

THE RECEPTIVE TRANSCENDENCE OF
KNOWLEDGE AND THE “FOURTH COGITO”:
TOWARDS A CONTENT-FULL NOTION OF “EARLY
PHENOMENOLOGY”

Josef Seifert*

*Abstract: There is a purely historical notion of “Early Phenomenology” (from the late 19th century to 1939), a period during which Husserl’s move towards transcendental phenomenology (1905 and 1913) has occurred that led to the break between him and almost the entire Göttingen and Munich circle of early phenomenologists. Evidence about the essence of knowledge, especially of a priori knowledge of essences and states of affairs grounded in them, but also of the phenomenological fourth cogito-argument (after Augustine’s, Descartes’ and Husserl’s) shows that the act of cognition is characterized by a transcendent receptive grasp of beings, essences, principles of ontology and logic, and other data that are autonomously existing “in themselves” and yet clearly given in intentional cognitive acts as being irreducible to noemata and purely intentional and constituted objects of conscious acts. The transcendence of the act of knowledge rejected by Husserl from his *Beilagen* to “The Idea of Phenomenology” (1905) on, and its strong defense by some phenomenologists, leads to a contentful concept of “early phenomenology” as an objectivist and realist phenomenology. Such a “phenomenology of cognitive transcendence” was ably defended in the *Prolegomena* of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, various works of Scheler, Reinach, Hildebrand, and others, leading to a deep break within the phenomenological movement and to the birth of a phenomenological realism very much akin to Platonic, Augustinian, and medieval, Aristotle-inspired philosophy. Moreover, it will be argued that, far from constituting a “naïve realism,” a relapse to a *Bilderbuchphänomenologie*, and *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* opposed to rigorously “scientific phenomenology,” a phenomenology based on the discovery of the transcendence of man in knowledge constitutes the only properly critical phenomenology faithful to things themselves as given to the mind, and free of inner contradictions, and did not end in 1939 but continues to exist until today.*

Some authors use a purely historical notion of “Early phenomenology” extending from the late 19th century to 1905 or to 1913, i.e. to the moment when Husserl’s

*Dr. JOSEF SEIFERT, Gründungsrektor of The International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality of Liechtenstein. Full Professor at the International Academy of Philosophy Spain – Instituto de Filosofía Edith Stein. Conference held at the Conference sponsored by the Northamerican Society for Early Phenomenology, June 12-14, 2013, at King’s University College, Western University, London. Ontario. Canada.

move towards transcendental phenomenology has occurred¹ that led to a more or less sharp philosophical break between him and almost the entire Göttingen and Munich circles of early phenomenologists.² Other authors let “early phenomenology” end only in 1939, an artificial date meant to designate the point in time when realist and “early phenomenologists” had died or ceased to write in the mode of early pre-transcendental phenomenology. However, this date is obviously incorrect because many early phenomenologists (such as Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Dietrich von Hildebrand, or Roman Ingarden) wrote until the 1960ies and 1970ies in the same realist way and published some of their epistemological main works or critiques of Husserl during this period. Moreover, many realist phenomenologists are continuing to think in ways similar to those of “early phenomenologists” until today.

I would like to suggest that the essential point that identifies the so-called “early” Munich and Göttingen phenomenology and distinguishes it from Husserl’s later phenomenology cannot be identified in a purely historical periodization but concerns an essential philosophical content: namely the realism and above all the understanding of the transcendence of phenomenological knowledge and of knowledge as such, and the consequent critique of Husserl’s “cognitive immanentism” which emerges for the first time in his 1905 lectures *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*³, in which Husserl expresses most clearly the same kind of “phenomenological immanentism” that characterizes his *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* as well as his *Ideas* and *Cartesian Meditations*.⁴

¹Edmund Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), originally written in 1905; and Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, I, *Husserliana* Bd. 3, ed. H. L. Van Breda, hrsg. v. W. Biemel (Den Haag, 1950); originally written in 1913.

