

Introduction

JOSEF SEIFERT AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL REALISM

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Josef Seifert is Europe's most illustrious phenomenological realist philosopher today. The volume *Reality, Real Being, and Phenomenological Noumenology*, which is in front of you now, epitomizes his metaphysics and epistemology. The title of the work presents itself: it is a metaphysics of the being-in-itself or the metaphysics of the *noumenon*. It is metaphysics of what Immanuel Kant claimed to be beyond the reach of knowledge. It claims the knowability of the being in itself or *the noumenon*. Of course, the work is also an epistemological one of phenomenological realism. It explores the being in itself as the cognitive object and the phenomenological method to explore it. Thus, with daring moves, Seifert also advances Husserl's motto, "back to things themselves," into "back to thing in itself," making a fully Platonic return in phenomenology and raising the stock value of the philosophy called "phenomenological realism," which he champions today. Seifert's endeavor is darling because it swims against a wave of our epoch, which many philosophers would like to claim to be postmodern and in which it is the diversity of truth and knowledge, not unity of truth and knowledge, that is advocated.

As is well known, Kant first developed the concept of *noumenon* to connote a being that exists independently of the human sense, or the thing that is contrasted to a phenomenon, which is an object of sense. In Kant's transcendental idealism, we know the phenomenon, but the noumenon would remain unknown to us, amid we know that the world of noumenon exists. Seifert's noumenology here is, of course, to dethrone Kant's outlook and to claim that we not only know the existence of the world of noumenon, but also can know the noumenon. Seifert insists that the noumenon is knowable. He also insists that knowability is a criterion indicating *the noumenon* to be a real being. He claims, "being can stand out from non-being or nothingness" in three different but interrelated ways: (1) its intelligibility (level of inner meaning and cognizability); (2) "its value"; and (3) its "being real" and its "reality," e.g., having essence. All three moments are necessary of reality and inseparable (Seifert, 2024, 14)¹. Noteworthy, for decades, Kant's thesis of the unknowability of the noumenon has been the bona fide of Seifert's philosophical criticism.

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¹Josef Seifert, *Reality, Real Being, and Phenomenological Noumenology* in this volume. Hereafter referred to as Seifert 2024.

The *Noumenon*, as a being, stands out from non-being in these three ways or possession of all these three conditions/moments: its intelligibility, its value, and its being real. We should add here its objectivity. *The noumenon* is knowable, according to Seifert's phenomenological realism. This is also a thesis that Seifert has been advocating for decades. As a being, the noumenon has values and meaning. In Phenomenological realism, facts and values are integrated in being. The noumenon is real in virtue of its essence or the essential constitution of it. It is in the being in itself that the original reality of a being lies. Moreover, the noumenon is not merely an intentional existence of the consciousness. It is not even Husserlian *noemata*, which is the phenomena that appears in consciousness. Instead, it is a being in the full, proper sense and a being is knowable. Knowing *the noumenon* is the ultimate objective of knowing a thing in phenomenological realism. In a daring move, Seifert brings full stock value to the concept of the being in itself or *the noumenon*.²

The tenet of the knowability of the noumenon demarcates Seifert's phenomenological realism from Husserl's phenomenological idealism in two ways. First, in phenomenological realism, noumenon is an objectively existing being, independently of our consciousness. In comparison, *noemata* is given in our consciousness, not independent of our consciousness. That is to say, in phenomenological realism, the cognitive object is the being in itself, while in phenomenological idealism, the cognitive object is the being in consciousness. Second, in phenomenological realism, noumenon as the being in itself is knowable. In contrast, in phenomenological idealism, what we can know is *noemata*, the phenomenon of the *noumenon* that is given in consciousness. Seifert makes no bone of this difference and points out:

Still less would transcendental idealism grant that we can know the really real existence and essence of things; for this implies that we are capable of knowing "things in themselves," which can only be reality if they are independent of being a purely intentional object of the human mind or of transcendent consciousness. According to transcendental idealism, "real beings and real existence" would also exist only "in the mind," namely as *noemata* constituted by our conscious intentional life (*noesis*) (Ibid).

