed critique of Michel Henry's book, *Je suis la Vérité*, in which he claims that each person IS the truth. On the question of the dependence of propositional truth on human acts of thinking and objective thoughts see my "Is the Existence of Truth dependent upon Man?" in *Review of Metaphysics* (March 1982).

¹⁵See Josef Seifert, *Der Widersinn des Relativismus: Befreiung von seiner Diktatur*. (Mainz: Patrimonium-Verlag, 2016). (Mainz: Patrimonium-Verlag, 2016).

objective relations between evidence, coherence, consensus etc. and truth.¹⁶

My investigations into the truth of the judgment consisting in a peculiar correspondence or coinciding between the judgment and the states of affairs are linked also to my observations at the border between logic and aesthetics of literary works of art. Roman Ingarden made a great discovery important for understanding literature and logic. He discovered in literary works of art there are many propositions that seem to be judgments and therefore, according to the principle of excluded middle, at least if they are free of ambiguities and equivocations, would have to be either true or false, but they are neither true nor false. He called them “quasi-judgments”. He found that these quasi-judgments do not assert states of affairs even though it belongs to them that they seem to do so and apparently do so. However, in fact, they are not judgments but tools to create the world of fiction. These peculiar creative thoughts play a crucial role in literary works of art. I tried to elaborate this great discovery of Ingarden,¹⁷ but criticized Ingarden for making the unjustified claim that *all* declarative sentences in literary works of art, which seem to express judgments, express solely such quasi-judgments that build up the fictional world but are neither true nor false. There are not only the “unreal judgments” of represented characters in literary works of art that differ from quasi-judgments. Literary works also contain many real judgments, which make full truth-claims. One such example is Manzoni’s marvelous description how secrets entrusted only to one’s best friend keep spreading in a single day and reach on the same evening, via many other “best friends,” just those persons from whom we want to guard a secret.

¹⁶See my *Der Streit um die Wahrheit. Wahrheit und Wahrheitstheorien. De Veritate – Über die Wahrheit, Bd. II/The Controversy about Truth. Truth and Truth Theories* (Frankfurt / Paris / New Brunswick: 2009).

¹⁷See *Roman Ingarden, The Literary Work of Art*, transl. by George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); see Josef Seifert, “Ingarden’s Theory of the Quasi-Judgment. An exposition of Its Logical Aspects and a Critical Evaluation of Its Value in the Context of Understanding the Literary Work of Art,” in: *Roman Ingarden. A filozofia naszego czasu* (Cracow: Polskie Towarzystwo Filozoficzne, 1995); also (with Barry Smith) “The Truth about Fiction,” in: *Kunst und Ontologie. Für Roman Ingarden zum 100. Geburtstag*, Hrsg. v. Włodzimierz Galewicz, Elisabeth Ströker, Władysław Stroiński, in: *Elementa*, Hrsg. Rudolph Berlinger und Wiebke Schrader (Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994).

First Principles of Ontology and Logic and Apories, Antinomies and Logical Paradoxes. My philosophical interests in truth and knowledge are intimately linked to an interest in logic, not in the formalisms and different systems of logistics and symbolic logic and logical games, but rather the essence of logic, in its radical distinction from, and irreducibility to, psychology. I see these insights magnificently unfolded in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and Pfänder's *Logic*. Building on their understanding of the objectivity and *a priori* character of logical laws, I go beyond Alexander Pfänder and Edmund Husserl in developing, in a more Platonic upsurge. This transcendent plenitude of ideal meaning units, concepts, and objective thoughts are the ultimate bearers of the truth of judgments and cannot be reduced to thoughts actually thought by men. This infinity of truth and the perfections of utmost clarity, unity, logical interconnections, and freedom of contradictions cannot have their ground in human intentional acts, as Husserl and Pfänder – in spite of their sharp critique of psychologist logic – believed. No, human logic can only comprehend a tiny fraction of the infinite realms of logical meaning units and logical laws.¹⁸

Within logic in such a purely philosophical understanding, I also have a special interest in the relationship between general (formal) ontology and logic. As Pfänder has shown, the four first principles of logic that all refer to propositions and their truth and falsity differ sharply from the first metaphysical or ontological principles of the same name but depend on them. This applies to the principles of identity, contradiction, excluded middle, and sufficient reason. On their difference and relationship, the logical laws being grounded in ontological ones, I have worked a great deal, in both published and even more in unpublished writings.¹⁹ Within this sphere, I am particularly fascinated with the problems of logical paradoxes and apparent antinomies, which I sharply distinguish from *apories* and seeming antinomies in nature. Thus, this interest is closely related to metaphysical problems. By investigating these, I tried to show that in logic itself or mathematics, when they are based on truth, no contradictions

¹⁸See especially my "Is the Existence of Truth dependent upon Man?" in *Review of Metaphysics* (March 1982).

¹⁹See my *Essere e persona*, cit., ch. 5; "El papel de las irrealidades para los principios de contradicción y de razón suficiente," Ibáñez-Martín, J.A. (coord.), *Realidad e irrealidad. Estudios en homenaje al Profesor Antonio Millán-Puelles*, (Madrid: RIALP, 2001), pp. 119-152.

can arise, which can only be due to intrinsically false and contradictory assumptions; and I showed that the famous paradoxes of set theory and others are due to equivocations and other errors. Through these examinations, I refute Kant's chief argument for introducing the subjectivist transcendental turn in philosophy: namely, his claim of antinomies arising inevitably from the nature of things, which can only be solved by denying philosophical realism. On the contrary, in a truly realist philosophy it is impossible that contradictions and antinomies arise. They arise only due to false assumptions and equivocations about space, time, matter, and free will, not from taking them to be real. In this context, I also discuss the Kantian treatment of antinomies and the modern attempts of Frege, Russell and others to solve them. Also the significance of Alexius Meinong, a protohenomenologist, in showing the false and contradictory assumptions that lead to the antinomies of set theory and others, are evaluated by me, in published as well as in a large unpublished book on logical paradoxes.²⁰

Philosophy of Games and of Chess. My hobby of playing (badly) chess and having been President of the Liechtenstein Chess Federation for 10 years, prompted me to lecture various times at the Liechtenstein Chess Open and to publish a book on a philosophy of chess which also represents an introduction to philosophy.²¹ In this work, I analyze the essence of games and the special reasons for the fascination with chess: the fundamentally different laws that govern chess: conventional ones, prudential ones, absolutely necessary mathematical and logical laws, and necessary laws that result from the combination of conventional rules and eternal truths. I also deal with the ethical questions regarding chess and the relation between chess and art.

Philosophy of Law and Political Philosophy. My two main works on political philosophy, a vastly critical book on Machiavelli (which I intend to publish together with a defense of Machiavelli by Rocco Buttiglione, a text he lost and we are looking for) and on the relations between ethics and politics, and

²⁰See my *Das Antinomienproblem als ein Grundproblem aller Metaphysik: Kritik der Kritik der reinen Vernunft* in *Prima Philosophia*, Bd. 2, H 2, 1989; *El problema de las antinomias considerado como un problema fundamental de toda Metafisica: Critica de la 'Critica de la Razón Pura,'* *Revista de Filosofia* 3.* epoca, vol 6 (1993); traducción de Rogelio Rovira, pp. 89-117; see also *Überwindung des Skandals der reinen Vernunft. Die Widerspruchsfreiheit der Wirklichkeit – trotz Kant*, (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2001).