²See Adolf Reinach, «Über Phänomenologie», in: Adolf Reinach, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Ausgabe mit Kommentar*, Bd. I: *Die Werke*, Teil I: Kritische Neuausgabe (1905-1914), Teil II: Nachgelassene Texte (1906-1917), S. 531-550; Roman Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, translated by Arnór Hannibalsson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975); Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Der Sinn philosophischen Fragens und Erkennens*, (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1950); the same author, *Che cos'è la filosofia?/What Is Philosophy?*, English-Italian (Milano: Bompiani Testi a fronte, 2001).

³Edmund Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), *Beilagen*. The English translation: *The Idea of Phenomenology*, transl. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964) does not contain these decisive texts.

⁴See Edmund Husserl, *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*, in: Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge* (1911-1921), Hrsg. Thomas Nenon und Hans Rainer Sepp, *Husserliana* Bd. XXV (Dordrecht/Boston/Lancaster: M. Nijhoff, 1987), S. 3-62; see also *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, I, *Husserliana* Bd. 3, ed. H.L. Van Breda, hrsg. v. W. Biemel (Den Haag, 1950), and 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. van Breda. (Den Haag, Nijhoff 1950 – 1962), Bd. 1, 1950. See also Josef Seifert, „Phänomenologie und Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft. Zur Grundlegung einer realistischen phänomenologischen Methode – in kritischem Dialog mit Edmund Husserls Ideen über die Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,“ in: *Filosofie, Pravda, Nesmrtenost. Tòì prauškà pòednáóky/Philosophie*,

I. Husserl's Rejection of the "Transcendence of Man in Knowledge"

In his five lectures entitled *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl writes:

Cognition in all of its manifestations is a psychic act; it is the cognition of a cognizing subject. The objects cognized stand over and against the cognition. But how can we be certain of the correspondence between cognition and the object cognized? How can knowledge transcend itself and reach its object reliably? The unproblematic manner in which the object of cognition is given to natural thought now becomes an enigma.⁵

It is quite clear from the further text that "because our lack of clarity about cognition implies that we cannot understand what it could mean for something *to be known in itself yet in the context of cognition*,"⁶ Husserl arrives at a negation, amply testified to by the passages quoted below, of any real transcendence of knowledge to the "*Ding an sich*" (in itself) of 'things in themselves.' It is highly surprising to find such a denial of knowledge transcending towards 'things in themselves' in a thinker who had so strongly insisted in his *Logical Investigations* and in subsequent works that most forms of consciousness are 'intentional acts,' and thereby achieve some 'transcendence' in that each act of perception or knowledge is directed towards an object which is not a real part of our conscious experience itself. Even when the object of consciousness is merely fictional, Husserl asserts, it stands clearly over and against the stream of our conscious life.

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; «философия как строгая наука» (Philosophy as a Rigorous Science. Towards the Foundations of a Realist Phenomenological Method – in Critical Dialogue with Edmund Husserl's Ideas about Philosophy as a Rigorous Science), (Russian), *Logos* 4 9 (1997), 54-76.

⁵Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 15. See also the original text in E. Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), p. 20: "In allen ihren Ausgestaltungen ist die Erkenntnis ein psychisches Erlebnis: Erkenntnis des erkennenden Subjekts. Ihr stehen die erkannten Objekte gegenüber. Wie kann nun aber die Erkenntnis ihrer Übereinstimmung mit den erkannten Objekten gewiß werden, wie kann sie über sich hinaus und ihre Objekte zuverlässig treffen? Die dem natürlichen Denken selbstverständliche Gegebenheit der Erkenntnisobjekte in der Erkenntnis wird zum Rätsel."

⁶Die Idee der Phänomenologie, II, 23-3: weil die erkenntnistheoretische Unklarheit es mit sich bringt, daß wir nicht verstehen, welchen Sinn ein Sein haben kann, das an sich und doch in der Erkenntnis erkannt sei. *The Idea of Phenomenology*, 2nd lecture, p. 29.