Thus, Seifert indicates that Husserl's view that "all 'reality' is constituted by transcendental consciousness as the object of consciousness...contradicts real reality and the in-itself closure of the real." (Ibid) Accordingly, while Husserl's phenomenological idealism focuses on the studies of the universal feature of

² Of course, Seifert does not use the concept of being in itself in the same sense as Jean-Paul Sartre uses the idea of being-in-itself. Seifert's being in itself is Plato's being in itself, although Seifert does not evoke Plato's concept of form. Sartre's being-in-itself is the unconscious, thing-like being contrasted to being-for-itself, e.g., the human being.

consciousness, Seifert's phenomenological realism focuses on the studies of the universal, necessary feature of being, especially the being in itself or *the noumenon*. The shining pearls in the palm of Husserl's phenomenological idealism are *noemata*—the phenomena that appear, *noese*—the constituting acts of consciousness, and *transcendental ego*—the source of noese. In comparison, the shining pearls in the palm of Seifert's phenomenological realism are beings, especially beings in themselves, not merely beings in consciousness, and necessary and supremely intelligible essence.

The *noumenon* is a being, not a non-being in the sense that it is real. But what is being real? Seifert rejects Husserl's thesis that "the only, or at least a sufficient, characteristic of reality is its temporality." Seifert insists on two grounds. First, temporary is not a sufficient characteristic or condition of reality. X is a sufficient condition for Y in the following situation: If X, then Y; Y, not necessarily X. It is not true that a being that has temporality is real. Or it is not the case that whatever has temporality has reality. Seifert claimed, "that not everything temporal is real is already evident from the fact that even purely intentional objects, such as the events and occurrences in a novel that take place in a fictional time." (Ibid, 16) The same is true of the fact that, for example, a mentally constructed protagonist in a play may have temporality but is still not real in the sense that it does not have real existence but has only an imagined existence or intentional existence. This is also the case of intentional beings such as beings in dreams, illusion, imagination, and fantasy. Second, temporality is not a necessary condition for reality either. X is the necessary condition for Y in the following situation: If Y, then X; No X, no Y. Not every real being or a being that has reality or is real has temporality. Thus, for example, God is real and has reality, but God does not have temporality. This is also the case of universal truth, universal justice, universal beauty, universal duty, and universal virtue. What is universal is timeless and transcending above space.

Seifert also rejects Scheler and Kant's view that makes "resistance to the sense of touch to drives, expressions of will, and desires as the sole criterion" of reality. On the one hand, resistance to sense is not a sufficient characteristic or condition of reality. Objects of hallucination or psychic experiences produce resistances to senses, but they are not real; "there can be resistance of unreal objects.". Also, evidentially, "there are also many ideal laws of essences and other non-real objects which resist our imagination and volition without therefore being real in the strict sense of the primordial phenomenon of reality." (Ibid, 19) On the other hand, resistance to senses is also not a necessary characteristic or condition of reality. For example, truths or justice that we arrive at through speculative reasoning may not produce resistance to senses, will, or desires. Noteworthy, if an object can produce resistance to senses if and only if it is sensible. However, not everything real being is sensible. Scheler and Kant's view may commit the logical flaw of begging the question here: X is real because it is sensible and produces resistance to senses, and X is sensible and produces resistance to sense because it is real. Thus, resistance to senses, will, and desires is "neither exclusive criterion [of reality] nor its innermost core."

In connection with this, value is a different moment of being that is distinctive from being real. Thus, Seifert also rejects G.E. Moor's identifying of reality with good/value (Ibid, 21). The question of what is good is what is the reality of good. Moor's answer that good is good claims that good is valuable and desirable. Seifert insists that it is one thing to say that good exists and is real and thus to answer the question of what the reality of is good, the question of whether good exists or in terms of what it exists; it is quite another to claim that the property and content of good is desirable and valuable.

At the end of the day, Seifert's criterion of reality is a synthesis of the Platonic emphasis on essence and Aristotle's concept of primary substance. Seifert's approach is a phenomenological return but also a realist return. It is a phenomenological return in the sense that its method is "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in every way in which it shows itself from itself." (Heidegger 1962, BT58/H34) ³ Its maxim is "[back] to the things themselves!" (Ibid) Seifert insisted not only back to things themselves, but also back to things in themselves—for example, not just back to things themselves in consciousness, but back to things themselves in themselves existing independently of our consciousness. It is not just back to things themselves in their phenomenal appearances, but back to things themselves independently existing as defining, distinctive, and individually real beings. Seifert's approach is realist in the sense that it insists that real beings have mind-independent existence and are not mind-dependent; real beings are real and exist even in the absence of any minds perceiving them or knowing them; real beings are what they are, not necessarily as what our minds understand them. By this token, Kant and Husserl are not realist philosophers and thus are the bona fide objects of Seifert's criticism, amid both Husserl and Seifert are phenomenologist philosophers. Both Kant and Husserl make real beings mind-dependent beings. By this token, realism is the doctrine holding that reality is mind-independent; it is independently of the mind. Seifert insisted that the reality of a being exists independently of a person's mind or any mind.