²¹ *Schachphilosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989).

an analysis of Aquinas' *De Regimine Principum* and on the different forms of government. Neither one of these have been published yet. My main published works in the philosophy of politics encompass the indispensable role truth and value, and the sinister role, ideologies play in politics. This required defining the nature of ideology in politics and in private life. In several articles, I liberated some true insights of Marx and Engels, according to which ideologies have causes and reasons foreign to the object of their assertions, from their huge error of imprisoning man entirely in ideologies that make truth claims that are not motivated by truth but by foreign interests. Instead of making correct and incorrect truth claims for motives other than their truth, the political life of man should and can wholly rest on truth and on the quest for truth.²²

In Philosophy of Law, I have dedicated many reflections to the foundation of basic (natural) human rights in the different levels of human dignity,²³ as well as to the question as to how we know values and human rights.²⁴ I also dealt with specific forms of human dignity and human rights in women and children (youths).²⁵ A particular focus of my philosophy of law, however, centers on

²²See my "Ideologie und Philosophie. Kritische Reflexionen über Marx-Engels 'Deutsche Ideologie' - Vom allgemeinen Ideologieverdacht zu unzweifelbarer Wahrheitserkenntnis" in *Prima Philosophia*, Bd. 3, H 1, 1990. „Die Philosophie als Überwindung der Ideologie“, in: *Al di là di occidente e oriente: Europa*, a cura di Danilo Castellano (Napoli/Roma/Benevento/Milano: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1994), pp. 27-50.

²³„*Philosophische Grundlagen der Menschenrechte. Zur Verteidigung des Menschen*“, *Prima Philosophia* V. 5 (4) (1992), pp. 339-370; "Die vierfache Quelle der Menschenwürde als Fundament der Menschenrechte," in: Burkhardt Ziemke (Hrsg.), *Staatsphilosophie und Rechtspolitik*. Festschrift für Martin Kriele zum 65. Geburtstag (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1997), S. 165-18.

²⁴„Zur Erkenntnis der Menschenrechte und ihrer axiologischen und anthropologischen Grundlagen“, In: (Ed.), *Wie erkennt man Naturrecht? Mit Beiträgen von Rocco Buttiglione, Franz Bydliniski, Theo Mayer-Maly, Josef Seifert, Wolfgang Waldstein*. In: *Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology*. Bd. VI (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998), S. 65-106.

²⁵„Zu den Menschenrechten und Pflichten der Jugendlichen. Philosophische Reflexionen über die universale Erklärung der Rechte und Pflichten der Jugendlichen,“ with an English and an Italian summary, *Medicine, Mind and Adolescence* 10 (1995), 187-211, actually published in 1997;

which one is the most fundamental human right, a question that can be understood in three different senses and receive an answer from quite different viewpoints:

1. That of the condition of the possibility of all human rights and goods (that I identify with the right to life).
2. That of those rights that refer to the highest goods (which I interpret as the rights to the freedom of conscience and of religion), and:
3. That of the most universal human right from which all others logically follow such as the right to be always treated as an end in itself.²⁶

Having always been fascinated with Adolf Reinach's philosophy of the *a priori* in civil law, I unfolded the distinction Reinach draws between *a priori* law and "natural law," though I see many more parallels between them than Reinach admits. Moreover, while appreciating his insights into possibilities of modifying laws, legal obligations, and duties that follow *a priori* from certain acts, through positive law, I criticized his claims about an almost infinite possibility to change the *a priori* legal effects of fundamental acts such as promises or contracts by positive law.²⁷

Aesthetics and Philosophy of Beauty. Questions of aesthetics have

²⁶“Dimensionen und Quellen der Menschenwürde” in: Walter Schweidler, Herbert A. Neumann, Eugen Brysch (Ed.), *Menschenleben – Menschenwürde. Interdisziplinäres Symposium zur Bioethik*, Hans-Jürgen Kaatsch and Hartmut Kreß (Ed.), *Ethik Interdisziplinär*, Vol. 3, (Hamburg/München/London: LIT Verlag, 2003), pp. 51-92; “Menschenwürde – Fundament der Grundrechte” in: Gudrun Lang und Michael Strohmer (Ed.), *Europa der Grundrechte? Beiträge zur Grundrechtecharta der Europäischen Union*, edition pro munis Bd. 9 (Bonn: Culture and Science Publisher, 2002), pp. 18-38; “Is the Right to Life or is another Right the most Fundamental Human Right? - das ‘Urgrundrecht?’: Human Dignity, Moral Obligations, Natural Rights, and Positive Rights?” *Journal of East-West Thought*, Winter Nr. 4 Vol. 3, December 2013, pp. 11-31.

²⁷See Adolf Reinach, “The Apriori Foundations of the Civil Law,” transl. by J. F. Crosby, *Aletheia III* (1983), pp. xxxiii-xxxv; 1-142; see also Josef Seifert, “Is Reinach's ‘Apriorische Rechtslehre’ more Important for Positive Law than Reinach Himself Thinks?” in *Aletheia. An International Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1983), pp. 197-230.

interested me since my earliest youth, as already mentioned in the autobiographical part of this essay. I dedicated special effort to elaborate two great aesthetical discoveries of Dietrich von Hildebrand, the higher beauty of forms, and a critique of aesthetic relativism. Both aesthetic investigations I published first in Greece,²⁸ but the second one I recently expanded in my new book *Der Widersinn des Relativismus* and for the first time published it in German.²⁹

Philosophy of Nature and of Life. In philosophy of nature, I have dedicated investigations to space, time (and eternity), and movement³⁰ and to life. I seek to demonstrate life as an irreducible and ultimate datum that can in no way be explained, nor produced by lifeless matter. Its understanding requires a metaphysics of life found on all levels of being, and a phenomenology of biological life of plants, animals, and of men as persons-in-a-body, as well as the elaboration of soul as source of all life and of rational human souls that can have life also separated, through death, from the body.³¹

About Different Philosophers and Philosophy in Literature. As already mentioned, I wrote books and articles on different philosophers, but mostly from a purely thematic-systematic philosophical point of view: on Plato,³² Aristotle,³³

²⁸“Beauty of Higher Forms (Second Potency) in Art and Nature” in *Annales d’Esthetiques*, vol. 21-22 (1982-83); “The Objectivity of Beauty in Music and a Critique of Aesthetic Subjectivism,” *XRONIKA AISTHETIKHS Annales d’Esthétique* Tom. 31-32/1992-1993, 33-61.

²⁹Josef Seifert, *Der Widersinn des Relativismus: Befreiung von seiner Diktatur*. (Mainz: Patrimonium-Verlag, 2016), ch. 6.

³⁰See my “Das Antinomienproblem als ein Grundproblem aller Metaphysik: Kritik der Kritik der reinen Vernunft“ in *Prima Philosophia*, Bd. 2, H 2, 1989; *Essere e persona*, cit. Ch. 10.

³¹*What is Life? On the Originality, Irreducibility and Value of Life*. (*Value Inquiry Book Series - VIBS*), ed. by Robert Ginsberg, vol. 51/*Central European Value Studies (CEVS)*, ed. by H.G. Callaway (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997).

³²See my *Ritornare a Platone: la fenomenologia realista come riforma critica della dottrina platonica delle idee*. In appendice un inedito di Adolf Reinach, ed., Preface and trad. by Giuseppe Girgenti, (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2000). This book is a translation and first publication of the first of four parts of my (largely unpublished) book on Plato. I wrote as well a hitherto unpublished book of defense of the Platonic Ideas against Aristotle’s criticisms. Besides his doctrine in the eternal forms and indubitable knowledge, and proofs