Zeus, or a house which we perceive in a dream, are not part of our conscious life; we will never find their properties as properties of our own conscious acts. Our conscious life does not have windows, doors, or colour - as does the house we dream about; nor are Zeus and his lightning and thunderbolts immanent parts of our consciousness.⁷ From this important insight into the intentional character of consciousness, which always achieves a 'transcendence' towards intentional objects that are not parts of the real stream of consciousness, it would seem that Husserl should not have experienced special difficulty in answering the problem of the 'transcendence of knowledge' in the sense of reaching being and essences that - while existing wholly autonomously with respect to our consciousness - still show themselves to our conscious cognitive acts.⁸

⁷See also the expression of the same idea in Adolf Reinach, "Über Phänomenologie", in: Adolf Reinach, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Ausgabe mit Kommentar*, Bd. I: Die Werke, Teil I: Kritische Neuausgabe (1905-1914), Teil II: Nachgelassene Texte (1906-1917), S. 531-550, and the English translation: Adolf Reinach, 'Concerning Phenomenology,' transl. from the German ("Über Phänomenologie") by Dallas Willard, *The Personalist* 50 (Spring 1969), pp. 194-221. Reprinted in *Perspectives in Philosophy*, ed. Robert N. Beck (New York: Holt, Reinhart, & Winston, 1961 and 1969).

⁸I am aware of many philosophers and interpreters of Husserl who, like Dallas Willard and Robert Sokolowski, seek to interpret Husserl as a thinker who does not see any real or important distinction between idealism and realism (Sokolowski), or who is a firm realist (Willard). See Robert Sokolowski's still authoritative work, *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*. *Phaenomenologica* 18 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), in which he gives to the terms "constitution" primarily a harmless meaning that a realist philosopher just as an idealist one could accept: that through a variety and series of conscious acts objects show themselves and become present to the human subject and in this sense "constitute themselves" as *objects of knowledge and consciousness*, through or to the subject by means of passive or active syntheses. In his more recent works, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and his "Husserl on First Philosophy". *Phaenomenologica* 200, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 3-23, Sokolowski presents similar interpretations of "constitution in Husserl, which undoubtedly capture well this universally accepted and acceptable sense of the term, but do not even touch the obviously entirely different ontological sense of constitution Husserl has in mind in his *Beilagen* and in his *Cartesian Meditations*. Willard claims, without any reason or quote that would demonstrate that I hold such an opposite view of my own position, that my own position in *Back to Things in Themselves* and critique of Husserl is "quintessentially idealist" and at the same time "naively realist," which would amount to a well-nigh idiotic position, fitting in well with the generally rather sneering and insulting terms in which describes my work (Thus Willard writes: "The only sustained piece of philosophical argument occurs on pp. 303-317, where Seifert purports to prove an inner contradiction in any idealist position." Willard claims without any further argument, that I hold the opposite of what I do in fact hold: "in any case, the 'being in itself' which the author purports to prove is itself of quintessentially idealist type." And later, referring to phenomenological realism, adds: "In this regard he remains faithful to that naivity for which Husserl criticizes his own early followers.") See Dallas Willard, "Seifert, Josef, *Back to Things in Themselves: A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism*," *Canadian Philosophical Review*, IX, #2 1989, 66-69; <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=55>. I believe that interpreters of Husserl such as Sokolowski and Willard, with all their brilliant expertise in Husserl, do not attend to the very basic later Husserlian position that our conscious acts can never reach any being that would not be

However, made aware by Nicolai Hartmann of the fact that this ‘transcendence’ of each intentional act, as such, does not imply anything except ‘immanent transcendence,’ Husserl came to see the problem of how knowledge can achieve ‘transcendent transcendence,’ in which, as he put it in the *Prolegomena* to the *Logical Investigations*, “angels and gods would recognize the same (eternal) truths,” as insoluble: Could not an omnipotent . . . liar-spirit have created my soul in such a way and given it such contents of consciousness, that of all the objects which it intends, insofar as they are (claim to be) in extra-mental reality, nothing would exist? Perhaps there are things apart from me, but none of those which I take for real. And perhaps there is nothing at all outside of myself . . . Does perception possess any *evidence* for this achievement of transcendence? But any evidence, what else is it except a certain psychic character. . . something transcendent is not implied in the immanent. . . . The transcendent . . . can in principle not be experienced.⁹

Consider also this impressive text:

The relatedness of knowledge to something transcendent is unclear. When would we have clarity about it, and where? Well, when and where the essence of such a relatedness would be given to us, so that we could *intuit* it (*sie schauen*), we would comprehend the possibility of knowledge (for the respective type of knowledge in which it would be achieved). Obviously this condition [i.e., the evidence about transcendent cognitive contact with being in itself, J.S.] seems to be a priori unfulfillable and thus transcendent knowledge impossible.¹⁰

dependent on and constituted by the ego and that knowledge of any being as it exists independently of human consciousness and that knowing *things in themselves* is impossible and absurd. I have dealt with this position, with all necessary texts and passages to substantiate the claim of interpreting the later Husserl as a more radical transcendental idealist than Kant, in a paper Willard does not seem to know, “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.) See also my “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.

⁹ Die Idee der Phänomenologie, Beilage II, *ibid.*, pp. 81-2: Könnte nicht ein allmächtiger...Lügengeist meine Seele so geschaffen und so mit Bewußtseinsinhalten versorgt haben, daß von all den in ihr vermeinten Gegenständlichkeiten, soweit sie irgend ein Außerseelisches sind, nichts existierte?. Vielleicht sind Dinge außer mir, aber kein einziges von denen, die ich für wirklich halte. Und vielleicht sind überhaupt keine Dinge außer mir... Haftet der Wahrnehmung eine Evidenz an für diese Leistung der Transzendenz? Aber eine Evidenz, was ist sie anderes als ein gewisser psychischer Charakter...Transzendentes ist nicht in Immanentem impliziert . . . Das Transzendente ist...prinzipiell nicht erfahrbare. (Translation mine; this text is not contained in the English edition.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Beilage III, p. 83 (translation mine): Unklar ist die Beziehung der Erkenntnis auf Transzendentes. Wann hätten wir Klarheit und wo hätten wir sie? Nun, wenn und wo uns das Wesen dieser Beziehung gegeben wäre, daß wir sie schauen könnten, dann würden wir

Husserl's thesis is clearly this: "How immanence can be known is understandable, how transcendence, unintelligible."¹¹ It is equally clear that one of the decisive reasons for Husserl's turn towards transcendental subjectivism and for its radical interpretation of *epoché* lies here. In fact, *epoché* receives an even more radical meaning here than the fourth sense of this term distinguished elsewhere.¹² It comes to mean a radical doubt of *all transcendence* of knowledge in the sense perhaps, of there being *absolutely nothing* outside of cogitation and *cogitate*.¹³ But why did Husserl accept it as clear that the 'immanent transcendence' of the intentional objects as well as the 'immanent' being of consciousness can be grasped and explained, whereas any 'going beyond the act of knowledge' toward the 'things in themselves' in their 'real transcendence' is taken by him to be inexplicable and impossible?¹⁴ And more importantly: Is the rejection of really transcendent knowledge in rigorous scientific philosophy justified?

II. Critique of Husserl's Rejection of Cognitive Transcendence and Defense of the Latter through the "fourth cogito" of Realist Phenomenology

This step in Husserl's reasoning toward transcendental idealism is entirely unwarranted, as can be shown in the following ways which will only be sketched here and have been treated more extensively elsewhere.¹⁵ I wish to start the sharp critique of this Husserlian thesis with the expression of an important shared conviction: that the ultimate foundation of philosophy and of epistemology calls for certain knowledge, and even for an indubitable certainty of knowledge.¹⁶

die Möglichkeit der Erkenntnis (für die betreffende Erkenntnisartung, wo sie geleistet wäre) verstehen. Freilich erscheint diese Forderung eben von vornherein für alle transzendente Erkenntnis unerfüllbar und damit auch transzendente Erkenntnis unmöglich zu sein.

¹¹Ibid., p. 84: "Wie Immanenz erkannt werden kann, ist verständlich, wie Transzendenz, unverständlich" (translation mine).

¹²See Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987; electronic edition 2013), ch. 2.