In Seifert's view, the first necessary and sufficient characteristic of reality is the essence of the being. By essence, Seifert means Platonic essence of being or Aristotle's nature of being. It is the universal, defining, and fundamental property, characteristic, or condition of a being. All beings that are real necessarily have their essence or nature. All that have essences or natures are necessarily real and have reality. Seifert claims that the association between being real and essence can be seen evidentially by looking at "some modes of beings that possess their nature [essence] as living, conscious, thinking, or free beings" (Seifert, 2024, 22). We will see that such beings possess the essence or nature consisting of living, conscious, thinking, or free only if they are real; reversely, they are or exist because they have such

³ Heidegger, Martin. 1962., *Being and Time*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.

essences—that is, essence determines existence, not the other way around as phenomenological existentialists such as Heidegger and Sartre insist; the essence of a tomato determines its existence to be a tomato's, not a potato's.

An examination of those beings that possess the nature or essence of being living, conscious, thinking, or free reveals the following. First, “such an affiliation of being real to the essences of certain beings can be shown” to all substances, including those beings whose beings are beings-in-themselves in existence. Second, it reveals that “all material movements through space claim an autonomous real existence” that is beyond and “independent of mere possibilities, ideas” or intentionality. Third, living beings claim an independent real existence according to their essence. A person has his/her independent real existence prescribed by his/her human nature or essence and cannot have an existence of a monkey, apple tree or tomato. Fourth, “reality belongs to the essence of a person and to her unique, unrepeatability.” (Ibid, 23) On the one hand, a real person is not repeatable or duplicable. On the other hand, the nonrepeatability or non-duplicability of a person is determined by her human essence. Fifth, it reveals that God's being real and God's essence are not separable; God that does not have the essence of God is not real God—for example, God that is not omnipotent, omniscient, and all good is not real God; God that is not real cannot be God of omnipotence, omniscience, and all good. God is real in virtue of its essence.

Noteworthy, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger also proposed the human being or *Dasein* as the paradigmatic, archetype of being to investigate Being. From the point of view that the human being is timely, communal, conscious, and capable of taking a stance, Heidegger put forth the memorable motto of existentialism: existence precedes essence. By contrast, from the point of view that beings such as human beings are conscious, thinking, and free, Seifert insists on a phenomenological realist stance that essence determines existence and thus precedes existence. As it will be shown immediately, Seifert does not deny that existence is a predicate to reality, but reality is first associated with essence.

Interestingly, insisting on a stronger form of phenomenological realism, Seifer brings something from Hegel, if not from Daoist philosophers. He further claims that being real or reality is known by its opposites and by what is not. The real or being real can be understood by its opposites: (1) by its opposition to the possible, (2) by its opposition to the impossible, (3) by its opposition to the merely imagined, and (4) by its contrast to the purely ideal. In short, being real is known so much for its own distinctiveness, but also by its opposites. This also rehabilitates the Platonic view that the essence of a being will not be the opposite of the being. By this token, the moment of “in-itself” does not make a being less real or unknowable but “completes the final being of being real. Thus, for example, X's *noumenon* is actually the moment that completes X as a real being. Seifert's thesis here is not so much to claim objectivity as a characteristic of reality as it is to claim that the essence of a being is a being-in-itself.

Meanwhile, Seifert's phenomenological realism also has its unique approach to the relationship between essence and existence. Its basic thesis is that, on the one hand, real existence is not a predicate of the essence or real beings, at least of no contingent beings; on the other hand, existence is a real predicate in the twofold sense: in the sense that it adds something to a being and also in the logical sense. The phenomenological realist approach denies the phenomenological existentialist claim that existence defines essence—that is, the whatness of a being, amid it acknowledges that existence can contribute that which can be used to describe or characterize a being.