Anselm,³⁴ Bonaventure,³⁵ Duns Scotus,³⁶ Kant,³⁷ Nietzsche,³⁸ Hegel,³⁹

of the soul and its immortality, the great ethical insights of Plato in the *Apology*, in *Crito*, and in the *Gorgias* enthused and deeply influenced my philosophical ethics. See my “Philosophizing with Plato about the Immortality of the Soul,” *Philosophical News*. No. 8 marzo 2014. “Nemirtingumas” (Lithuanian: “Immortality”), *Logos* 12 (1997/12), mit einer Einführung von Magister Aivaras Stepukonis, S. 81-109; “¿Tenemos y somos un alma espiritual e inmortal?” in: Carlos A. Casanova (Ed.), Carlos Casanova, Josef Seifert, Daniel von Wachter, *El alma, la providencia y el derecho natural (un ejercicio de filosofía como capacidad de juzgar)*. Las tres conferencias de cierre de la International Academy of Philosophy at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de CHILE, pp. 11-40. See also my “The Idea of the Good as the Sum-total of Pure Perfections. A New Personalistic Reading of Republic VI and VII,” in Giovanni Reale and Samuel Scolnikov (Ed.), *New Images of Plato. Dialogues on the Idea of the Good*, (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2002), pp. 407-424; “Moral Goodness Alone Is ‘Good Without Qualifications’: A Phenomenological Interpretation and Critical Development of some Kantian and Platonic Ethical Insights into Moral Facts which Contribute to the Moral Education of Humanity,” in *The Paideia Project* (20th World Congress of Philosophy in Boston August 10-15, 1998); “Philosophizing with Plato about the Immortality of the Soul,” *Philosophical News*. No. 8 marzo 2014. *Anima*, 140-162; “Salvezza e condanna come problemi filosofici: riflessione sul Gorgia di Platone,” *Revista Teologica di Lugano* III, 2 (1998), 265-289; “Platón y la fenomenología realista. Para una reforma crítica del Platonismo,” *Anales del Seminario de Metafísica* 29 (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1995), pp. 149-170; “Alcune pagine della *Postfazione* all'edizione tedesco di questo libro di Josef Seifert” in: Giovanni Reale, *Per una nuova interpretazione di Platone*, 16th ed., Appendice VI, (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1996), pp. 859-870; “Nachwort des Herausgebers zu Giovanni Reale,” *Zu einer neuen Interpretation Platons. Eine Auslegung der Metaphysik der großen Dialoge im Lichte der ‘ungeschriebenen Lehren’* übers. v. L. Hölscher, (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1993), pp. 541-558.

³³“A Phenomenological and Classical Metaphysics of the Person: Completion and Critique of Aristotle’s Metaphysics” in: Richard P. Francis and Jane E. Francis (Ed.), *Christian Humanism. International Perspectives* (New York/Washington, D.C./San Francisco/Bern/Frankfurt a.M./Berlin/Vienna/Paris: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 213-22; “Persons and Causes: beyond Aristotle,” *Journal of East-West Thought*, Fall Issue Nr. 3 Vol. 2, September 2012, pp. 1-32;

³⁴Large portions of my books, for example of *Gott als Gottesbeweis*, cit.; or *Of Essere e*

persona, cit., ch. 5, and several articles dealt with Anselm: “Der Vergessene Protophänomenologe Anselm: Anselm von Canterburys, ‘Ontologisches Argument’ und die Methode der Realistischen Phänomenologie von Edmund Husserl bis zur Gegenwart,” *The Paideia Project* (20th World Congress of Philosophy, Boston: August 10-15, 1998)

<http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Meth/MethSeif.htm>; “Kant und Brentano gegen Anselm und Descartes. Reflexionen über das ontologische Argument” in *Theologia* (Athens 1985), 3-30; “Kant y Brentano contra Anselmo y Descartes. Reflexiones sobre el argumento ontológico,” *Thémata* 2 (Universidades de Malaga y Sevilla, 1985): 129-147.

³⁵“Bonaventuras Interpretation der augustinischen These vom notwendigen Sein der Wahrheit” in *Franziskanische Studien*, H 1 (1977), 1. Halbj., 59; “Si Deus Deus est, Deus est. Reflections on St. Bonaventure’s Interpretation of St. Anselm’s Ontological Argument” *Proceedings of the PMR Conference (8) (8th Conference on Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Villanova)* (1983), pp. 119-129;

³⁶“Essere Persona Come Perfezione Pura. Il Beato Duns Scoto e una nuova metafisica personalistica,” *De Homine, Dialogo di Filosofia II* (Rom: Herder/Università Lateranense, 1994), pp. 57-75; “A vontade como perfeição pura e a nova concepção não-eudemonística do amor segundo Duns Scotus,” traduzido do inglês por Roberto Hofmeister Pich, *Veritas* (Philosophische Fakultät, PUCRS, Porto Alegre, Brasilien: September 2005), pp. 51-84. “Duns Scotus’ Philosophie des Individuums und Kritik am Abstraktionismus der aristotelischen Erkenntnistheorie als grandioses Beispiel einer mit dem christlichen Glauben vereinbaren Philosophie,” *Intus legere. Filosofia Año 2015*. Vol. 9/No 2, 111-124.

³⁷*Überwindung des Skandals der reinen Vernunft. Die Widerspruchsfreiheit der Wirklichkeit – trotz Kant*, (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2001); “Grandezas Y insuficiencias de la filosofía kantiana de la dignidad humana. Un análisis crítico” in: Ignacio García de Leániz (ed.), *De nobis ipsis silemos. Homenaje a Juan Miguel Palacios*, (Madrid: Encuentro, 2010, pp. 173-204.

³⁸“Friedrich Nietzsches Verzweiflung an der Wahrheit und sein Kampf gegen die Wahrheit” in *Rehabilitierung der Philosophie* (Regensburg: J. Habel, 1974), ed. Dietrich von Hildebrand, pp. 301-332; “Wahrheit als Orientierungspunkt menschlicher Entscheidungen” in: G. Gelhaer (Ed.), *Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Beiträge zur Nietzsche-Forschung anlässlich des Jubiläumsjahres*, 2. erw. Auflage (Traude Junghans Verlag, 1995).

Brentano,⁴⁰ Husserl,⁴¹ Vico,⁴² Scheler,⁴³ Hildebrand,⁴⁴ and others.

³⁹“Truth and History. Noumenal Phenomenology (Phenomenological Realism) defended against some Claims made by Hegel, Dilthey, and the Hermeneutical School” in *Diotima* XI, Athens 1983, 160-181.

⁴⁰“Eine kritische Untersuchung der Brentanoschen Evidenztheorie der Wahrheit,” *Brentano Studien* XII - 2006/09; 307- 356.

⁴¹Apart from the mentioned works, “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: Instituto de Filosofía, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile en Santiago, *Seminarios de Filosofía*, Vols. 17-18, (Santiago de Chile: Instituto de Filosofía, 2004-2005), pp. 133-190.

⁴² “L’Uomo comprende meglio le cose fatte da lui stesso che non quelle non create da lui? Riflessioni critiche sul principium *verum factum* di Giambattista Vico” (Riassunto in Italiano) in: *Studi italo-tedeschi/Deutsch-Italienische Studien* XVII, *Giambattista Vico (1668-1744)*, pp. 91-93; Versteht der Mensch das von ihm selbst Gemachte besser als das nicht von ihm Geschaffene? Kritische Reflexionen über Giambattista Vicos Verum-Factum-Prinzip?” in: *Studi italo-tedeschi/Deutsch-Italienische Studien* XVII, *Giambattista Vico (1668-1744)*, pp. 53-90.

⁴³“Schelers Denken des absoluten Ursprungs: Zum Verhältnis von Schelers Metaphysik und Religionsphilosophie zum ontologischen Gottesbeweis,” in: Christian Bermes, Wolfhart Henckmann, Heinz Leonardy und Tübingische *Gesellschaft für Philosophie*, Jena (Hg.), Denken des Ursprungs – Ursprung des Denkens. *Schelers Philosophie und ihre Anfänge* in Jena. *Kritisches Jahrbuch der Philosophie* 3 (1998), S. 34-53; “Scheler on Repentance” in: John F. Crosby, (Ed.), Max Scheler, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 79, 1 (Winter 2005), 183-202; “Max Schelers Denken über Frieden und Solidarität“, in: Christian Bermes/Wolfgang Henckmann/Heinz Leonardy (Hrsg.), *Solidarität. Person und soziale Welt*, (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006), pp. 87-106

⁴⁴I refer to him in almost all of my writings, but wrote a number of papers about him, for example, “Dietrich von Hildebrand and seine Schule” in *Christliche Philosophie im katholischen Denken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. E. Coreth, W.M. Neidl, G. Pfligersdorffer, vol 3 (1989), pp. 172-200; Wert und Wertantwort. Hildebrands Beitrag zur Ethik” in *Prima Philosophia*, Sonderheft 1, 1990; “Personalistische Philosophie und Widerstand gegen Hitler.” Zum Kampf Dietrich von Hildebrands gegen den

Philosophy of the Person: Philosophical Anthropology, Soul, Body, Immortality. Besides these moral, epistemological and logical questions, my philosophical interest and work centers also, and in a special way, on philosophy of man, philosophical anthropology and philosophy of the person. I dedicated many works to this topic, starting with my books of defense of the existence of a real, living, spiritual and rational human soul, and its radical distinction from the body. At the same time, I showed the deep unity of man as a new composite substance composed of body and soul can only be comprehended if the difference between body (brain) and mind (soul) is clearly understood.⁴⁵ To defend this view, I distinguish many quite different meanings of the confusing term “dualism.” Just as the radical difference between a concept and the conceptual logical meaning of a word and the physical word does not counteract their profound union, but renders it possible, so the radical difference between the body/brain from the soul does not in any way jeopardize their unity. On the contrary, the substantial and radical distinction between body and soul is the condition of their unity. Understanding this also involves distinguishing different types of unity, only two of which are or presuppose identity.