Seifert claims, "Existence is not a predicate of the whatness or essence of a real being, at least in the case of contingent beings. What we mean by the existence of something belongs neither to 'what' the being is (to its *ti einai*) nor to how it is (to its *poion einai*)." (Ibid, 28) Existence does not "add a determination of essence to the thing as such." Thus, for example, the existence of a cat indicates that an animal called "cat" is or exists, but it does not add a determination of "catness" or "animalness" to the being called "cat." This is particularly the case regarding contingent existence. A contingent existence is that it is, but it could be not; it exists, but it could exist not. If X's existence is contingent, it has nothing to do with X's essence. If X's existence has an internal relation to its essence, then X's existence is necessary, not contingent.

Notwithstanding, although existence is not a predicate of the essence of a being, in particular of contingent beings, it is a real predicate. Ontologically, "something is 'added' to a being or what it is as possible if real existence is given to it." Locally, when we say that X this or that exists", "something is 'added' to the subject term" (Ibid, 29). Moreover, that existence is a real predicate in both an ontological sense and in a logical sense can be seen in ten ways: (1) "the sense of many existential questions and judgments can only be explained if one admits that existence is a predicate in the two senses defined above" (Ibid, 31); (2) metaphysically, "no one would say that nothing is 'added' to a being at then unique moment it receives existence" (Ibid, 32); (3) "the essence of a being gets a completely new 'meaning' if this being exists"(Ibid); (4) "everything is added to a being when it receives real existence." (Ibid, 33); (5) That "existence is a real predicate" is evident in the fact that different modalities of existence which we can encounter add different things to a being (Ibid, 35); thus, a necessary existence adds things to a being that differ from what a contingent existence adds to the being (ibid); (6) unless existence adds things to a being, Kant could not reasonably claim that "every existential proposition is synthetic" (Ibid, 36); (7) "the 'exact coincidence' between real existence and possible existence shows clearly that (real) existence is a predicate"(Ibid); (8) "the exact correspondence between the 'essence of the possible and that of real" indicates that existence adds something to a being (Ibid, 37-38); (9) "the crucial difference between 'is' in the meaning of 'exists' and 'is' as a cupula" (Ibid, 38); and (10) "The distinction between potential and actual being" indicates that existence is a real

predicate (Ibid, 41) All the same, existence is a real predicate of a being, amid it is not a predicate of the essence of the being. This thesis rejects the existentialist claim that existence determines and defines essence on the one hand and recognizes that existentially, existence contributes to identifying reality and being real.

In short, the phenomenological noumenology in this volume is metaphysically and epistemologically realist noumenology. It contends that noumenon is the knowable real being independent of our consciousness; the being in itself is not being in consciousness only. It contends that existence is a real predicate, amid it is not a predicate of the essence; existence adds meanings, values, and conditions to a being; nonetheless, it is the essence that determines existence, not the other way around; equally crucial, there are both necessary and contingent existences, as well as essential and non-essential existence. It calls for back to the being in itself, not just back to a being itself as given in consciousness. It synthesizes insights of both Plato's and Aristotle's metaphysics, and insights of both Plato's and Aristotle's epistemology. Not surprisingly, demonstrating that the being in itself or noumenon is a real being with knowability of the being in itself or *noumenon*, *Reality*, *Real Being*, and *Phenomenological Noumenology* recommends that the method to know the being in itself is phenomenological: that is, to see the noumenon as itself in itself; it is to let the noumenon which shows itself be seen from itself in every way in which it shows itself from itself; it is to let the being in itself to be seen in virtue of its being an essentially necessary being that embodies both the universal and the particular. It firmly defends the traditional concepts of virtues of truth and knowledge: objectivity, universality, certainty, and correspondences between the mind and reality outside the mind.

A few words about the philosopher himself are in order. One's works reveal one's character. As his writing reveals, Josef Seifert is the Socratic kind of philosopher in every sense. He lives on philosophy. He embodies what philosophy is all about loving wisdom and knowledge. He devotes himself totally to practicing philosophy and exploring philosophical truths. He had been a philosophy professor at the University of Texas at Dallas in the 1970s and early 1980s before he established the International Academy of Philosophy in Europe, modeled after Plato's and Aristotle's academies. For decades, he has been the banner holder of phenomenological realism in Europe and the world. The late Pope John Paul II famously proclaimed that Seifert was the best phenomenological philosopher in Europe.

For decades, Seifert has developed an outstanding phenomenological realist metaphysics and epistemology. He is well recognized for his contributions to making metaphysics a rigorous science of *being qua being*. His book *Back to "Things in Themselves": A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* is one of the most influential works in European philosophy. In the book, Seifert demonstrates that the original inspiration of phenomenology was the primordial insight of philosophy itself, the foundation of philosophia perennis. He frames his insights by engaging in dialogues with Descartes, Kant, Husserl, Gadamer, and various

European continental philosophers. Even in this early work, while defending Husserl's phenomenological principle of the method, "Back to things themselves," Seifert criticizes Kant's arguments that discredit the knowability of things in themselves. In *Reality, Real Being, and Phenomenological Noumenology*, in the current volume, Seifert determinedly rejected both Kant's and Husserl's thesis that *the noumenon* is unknowable.

Meanwhile, in his influential paper on metaphysics entitled "In Defense of Free Will," published in *The Review of Metaphysics* in 2011, Seifert defends the existence of free will with the arguments of immediate evidence, necessary evidence, and the experience of moral "ought." His three recently published books, *Metaphysics as Rigorous Science of Things in Themselves*, *Metaphysics as the Science of Being Qua Being*, and *Person as Truest Being* developed a realist phenomenological and perennial personalist metaphysics and new insights into the perfect being, e.g., the divine being. His recently published book, *The Primal Phenomenon of Reality*, is another masterpiece of phenomenological realist metaphysics.

Metaphysics as Rigorous Science of Things in Themselves, seeks a rigorous, scientific "return to things themselves". It explores necessary and supremely intelligible essences, states of affairs, and laws and refutes the reductionism of transcendental idealism, e.g., Kant's transcendental idealism. Meanwhile, *Metaphysics as the Science of Being Qua Being* proposes creatively four principles of understanding the object of metaphysics, being qua being: the principles of non-contradiction, identity, excluding the middle, and sufficient reason. It develops Duns Scotus's contribution to the metaphysics of transcendentals. Seifert points out in the book that the essential point of them is not that they are found in everything that is but rather that they do not have any intrinsic limitation (and therefore, unlike limited and mixed perfections like animal and human nature); they can also, and must even, be attributed in the primary sense, to God). He argues that besides seven "transcendental properties" found in all things, there are other transcendentals: pure perfections that are found only in some beings (life, wisdom, etc.) but are not restricted to limited spheres of being but are fully themselves only when they are infinite, which is the core of their "transcendentality"; still others are exclusively divine attributes; of all of them holds true: a pure perfection (a transcendental) is whatever is absolutely and without qualification better than beings incompatible with it.

In connection with the above, *Person as Truest Being* investigates this decisive question of what is being in the primary and most authentic sense. The center of the book consists of a carefully weighed answer to this question of *being qua being* and using a considerable number of criteria for determining what is in the primary and most proper sense among all beings on earth. It gives a very carefully reflected answer to the same question about being in the most proper sense: an answer very different from the traditional Aristotelian and Thomist one but being quite

compatible with Aquinas' deepest understanding of being qua being as a person. In the book, Seifert gives a paradigmatic definition of person: "*Person*" refers to the most perfect there is in all nature, namely to what subsists in a rational nature (*subsistens in rationali natura*). Yet, all that is perfect should be attributed to God because His essence contains all perfection.⁴ He points out that this name [person] should thus be attributed to God; also, in the same manner, it is attributed to creatures: it will be in a more excellent fashion; to be a person (not to be this or that individual person) is pure perfection and thus must exist most perfectly in God. With these and other arguments, Seifert proves a very central thesis of the book: to be a person is to possess the being of the person and to be capable of the good in the most proper sense of the term.

For Decades, Seifert also develops an outstanding phenomenological realist philosophy of religion. He is a staunch advocate and defender of the rationality of faith, the association of faith and knowledge, the existence and nature of God, and the immortality of the soul. He has written extensively on the nature of God, the problem of evil, the relationship between faith and reason, philosophy of religion as a rigorous science, and the scientific method in religious studies. He has contributed significant insights to philosophy of religion, including our understanding of God and the perfect being. He has argued that God is the foundation of all reality and that the existence of evil does not negate the existence of God.