My main work on philosophy of the person (soon to be published in English and in Spanish) is *Essere e persona*,⁴⁶ which Giovanni Reale, who “commanded

Nationalsozialismus, seine Ideologie und seinen rassistischen Antisemitismus” in: Josef Seifert (Ed.), *Dietrich von Hildebrands Kampf gegen den Nationalsozialismus*, Reihe Akademie-Reden/Internationale Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998), pp. 107-163.

⁴⁵See my *Leib und Seele. Ein Beitrag zur philosophischen Anthropologie* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 1973); *Das Leib-Seele Problem und die gegenwärtige philosophische Diskussion. Eine kritisch-systematische Analyse* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989); *What is Life? On the Originality, Irreducibility and Value of Life. Value Inquiry Book Series (VIBS)*, ed. by Robert Ginsberg, vol 51/Central European Value Studies (CEVS), ed. by H.G. Callaway (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997); “Sind Geist und Gehirn verschieden? Kritische Anmerkungen zu einigen Neuerscheinungen zum Leib-Seele-Problem,” *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 18.2 (1993), 37-60.

⁴⁶*Essere e persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica.* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1989); *Fiinôá ói persoaná. Spre o fundamentare fenomenologicá a unei metafizici clasice ói personaliste*, trad. N.I. Marió, (Bucureóti,

me to write it”, called my *Summa*. In it, I showed that being in the most proper sense and in the absolute sense is being-person.⁴⁷ I offered many reasons to defend this thesis:

- a) Persons are substances in a far higher sense such that Aristotle’s description of being in the most proper sense as “substance” is quite incomplete;
- b) All essential features of the person show that it is an insuperable perfection of being to be person, and that the highest values and perfections of being can solely be possessed by persons. That the acts and accidents that Aristotle excluded from metaphysics belong there, which is most clearly seen through the person; that God must necessarily be a personal being.⁴⁸

The interest in anthropology entails also many published and unpublished works on the immortality of the human soul, a question which, from my reading of Plato’s *Phaedo* and my earliest philosophical works on (for example an unpublished dialogue *Orpheus and Eurydice – On the Immortality of the soul* written in 1964) occupied me deeply. Agreeing with Blaise Pascal and Gabriel Marcel, it also appeared wholly astonishing and shocking to me how little interest so many human beings, including philosophers, have on a question on which “our whole or our nothing” depends. Distinguishing between the religious faiths, for example the Christian faith in resurrection and eternal life that transcends entirely philosophical demonstrations, and natural human reason, I develop many purely philosophical proofs for the immortality of the soul. Some of them are more abstract metaphysical ones based on the simplicity and indestructibility of the soul proposed by Plato. Others are more deeply personalist and existential and I give precedence to these, arguing for the immortality of the human soul based on the moral life, knowledge, love, hope, gratitude, etc. rather than on the grounds of the soul’s mere spirituality, lack of composition of parts and indestructibility of

Romúnia. Editura Yes, 2004). Rumanian translation. The book will be published in 2017 by IAP-Press, and based on this enlarged edition, in Spanish.

⁴⁷Ibid., ch. 9.

⁴⁸Ibid., 10-15.

simple substances. Such proofs of immortality have two major flaws: they do not prove a lived and experienced immortal life and could even prove an immortality of energy quants. They do not contribute to know a positive value content of life after death. They would just as much apply to heaven as to hell. Therefore, I prefer by far the personalist proofs for the immortality of the soul.

Their first premise is that the meaning and vocation of the human person, his aspiration to the fulfillment through knowledge, love, happiness, love of God, etc. is inseparable from immortality.⁴⁹ This meaning of human existence would be frustrated and absurdly contradicted if his life ended like that of an insect or rat. A metaphysical disharmony to its innermost essence would result if death were the destruction of personal human life. The reason to reject that reality could contain such an absurdity and tragic contradiction, can be found, on a first level, in the inner essence and inner truth of those aspects of personal life, which promise immortality. In virtue of their inner truth they are as it were “prophetically announcing” immortality with authority instead of us just being captured by unrealistic wishful thinking. By its nature, the soul is ordained to an immortal life.

⁴⁹ Among other works see my *Filosofie, Pravda, Nesmrtnost. Tõi praúská pòednáóky/Philosophie, Wahrheit, Unsterblichkeit. Drei Prager Vorlesungen/ Philosophy, Truth, Immortality. Three Prague Lectures* (tschechisch-deutsch), pòeklad, úvod a bibliografì Martin Cajthaml, (Prague: Vydala Kòestanská akademie Òim, svacek, edice Studium, 1998); “Philosophizing with Plato about the Immortality of the Soul,” *Philosophical News*. No. 8 marzo 2014. *Anima*, 140-162; “Nemirtingumas” (Lithuanian: Immortality), *Logos* 12 (1997/12), mit einer Einführung von Magister Aivaras Stepukonis, S. 81-109; “Anima, morte e immortalità,” in: *L’Anima, Seconda Navigazione. Annuario di filosofia 2004*, (Mailand: Mondadori, 2004), S. 157-182; “¿Poseemos y somos un alma inmortal?”, *Philosophia*, 73, 1 (2013), 13-42; “¿Tenemos y somos un alma espiritual e inmortal?”, in: Carlos A. Casanova (Ed.), Carlos Casanova, Josef Seifert, Daniel von Wachter, *El alma, la providencia y el derecho natural (un ejercicio de filosofía como capacidad de juzgar). Las tres conferencias de cierre de la International Academy of Philosophy at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de CHILE*, pp. 11-40; „Das Unsterblichkeitsproblem aus der Sicht der philosophischen Ethik und Anthropologie“, *Franziskanische Studien*, H 3 (1978); ”Unsterblichkeit,” in: *Evangelisches Lexikon für Theologie und Gemeinde*, ed.v. H. Burkhardt und U. Swarat Bd. III. (Wuppertal und Zürich: R. Brockhausverlag, 1994), pp. 2061-2064. A whole book on the immortality of the soul is still unpublished.

Marcel formulates “To love someone is telling him you will not die.” An even deeper ground of affirming philosophically and apodictically the immortality of the soul can be reached, if we can know the existence of God, an infinitely good being who cannot possibly mock human persons by making death have the last word.

I try to show the fundamental differences between philosophical proofs of the immortality of the soul and the authoritative message of the Christian faith of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our resurrection. This message answers profound human aspirations and questions pure philosophy is unable to answer. Philosophy, confronted with the ultimate mysteries of human life, gets only to the threshold. To go beyond requires a further leap and act of faith on our side, and a revelation of truths inaccessible to purely human rational efforts. When philosophy forgets this, it turns into violent constructions, unsupported theories and its rationalism ends up with a deep irrationalism. Thus, confronted with these ultimate questions about persons, philosophy ends up recognizing both the immense greatness and the abysmal misery and poverty of human reason, left solely to its own resources of wisdom.