In *Back to 'Things in Themselves': A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism*, Seifert has made other notable contributions to our understanding of religion and God as the perfect being and the source of all reality. Among the most notable contributions is his new doctrine of pure perfection. The medieval doctrine posits that God is the source of all perfections and that these perfections are simple and indivisible. Seifert has been a leading proponent of this theory and used it to explore the nature of God and the limits of human understanding. Seifert's work on pure perfections builds on the ideas of Anselm of Canterbury, who was the first philosopher to grasp the essence of pure perfections with philosophical clarity. Anselm sought a criterion for discerning which predicates are substantively or properly characteristic of the divine essence. To find a solution, Anselm first distinguished two basic types of predications: the relative and the absolute. Imbibing insights from traditional Western philosophies, Seifert has introduced corrections and clarifications to the traditional doctrine of pure perfection, as well as developed new insights into its nature. In this regard, Seifert develops a paradigmatic formula of pure perfection: *A pure perfection is such that the being which possesses it and which is compatible with it is, from the point of view of that perfection, necessarily more perfect than a being which in fact does not possess the given perfection, or by*

⁴ Cf. Roira, Rogelio. 2017. "Perfection and imperfection of Josef Seifert's Theory of Pure Perfections," *Journal of East-West thought*, 7:1, pp.53-71. Indebted to Rovira's insights here.

essence cannot possess it. His second major contribution to the theory of pure perfections concerns the ways in which the actual existence of such perfections can be identified. Seifert begins by noting that pure perfection possesses an objective, essential necessity. They are indeed Urgegebenheiten, irreducible realities. Thus, their existence can be ascertained, according to Seifert, in two ways: indirectly, by negative proof, and directly, by a positive insight. His third contribution concerns the problem of knowledge of these perfections. In accordance with his manifold epistemological investigations and inquiries on the methods of realist phenomenology, Seifert defends an intuitive knowledge of pure perfection. This intuitive knowledge is certainly not direct but mediated “in the mirror” of others. This “mediated immediate” knowledge is, in Seifert’s own words, an “indirect knowledge in which other, originally hidden essences, are reflected and co-given in what is more immediately present to us, sometimes as their perfect form, other times as their intelligible “opposites,”” Seifert’s work shapes greatly contemporary debates in metaphysics and philosophical theology.

In the article “The Seventh Voyages of Philosophy” (*Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 1999), Seifert uses the concept of voyages of philosophy to refer to philosophical knowledge of truth, in contrast to skepticism and relativism. He designates philosophical knowledge to form the rational foundation of philosophy of religion and the application of a critical method to the central contents of studies of religion. He argues that realist phenomenology plays a key role in the seventh voyage by providing an objective foundation to *a priori* knowledge, including *a priori* knowledge of religion. The article also shows that essential necessity possesses a supreme form of intelligibility. Cognition is reached via insight and deduction; three kinds of essences explain the difference between empirical and *a priori* sciences, while the “impoverishment of *a priori*” is transcended through necessary essences. Seifert points out that rethinking Edmund Husserl’s method allows access to real existence, where objective values replace axiological nihilism; rigorous philosophy is thus compatible with divinely revealed truth about the mysteries of God and man.

Seifert’s three recently published books *Quinque Viae Amoris ad Deum; Five Ways from Love to the Knowledge of God*, Being and Person (Irving, TX, Gaflei, FL, Santiago de Chile, Granada, Spain, Gaming, Austria: IAP Press, 2023), *From Finite Person to the Infinite Divine Person, Being and Person*, Volume IV, (Irving, TX, Gaflei, FL, Santiago de Chile, Granada, Spain, Gaming, Austria: IAP Press, 2023) and *God as Truest Person and Infinitely Perfect Being. Metaphysics as Science of the Supreme Being in Himself*, Being and Person, (Irving, TX, Gaflei, FL, Santiago de Chile, Granada, Spain, Gaming, Austria: IAP Press, Kindle DP 2023), creatively develop a phenomenological realist account of our knowledge of God and the being of God and are truly thought-provoking and thought liberating.