Death and “brain death”. I have dedicated a large number of writings to a critique of a redefinition of human death in terms of “brain death”.⁵⁰

Philosophy of God and the Third Archimedean point in the Ontological Argument. In two major books and many articles, I have also shown that the real existence of God as well as the uninventible and necessary divine essence can likewise be known by human reason with indubitable certainty. I wish to call this the “third Archimedean point” of philosophical knowledge. I defended many ways

⁵⁰For example (among many more): “IS ‘Brain death’ actually death?” *The Monist* 76 (1993), 175-202, or: “Brain Death and Euthanasia” in: Michael Potts, Paul A. Byrne, and Richard G. Nilges (Ed.), *Beyond Brain Death. The Case against Brain Based Criteria for Human Death*, (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), pp. 201-227; “Consciousness, Mind, Brain, and Death,” in: *Calixto Machado/D. Alan Shewmon*, (Ed.), *Brain Death and Disorders of Consciousness*, (New York/Boston/Dordrecht/London/Moscow: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2004), pp. 61-78; “On ‘Brain Death’ in Brief: Philosophical Arguments against Equating It with Actual Death and Responses to Arguments in favor of Such an Equation” in: Roberto de Mattei (Ed.), *Finis Vitae: Is Brain Death still Life? Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 2006, 2007), pp. 189-210.

of reaching indubitable knowledge of God from the world, both classical cosmological arguments that I defended in a new personalist perspective, and specifically personalist proofs of the existence of God from the essence of gratitude, of moral values and of love.⁵¹ However, the center and most profound foundation of all proofs of the existence of God is the Anselmian-Cartesian ontological argument, which I meticulously considered and defended against its many critics. I demonstrated that this proof has four fundamental philosophical preconditions, all of which can be known to be true, and thus allow a refutation of the objections Aquinas, Kant, Brentano and others have raised against it.

1. Its starting point must not be a mere arbitrary concept or subjective idea, in which case it would be guilty of the many logical mistakes Aquinas, Kant, Brentano and others identified. Rather, it proceeds in its valid form from the objectively necessary and supremely intelligible (though mysterious) divine essence. This starting point, once recognized, makes the argument immune against a series of objections that would be perfectly valid as long as this first precondition is not established.

2. It presupposes that we have a true and sufficient knowledge of this divine essence to know God's existence from its mere contemplation. By means of complex epistemological analyses and distinctions between different perfections and imperfections of human knowledge of God, I reached the conclusion that the knowledge of the divine essence accessible to human reason is sufficient to ground the ontological proof of the existence of God. The following are the key steps and distinctions that serve establishing this second precondition:

a) The divine essence and its infinite perfection is co-given to human knowledge in the knowledge of the world in its finitude. The latter could not be known without possessing some knowledge of the former, as Bonaventure and Descartes pointed out.

b) The fact that we neither possess a complete, nor a perfectly deep, nor an immediate knowledge of God that would not be in some way mediated by the experience of the world, is perfectly compatible with possessing a sufficient knowledge of God to turn this knowledge into a valid second column of the ontological argument.

⁵¹See my *Erkenntnis des Vollkommenen. Wege der Vernunft zu Gott*, (Bonn: Lepanto Verlag, 2010); *Conocimiento de Dios por las vías de la razón y del amor*. (Traducido por Pedro Jesús Teruel, revisado y aumentado por el autor), (Madrid: Encuentro, 2013).

3. The ontological argument presupposes that existence is a real predicate and that the necessary existence of God can be known to be inseparable from the divine essence and is not extrinsic to it in the way it is in all contingent beings, inasmuch as what they are (essence) could never have existed. That existence (being) is a real predicate I showed by first refuting the Kantian claim that existence is not any predicate and adds nothing to the concept of a thing.⁵² Apart from contradicting Kant's own assertion that existential propositions are always synthetic (which presupposes that, logically speaking, the concept of existence "adds something to the concept of a thing"), the evident meaning of asserting or denying the existence of certain things refutes Kant through the evidence of things themselves. It is certainly true that existence (Sein) does not as such add essential predicates and constitutes, ontologically speaking, quite a unique predicate. It is also true that in all contingent beings' existence somehow falls outside the essence or is a gift that does not simply flow from their essence. Nevertheless, Kant falsely universalizes this truth and applies it precisely to the divine being to whom it evidently does not apply. He fails to see, furthermore, that, if the "extrinsic relation" of existence to essence, its falling in a sense "outside of essence," would be the only relation existence could have to essence, and if existence never were bound inextricably to essence, no really existing being could have a sufficient reason for being, instead of not being. Thus, the evidence of the principle of sufficient reason would be violated in a most grievous manner.⁵³

4. The ontological argument, finally, presupposes that the infinite goodness and value perfection (greatness) of the divine essence entails His existence. No limitedly and finitely perfect being, such as the 'lost' island of Gaunilo, could exist

⁵²A preliminary study of this metaphysical relation between essence and existence that was planned as first part of *Gott als Gottesbeweis*, cit., was my work *Sein und Wesen*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996). It was preceded by my English debate with "existentialist Thomism" (Gilson and others): „Essence and Existence. A New Foundation of Classical Metaphysics on the Basis of 'Phenomenological Realism,' and a Critical Investigation of 'Existentialist Thomism',“ *Aletheia I* (1977), pp. 17-157; *I,2* (1977), pp. 371-459.

⁵³On this see, besides *Gott als Gottesbeweis*, cit., my *Sein und Wesen* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), ch. 2; „Essence and Existence. A New Foundation of Classical Metaphysics on the Basis of 'Phenomenological Realism,' and a Critical Investigation of 'Existentialist Thomism',“ *Aletheia I* (1977), ch. 2.

necessarily, but beyond that: infinite value-perfection is the very nucleus and heart of the divine essence. Harkening back to Plato, the name of God “*id quo melius (maius) nihil esse sive cogitari possit*” (that better than which nothing can be or even conceived) is not dissimilar to the Biblical assertion “God is Love”, a name of God more intimate than “I am He who is”. One may summarize this fourth precondition of the ontological argument with Augustine: “This good and that good: take away this and that, and look at the good itself if you can; then you will see God, who is not good by another Good but the quintessence and sum-total of the Good (literally: the good of any good).”⁵⁴

I presented, on 700 pages, detailed analyses and a phenomenological metaphysical defense of these four conditions under which the ontological proof of the existence of God is not only perfectly valid but the deepest of all of them, and implicitly presupposed by all others (as also Kant saw; but while he rejected it, I defended it).⁵⁵

Discours des Méthodes: Radical Rethinking of the Phenomenological Methods. It is clear that presenting all of these epistemological and metaphysical results with the claim that they can be known by a rigorous phenomenological return to things themselves and things in themselves (i.e., by a phenomenological

⁵⁴Augustine, De Trinitate VIII, 3 (CCL 50 p. 273/44, Corpus Augustinianum Gissense a C. Mayer editum): “Bonum hoc et bonum illud: tolle hoc et illud, et vide ipsum bonum si potes; ita deum videbis, non alio bono bonum, sed bonum omnis boni.” I tried to defend the interpretation of Plato’s ‘Idea of the Good’ as coinciding with a living God-Creator in “The Idea of the Good as the Sum-total of Pure Perfections. A New Personalistic Reading of Republic VI and VII” in: Giovanni Reale and Samuel Scolnikov (Ed.), *New Images of Plato. Dialogues on the Idea of the Good*, (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2002), pp. 407-424.

⁵⁵ See my *Gott als Gottesbeweis. Eine phänomenologische Neubegründung des ontologischen Arguments*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), 2. Aufl. 2000; “Kant und Brentano gegen Anselm und Descartes. Reflexionen über das ontologische Argument” in *Theologia* (Athens 1985), 3-30; “Kant y Brentano contra Anselmo y Descartes. Reflexions sobre el argumento ontológico” in *Thémata 2* (Universidades de Malaga y Sevilla, 1985); “Über das notwendige Dasein Gottes. Eine kritische Antwort auf Franz Brentanos Kritik des ontologischen Gottesbeweises” in: Ion Tánăsescu (ed.), *Franz Brentano’s Metaphysics and Psychology. Upon the Sesquicentennial of Franz Brentano’s Dissertation*, (Bucharest: Zelta Books, 2012), pp. 180-224.

method) requires a radical rethinking of phenomenology. One must understand as well the phenomenological method and clarity about the limited role of *epoché*. The leading principle of this new realist phenomenology is that the only decisive principle of phenomenology is the *return to things themselves*, (i.e., moving away from all kinds of confusions, constructs, arbitrary and false assumptions, unexamined prejudices, and premature systematizations). In other words, the only goal is a pure seeing of things as they truly are. A phenomenological method apt to reach, or at least to approach, this goal, allows a rigorous scientific metaphysics, ethics, and realist epistemology. I explicitly dedicated to the elaboration of such a realist phenomenological method, besides the mentioned works, a book and several articles on methods of philosophy.⁵⁶ In my book, I distinguished three general meanings of methods and many subspecies of each of them:

1. Method as type of knowledge used, which entails in philosophy immediate vision of necessary essences, insights into essential states of affairs, logical demonstrations, and others.

2. Methods in the sense of elements of these kinds of knowledge, such as distinctions of a *datum* from similar or opposite phenomena, dialogue, dialectics and responses to objections.

3. Tricks and devices to reach philosophical knowledge such as *epoché*, free variation, methodic doubt, linguistic analysis of word-meanings, or the “negative test” of Gabriel Marcel.

I think that the quest for rigorous and indubitable scientific philosophical knowledge is no mere modern prejudice, as many traditional philosophers claim, but exists since Plato and Aristotle, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Descartes, Leibniz, Husserl, Hildebrand and the present, and is a perfectly legitimate and praiseworthy desire of human reason. This does not deny that a *restriction* of philosophical knowledge to *solely* indubitably certain knowledge is a dangerous rationalist and inhuman error.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Discours des Méthodes. The Methods of Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology*, (Frankfurt / Paris / Ebikon / Lancaster / New Brunswick: Ontos-Verlag, 2009); *Discurso sobre los métodos. Filosofía y fenomenología realista*, (Madrid: Encuentro, 2008); “Was ist Philosophie? Die Antwort der Realistischen Phänomenologie,” *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 49 H 1 (1995), 92-103.

⁵⁷ See my “Phänomenologie und Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft. Zur Grundlegung einer realistischen phänomenologischen Methode – in kritischem Dialog mit Edmund

Ethics: Foundations and Applications – 4 Dimensions of Human Dignity:

A further chief field of my philosophical investigations is ethics, both the foundation of ethics and applied ethics or concrete ethical questions. On the foundation of ethics, I have published two books and several articles.⁵⁸ Some of my articles defend strongly our human capacity to know what is morally good and what is morally evil without presupposing any religious faith. In fact, if we did not have some rational knowledge of moral values and disvalues, faith would be

Husserls Ideen über die Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft” in: *Filosofie, Pravda, Nesmrtlenost. Tòì praúská pòednáóky/Philosophie, Wahrheit, Unsterblichkeit. Drei Prager Vorlesungen/ Philosophy, Truth, Immortality. Three Prague Lectures* (tschechisch-deutsch), pòeklad, úvod a bibliografi Martin Cajthaml, (Prague: Vydala Kòestanská akademie Òim, svacek, edice Studium, 1998), S. 14-50; “La filosofia come scienza rigorosa. La fondazione di un metodo fenomenologico realista in dialogo critico con le idee sulla filosofia come scienza rigorosa di Edmund Husserl,” Saggio integrativo, in: Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Che cos'è la filosofia?/What Is Philosophy?*, Englisch-Italienisch (Milano: Bompiani Testi a fronte, 2001), 535-568; also published in Russian, Czech, and Lithuanian. I also wrote an unpublished book-length manuscript on sense perception and knowledge of other persons (both of which include less than apodictically certain knowledge).

⁵⁸ Josef Seifert, *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung? (What is and What Motivates a Moral Action?)*, (Salzburg: Universitätsverlag A. Pustet, 1976); Qué es y qué motiva una acción moral?, presentación de Alfonso López Quintás, tradd. de y ensayo introductorio de Mariano Crespo (Madrid: Centro Universitario Francisco de Vitoria, 1995); an English edition will come out in 2017. *The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure. Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine. Vol. 1: Foundations. Philosophy and Medicine, vol. 82* (New York: Springer, 2004) – Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure. Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine. Vol. 1: Foundations. Philosophy and Medicine, vol. 82, Kluwer online e-book, 2005; “Natural Law: Persons Are United through Ends: Seven Different Relations between Persons and Ends and Their Relation to Natural Law and Community of Persons,” *Revista Española de Teología* Vol. 67, cuad. 2-3, Facultad de Teología “San Damaso,” 67 (2007), pp. 149-163; and several unpublished ones, especially a large German book of critique of the “purely teleological foundation of ethics.”

deprived of its natural presuppositions.⁵⁹ I also wrote a number of papers in revealing that, underlying religious faith, there are also some rational intuitions into divine holiness, without which authentic religious faith would be without foundation.⁶⁰

In *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung?*, cit., I investigate only a small portion of the moral sphere, namely actions in the rigorous sense that aim at the realization of states of affairs in the world. They differ from purely inner acts such as gratitude as well as from general attitudes such as virtues and vices or fundamental moral attitudes, which are other important topics of ethics on which I have written later.⁶¹ Within moral actions in that narrow sense, I investigate again only a portion, namely morally obligatory actions, sparing good but not obligatory (supererogatory) actions for other ethical investigations.

I propose the thesis that the kind of motive I have, or better said, should have, for obligatory and free moral actions to be morally good, is of the essence of the moral action and inseparable from the question, whether, and to which degree, an action is morally good and obligatory. I distinguish between indispensable motives for a moral action to be morally good, ideal motives, and accidental superadded motives, which are not indispensable for the moral value of the action, and in a sense, do not belong to its essence. Excluding critically the eudemonistic, hedonistic, utilitarian and other theories regarding the motivation of moral actions,

⁵⁹See Josef Seifert, *San Pablo y Santo Tomás sobre Fides et ratio. ¿Fue San Pablo el crítico más severo o, con Santo Tomás, el defensor más grande de la filosofía? Saint Paul and Saint Thomas. Was Saint Paul the most severe Critic, or, with Saint Thomas the greatest defender of Philosophy?* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la Facultad de Teología “San Dammaso,” 2009).

⁶⁰See, for example, my “Transcendent Holiness as Divine Perfection: Its Importance for Understanding Theistic Religions and Interreligious Dialogue” in: Abraham Kovács and James L. Cox, *New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion*. (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2014), pp. 203-230.

⁶¹Josef Seifert, “Grundhaltung, Tugend und Handlung als ein Grundproblem der Ethik. Würdigung der Entdeckung der sittlichen Grundhaltung durch Dietrich von Hildebrand und kritische Untersuchung der Lehre von der ‘Fundamentalooption’ innerhalb der ‘rein teleologischen’ Begründung der Ethik,” in: Clemens Breuer (Hg.), *Ethik der Tugenden. Menschliche Grundhaltungen als unverzichtbarer Bestandteil moralischen Handelns*. Festschrift für Joachim Piegsa zum 70. Geburtstag, 311-360.

I propose a complex motivational structure of the morally good and obligatory action. Against Kant, I show the object to be realized decisively motivates moral actions, but this must not be identified with Kant, as a eudemonistic or hedonist view of ethics. Rather, the good to be protected or realized through our actions can motivate us also and principally, because our action is due to its intrinsic value. It deserves respect or love for its own sake.

I also argue, however, that Kant's intuition of a moral action, which must be done "from duty", points out a moment that motivates a morally obligatory action and cannot be reduced to the morally relevant object we realize. Above the object whose realization we intend, appears the moment of moral obligation to which we owe an absolute obedience that never can be accounted for in terms of an adequate response to the object we realize in our action. Moreover, against Scheler, I argue that the moral value of our own actions can also be a motive of the moral act, that there are, furthermore, different universal objects of the morally obligatory action whose missing would destroy the morality of the moral act. Finally, moral experience of conscience, as documented by Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, also gives witness to the fact that, at least implicitly, God as the supreme good and as Lord over our moral life, must be responded to for the moral action to retain its proper value.⁶² I argue as well that happiness can play a legitimate motivating role for moral actions as long as it is not their primary motive but a subordinated motive that presupposes a first motive in the intrinsic value of the object of the moral act and in other intrinsically important motives of the moral action. Ending up with a theory of a six-fold motivation of a morally obligatory action that is truly adequate to its object, I propose the unity and fullness of the moral action requires the presence and appreciation of each of these motives that, in their right order and unison, constitute the morally good action.