Five Ways from Love to the Knowledge of God, Being and Person concentrates on the specific nature of the person, especially of personal love, and shows that from

it, five thoroughly personalistic ways lead to the knowledge of God. The first way applies the Aristotelian and Thomistic insight that a deep finality permeates the universe in which nothing is “in vain,” without meaning and purpose, to a philosophy of love. The second way proceeds from the insight that moral values culminate in the love for God – which would be an absurdity if God did not exist. Both the inner meaning of love of God as a supreme morally good act and the necessity that all morally good persons receive their appropriate reward prove the real existence of God. The third way starts with the insight that only love can be the appropriate value response that is due to the inner preciousness of the person, a truth that grips us, particularly in the smile of a baby. The fourth way contemplates that love is pure perfection: that is a value, and perfection which to possess is absolutely better than not to possess it for whatever reason. No being could be perfectly good without being capable of loving and without actually loving. Therefore, God, who possesses all perfections in the supreme degree, i.e., in their infinitude, must love in the supreme degree and even BE LOVE ITSELF. The fifth way is prepared by the ontological proof of the existence of God, meanwhile, *From Finite Person to the Infinite Divine Person, Being and Person*, and *God as Truest Person and Infinitely Perfect Being. Metaphysics as Science of the Supreme Being in Himself, Being, and Person* explores insights of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, and various others and, therefore, proposes a phenomenological realist defense of God as the truest person and perfect being and consciousness.

Furthermore, for decades, Seifert has developed an outstanding phenomenological realist philosophy of science and the integration of scientific studies and religious studies. One of his influential works is his 1993 paper entitled “Is ‘Brian Death’ Actually Death” in *The Monist*, wherein Seifert explores the phenomenon of brain death and argues that the criterion in the concept of brain death is invalid for determining death; he also explores the philosophical aspects of death, e.g., the metaphysical, ontological, and philosophic anthropological dimensions of death. Seifert’s other influential work is his book, wherein he critically explores Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology and proposes a realistic turn in philosophical methods to establish philosophy as a rigorous science. His book *What is Life? The Originality, Irreducibility, and Value of Life* also contribute illuminating insights into life and the relationship among philosophy, religion, and science. The book explores the concept of life from the examined philosophy of life from a scientific, religious perspective. In the book, Seifert argues that life is an ultimate datum that cannot be reduced to physical reality. It also discusses the role of consciousness in understanding life and emphasizes the objective and intrinsic value of all life, including human life.

Finally, for decades, Seifert has developed an outstanding phenomenological realist ethics and moral philosophy. One of his notable works is the book titled “Material Value-Ethics: Evaluating the Thought of Josef Seifert and John F. Crosby.” In this book, Seifert and John F. Crosby present material value ethics that reject all forms of suicide, abortion, euthanasia, torture, destructive stem-cell

research, genetic enhancement, in vitro fertilization, and contraception. They also explore the philosophical foundations of material value ethics and its application to various ethical issues. Some of his notable works on ethics include (1) *The Theology of Hope*: In this work, Seifert explores the concept of hope from a moral perspective; (2) *Diktatur des Relativismus: der Kampf um die absolute Wahrheit für die Zukunft Europas*: This book delves into the topic of the dictatorship of relativism and the struggle for absolute truth in Europe's future; (3) *The Moral Action: What Is It and How Is It Motivated?* wherein Seifert examines the nature of moral action and its motivations. In the article "The Theology of Hope," published in *First Things* in 2018, Seifert presents an ethics of the intrinsically good that is always good and, in all situations, abandons the evil Machiavellian principle of private and public life.

To sum up, Josef Seifert, the philosopher who authors *Reality, Real Being, and Phenomenological Noumenology* in this volume, is a world-renowned phenomenological realist philosopher in Europe today. *Reality, Real Being, and Phenomenological Noumenology* is a philosophical achievement grounded in Seifert's decades-long philosophical achievements. In our epoch, in which postmodernism becomes a fashion and the ideas of universal truth, good, virtue, duty, and obligation were seriously devalued, Seifert and his phenomenological realism also swim against the wave. In an epoch of artificial intelligence, his philosophical realist noumenology both swims against the wave and sheds illuminating insights. Kant put forth his immortal motto of enlightenment: Enlightenment means having the courage to use one's own understanding. Ironically, the best defense of Seifert is from Kant, the philosopher who is the bona fide of Seifert's philosophical criticism. It is also a beauty. How much less would the world be if there were not a group of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, and Josef Seifert, who constantly stared at the sky and stars?