In my book on the foundations of ethics and, more specifically, of medical ethics,⁶³ I delve more deeply into the essence of moral values and their absolutely evidential link to free will. On the question of free will, I have also directed a

⁶²See also Juan-Miguel Palacios, "Cur honeste vivere? Los motivos de la acción moral en la ética de Josef Seifert" In: *Bondad, moral e inteligencia ética: nueve ensayos de la ética de los valores*, (Madrid: Encuentro, 2008).

⁶³*The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure. Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine. Vol. 1: Foundations*. (New York: Springer, 2004).

two-year research project financed by Fondecyt in Chile. In many articles, and in particular in a dialogue with Benjamin Libet and other brain scientists and determinists,⁶⁴ I defended the indubitable evidence that we possess a free will and described wherein it resides.⁶⁵

In this book, I treated also a decisive value necessary to understand in order to reach the foundation of ethics: human dignity.⁶⁶ I distinguish four dimensions of human dignity, which is possibly the most significant new contribution I made to the axiological and ontological foundation of ethics:

(1) *The ontological dignity*, an intrinsic and sublime value rooted in the being and essence of the person as such, not restricted to, but including, the *human person*. To be a living human being, whether unborn or born, healthy or sick, awakened and conscious or unconscious, is enough to possess this dignity. It has no degrees and imposes an absolute obligation never to violate it in attitudes or actions. It also gives rise to fundamental human rights such as the right not to be killed or the right never to be used solely as a means and others that are grounded in this ontological dignity.

(2) *The dignity of the person awakened to rational conscious life*: Pascal

⁶⁴For example Benjamin Libet, “Do we Have Free Will?”, in: Robert Kane (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 551-564.

⁶⁵See articles: “In Defense of Free Will: A Critique of Benjamin Libet,” *Review of Metaphysics*, Volume LXV, Nr. 2, December 2011, pp. 377-407; “Can Neurological Evidence Refute Free Will? The Failure of a Phenomenological Analysis of Acts in Libet’s Denial of ‘Positive Free Will’,” *Pensamiento. Revista de investigación e información filosófica*, vol. 67, núm. 254, *Ciencia, filosofía y religión*. Serie especial no 5 (2011), 1077-1098; “Persons, Causes and Free Will: Libet’s Topsy-Turvy Idea of the Order of Causes and ‘Forgetfulness of the Person’,” *Journal of East-West Thought*, Summer Nr. 2 Vol. 4, June 2014, pp. 13-51. “Are We Free? Are We Persons? 5 Ways to Obtain Certain Knowledge About the Existence of Free Will,” *Asian Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities. Bi-annual Journal of the School of the Humanities*. Ateneo de Manila University. Vol. 1, No. 2 2011, pp. 39-79. See also my earlier work, “To Be a Person – To Be Free” in: Zofia J. Zdybicka, et al. (Ed.), *Freedom in Contemporary Culture. Acts of the V World Congress of Christian Philosophy*. Catholic University of Lublin 20-25 August 1996, Vol I (Lublin: The University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin, 1998), pp. 145-185.

⁶⁶*The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure*, cit., ch. 2.

insists on this dignity, making the dangerous claim that our whole dignity consists in thought. To recognize the tremendous dignity of the thinking human person is very important, as long as one sees also the first source of human (ontological) dignity. In the dignity of actually conscious rational persons many rights are grounded, which neither the embryo nor any unconscious person possess: the right to education, to freedom from coercion, the right to marry, to political participation, and countless others.

(3) While also demons possess the first two dimensions and sources of dignity, they fail to possess a third one that requires the good use of human reason and free will. This dignity culminates in moral dignity (and holiness) and constitutes the vocation of the person. Without ever reaching this third, acquired dignity, the first two dimensions of human dignity are of no use to man. Unlike the ontological dignity of the person that is the same in all human persons, the second and third dignities of persons have countless degrees of perfection.

(4) There is, fourthly, the “bestowed dignity” as a pure gift that comes from some origin outside the person endowed with it, such as the dignity a person receives by being loved. This dignity assumes an extreme importance on the religious level of human existence: the dignity of being redeemed, of being loved by God, of living in a state of grace, exceeds in a certain sense all other dimensions of dignity but requires their interrelations and many mutual dependencies.

In *The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure*, I made two other contributions to the foundation of ethics, which I further developed in many articles:

1) First, I showed that an understanding of the moral action as motivated by values and goods to be realized (instead by a mere formal, empty Kantian moral law that is not based on values and goods) in no way gives rise to a kind of utilitarian or pragmatic ethics. It in no way reduces the moral quality of a moral action to the result of a calculus that shows that the expected overall consequences of a given action exceed in goodness those of all alternative courses of action. I showed this by completely refuting the claim that moral actions can be considered as mere means to causing certain goods. Such “teleological” or consequentialist ethics totally overlook the specific moral values born from the encounter of a conscious and free person with these goods or evils that demand an adequate response to them. In this moral value lies a far higher value than values realized in extra-moral effects and consequences of moral actions. Moreover, the

incommensurability of this value with non-moral values and consequences of human actions implies also that there are *intrinsically wrong actions*, even actions that have finite goods as their object. These actions *must never be done*, whatever their good consequences may be.⁶⁷

2) Another major error to refute is that content-full ethics (“non-formal value ethics”)⁶⁸ cannot be philosophically or rationally founded, but can have solely religious foundations. This radically fideist position, proposed by T. H. Engelhardt, Jr., negates to human reason any capacity to grasp a “natural law” and divorces entirely a content-full purely religious ethics of “private strangers in a public and pluralistic universe” from a philosophical ethics, a position I sharply criticized.⁶⁹ It proposes the idea; going far beyond the formalism of Kantian ethics, that human reason cannot establish any human action to be intrinsically wrong. While Kant in his personalist formulation of the categorical imperative (that was adopted by Polish ethical personalism as fundamental principle of ethics) still holds to the absolute value of personal dignity in the foundation of ethics, Engelhardt proposes a purely formalistic content-less philosophical ethics

⁶⁷See *The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure*, cit., ch. 6. See also my “Absolute Moral Obligations towards Finite Goods as Foundation of Intrinsically Right and Wrong Actions. A Critique of Consequentialist Teleological Ethics: Destruction of Ethics through Moral Theology?” *Anthropos I* (1985), pp. 57-94. “Der Glanz der sittlichen Wahrheit als Fundament in sich schlechter Handlungen. Die Enzyklika “Veritatis Splendor” von Johannes Paul II,” in: Clemens Breuer (Hg.), *Ethik der Tugenden. Menschliche Grundhaltungen als unverzichtbarer Bestandteil moralischen Handelns*. Festschrift für Joachim Piegsa zum 70. Geburtstag, (Eos, 2000) pp. 465-487; “The Splendor of Truth and Intrinsically Immoral Acts I: A Philosophical Defense of the Rejection of Proportionalism and Consequentialism in Veritatis Splendor”. *Studia Philosophiae Christianae UKSW* 52 (2015) 2, pp. 27-67; “The Splendor of Truth and Intrinsically Immoral Acts II: A Philosophical Defense of the Rejection of Proportionalism and Consequentialism in Veritatis New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1996). *Splendor*. *Studia Philosophiae Christianae UKSW* 51 (2015) 2, pp. 7-37.

⁶⁸See Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt Towards the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, transl. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1973).

⁶⁹Josef Seifert, *The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure*, cit., ch. 5.

that allows to secular bioethics in a pluralist society any moral horror. Pushing for an extreme liberalism and formalism in secular ethics, he calls in his *Christian Bioethics* the same acts that his secular ethics allows, for example abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, etc. deadly sins that deserve hell.⁷⁰ The United States Constitution, which Engelhardt interprets as abstaining from any natural law position, can serve as an extremely successful model for such a modern pluralistic society in which private moral codes of certain groups in society are not imposed on anyone else. According to it, if it is more and more applied, the standards of a public morality derive only from limited consensus, but more so from agreement, permission, and toleration. Therefore, they can be kept so liberal that, as far as humanly tolerable, within them anything is legally and ethically permitted. Any members or groups within this pluralistic society might choose to adopt this as their life-style. Engelhardt proposes “a public ethics for moral strangers” (that is, for individuals who do not participate in ‘a common moral vision’) when they meet on the marketplace and in the public cultural space of a pluralistic, non-coercive society.⁷¹ He himself holds a ‘private ethics’ which he accepts for the sphere of his own personal life and which condemns, for example, abortion and infanticide which his public ethics permits, as horrible crimes. This position leads him to an almost schizophrenic opposition between his private ethics and the public secular ethics and laws he proposes.⁷²

One could hardly go farther in the separation between reason and faith.

Fides et Ratio - Philosophy of Religion. The critique of such a destruction of philosophical “secular” ethics is closely linked to another area of my philosophical investigation into the philosophy of religion. As a Catholic

⁷⁰T. H. Engelhardt, Jr., *The Foundations of Christian Bioethics*, (Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger, 2000); *The Foundation of Bioethics*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁷¹*The Foundations of Bioethics*, 1986.

⁷²He propounds this ethics in several articles in the journal *Christian Bioethics. Non-Ecumenical Studies in Medical Morality*. As a matter of fact, Engelhardt states in the preface to the 2nd edition of his *The Foundations of Bioethics*, p. x, that the eternal fires of hell expect those who carry out what he proposes for ‘public ethics’, such as abortion on demand: “I am of the firm conviction that, save of God’s mercy, those who willfully engage in much that a peaceable, fully secular state will permit (e.g., euthanasia and direct abortion on demand) stand in danger of hell’s eternal fires.

philosopher, I have dedicated many investigations to the topic of the relations between reason and faith. I rejected five very different and widespread interpretations of these relations between reason and faith, and five corresponding notions of “Christian philosophy”. One of them is a completely fideist and skeptical one of the sort Engelhardt proposes, so as if human reason could know truth solely by means of religious faith. Another one, represented by Hegel and many Gnostics throughout the centuries, is its opposite, as if philosophy could rationally prove, usually by entirely reinterpreting them, the mysteries of Christian faith.

I identify eleven positive relations between philosophy and faith, which justify the misleading term “Christian philosophy”.⁷³ My basic understanding of their relation is that many ethical and other truths our faith teaches us, are also known by rational philosophical evidence which per se does not depend on faith, but in a certain way is even objectively presupposed by faith: *Gratia supponit naturam* (grace presupposes nature). Thus, I think that the relation between philosophy and faith is only valuable, if both are distinguished and neither reason rationalizes and falsifies revealed truth, denying or transforming it into an entirely different system such as Hegel’s “Christian philosophy” and other forms of rationalistic dissolution of mysteries of faith, nor reason loses its purity and autonomy. My new book, *Filosofía cristiana y purísima razón* (Granada: Nuevo Inicio, submitted 2016, to be published by 2018) expresses this most clearly. I propose that the purest, most rational philosophical knowledge can profit from faith and is needed to understand and defend faith. For example, the truths about birth control, the dignity and sanctity of human life, and the intrinsic and grave moral wrongness of any form of abortion and euthanasia, expressed in *Humanae Vitae*, *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae*, are fully open to pure philosophical knowledge. The relation between reason and faith can of course prompt the Church to condemn philosophical errors that are opposite to faith. Likewise, their complex mutual relationships entail, in virtue of the autonomy of human reason, elements of a critique of religion, with which the relation between reason and faith began in Xenophanes, Plato, and others. As a believing Christian, the philosopher has no doubt the task of criticizing the countless errors and

⁷³See my “Filosofía cristiana e libertà. A cura di Gian Paolo Terravecchia.” (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2013); *Christian Philosophy and Free Will*. (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine Press, 2016).

confusions Christian philosophers and theologians have defended. Practically each Christian heresy has its roots in philosophical errors. Even as a believing Catholic who believes in the gift of infallibility given to the Church as a whole and to the Pope when he pronounces dogmas of faith, I believe that philosophical knowledge retains the task to criticize beliefs of Catholic theologians, and even utterances of the ordinary magisterium of the Church. When Popes are not infallibly pronouncing a dogmatic teaching, which they most rarely did, they can clearly contradict rationally known or also revealed truths, even committing heresies such as Pope Liberius or John XXII.⁷⁴

⁷⁴See, for example, my “Der sittliche Unterschied zwischen Empfängnisregelung und Kontrazeption” in *Menschenwürde und Elternschaft* (Hg. Ernst Wenisch), (Valendar: Veritas-Verlag, 1983); “The Problem of the Moral Significance of Human Fertility and Birth Control Methods. Philosophical Arguments against Contraception?” in *Humanae Vitae: 20 Anni Dopo*, Acts of the Second International Congress of Moral Theology, Rome, 1988., pp. 661-672; “Il Dono dell’ Amore e Il Dono di Una Nuova Vita. Verso una visione più personalistica dell’ Matrimonio. Humanae Vitae - Familiaris Consortio. 1968-1988” in: *Per una trasmissione responsabile della vita umana*, a cura di Anna Cappella. Ivo Congresso internazionale per la famiglia d’Africa e d’Europa (Rom: Università dell’ Sacro Cuore, 1989); “Problem moralnego znaczenia ludzkiej plodności i metod kontroli pocze’c,” transl. J. Merecki SDS and P. Mikulska, in: Bp K. Majda’nski/T.Styczeń, *Dar ludzkiego Zycia Humanae Vitae Donum. W swudziesta rocznice ogłoszenia encykliki Humanae Vitae* (Lublin: KUL-Verlag, 1991), 247-259; “Una reflexion filosófica y una defensa de Humanae Vitae. El don del amor y de la nueva vida” in: Benedicto XVI, Karol Wojtyła, Carlo Cafarra, Antonio Me Rouco Varela, Angelo Scola, Livio Melina, Alfonso López Trujillo, Fernando Chomali, Josef Seifert, *A cuarenta años de la Encíclica Humanae Vitae*, *Cuaderno Humanitas No 19*, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Octubre 2008, pp. 49-59; “El aborto ‘terapéutico’ a la luz de la encíclica Evangelium Vitae,” *Humanitas*, *Cuaderno No 24*, Marzo 2011, pp. 112-122. “Der Glanz der sittlichen Wahrheit als Fundament in sich schlechter Handlungen. Die Enzyklika “Veritatis Splendor” von Johannes Paul II” in: Clemens Breuer (Hg.), *Ethik der Tugenden. Menschliche Grundhaltungen als unverzichtbarer Bestandteil moralischen Handelns*. (Eos, 2000) pp. 465-487; “The Splendor of Truth and Intrinsically Immoral Acts I: A Philosophical Defense of the Rejection of Proportionalism and Consequentialism in Veritatis Splendor.” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* UKSW 52 (2015) 2, pp. 27-67; “The Splendor of Truth and Intrinsically Immoral Acts II: A Philosophical Defense of the Rejection of Proportionalism and

Consequentialism in Veritatis Splendor". *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* UKSW 51 (2015) 2, pp. 7-37. I have also criticized assertions made by Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, on brain death, ethics, and other issues. For outside the sphere of what I take as infallible Papal teachings, there are errors possible. With respect to them, also philosophy retains its critical function in relation to religion, which is not restricted to the erroneous Greek religion which Xenophanes and Plato already have sharply criticized. It also refers to what I accept as true religion, but this does not exclude that private publications, or even the ordinary but not infallible magisterium of Popes, can contain errors which philosophers have the task to examine critically. In other words, even the most orthodox Catholic who adheres to any dogma of the faith, should avoid any kind of false respect for utterances of bishops or even Popes when they clearly contradict philosophically knowable truth. In many publications and letters written during decades, which I will not list here, I exerted, as I believe, this critical function of philosophy as a watchdog of human reason that Church and Pope need very much and for which some Popes thanked me.