¹³"Although the *epoché*, which the critique of cognition must employ, begins with the doubt of all cognition, its own included, it cannot remain in such doubt. . . . If it must presuppose nothing as *already given*, then it must begin with some cognition which it does not take unexamined from elsewhere but rather gives to itself, which it itself posits as primal. This primal cognition *must contain nothing of the unclarity and the doubt which otherwise give cognition the character of the enigmatic and problematic* . . . (emphasis mine - J. S.). See German text, *ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁴On the many motives that led Husserl to espouse transcendental phenomenology see the excellent work of Roman Ingarden: *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, translated by Arnór Hannibalsson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), and my *Things in Themselves*, cit., ch. 4.

¹⁵Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987; electronic re-edition, 2013).

¹⁶Sharing this assumption does in no way signal agreement with Husserl's claim that all knowledge less than apodictically certain that includes elements of belief or faith such as sense perception or the perception of real animals and persons (*Weltglauben*), should be excluded from philosophy and, instead of being defended in its rationality by it, be

Husserl's characterization of phenomenological realism as an unscientific philosophy of world-view that leaves the sphere of evident knowledge and is based only on some kind of "belief" in transcendence, in no way captures correctly phenomenological realism, so as if the latter were merely to espouse beliefs (knowledge in a wider sense) and only transcendental phenomenology were based on rigorously evident knowledge in the narrower sense. It is clear that the difference between knowledge in a wider sense and knowledge in a strict and narrow sense of the term is linked to the problem of certainty and of philosophy as a rigorous science. For it is precisely to the extent alone to which a knowledge-claim is justified by rigorous evidence and is thus certain, that I can really say that I know in the proper sense of the term.

The connection between knowledge and certainty can also be gathered from this: When referring to a lack of certainty, I may say, "I believe this to be true" or "I am convinced that this is true, but I do not know it." This way of speaking even of our well-founded opinions and this our contrasting them with knowledge strictly speaking shows that some kind of identification between knowledge and certain knowledge occurs in the related modes of expressing ourselves, and this is not by chance but follows from the nature of knowledge. *He ontoos epistème*, knowledge in the true sense, and surely philosophy as a rigorous science, is given only when knowledge is certain. On this, phenomenological realists agree entirely with Husserl, without absolutizing this ideal such that *only* indubitably evident knowledge should be held in esteem or used in philosophy.¹⁷ Unlike evident

debunked by it as belonging to a naïve belief in the world and to unphilosophical sciences. The recognition and elaboration of the real (transcendent) transcendence of the act of knowledge rejected by Husserl from his *Beilagen* to "The Idea of Phenomenology" (1905) on, and its strong defense by most of the early phenomenologists in Munich and Göttingen, leads to a content-full concept of "early phenomenology" as an objectivist and realist phenomenology. Such a "phenomenology of cognitive transcendence" was ably defended in the *Prolegomena* of Husserl's Logical investigations, various works of Scheler, Reinach, Hildebrand, and others, leading – upon Husserl's "transcendental turn" – to a deep break within the phenomenological movement and to the birth of a phenomenological realism very much akin to Platonic, Augustinian, and medieval, Aristotle- or Augustine-inspired philosophy. Far from constituting a "naïve realism," a relapse to a *Bilderbuchphänomenologie*, or to a pure "dogmatism" and *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* opposed by Husserl to a rigorously "scientific phenomenology," a phenomenology based on the discovery of the transcendence of man in knowledge, constitutes the only properly critical phenomenology faithful to things themselves as given to the mind, and free of inner contradictions, and did not end in 1913 or in 1939, but continues to exist until today.

¹⁷See my *Discours des Méthodes. The Methods of Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology*, (Frankfurt / Paris / Ebikon / Lancaster / New Brunswick: Ontos-Verlag, 2009). Nonetheless, forms of uncertain knowledge partake in the nature of knowledge insufficiently and only indubitably evident knowledge is archetypical and, being certain, fulfills the ratio of knowledge in the authentic sense. Hence only certain knowledge is *epistème ontoos ousa* and can both rightfully claim the title of *knowledge* and justify fully claims about philosophy being a rigorous science. Thus it alone can teach us fully what *knowledge* is. For it is a general principle of philosophical method that we should first begin with examples in which the true essence of something is clearly and unambiguously given so that we might not confuse the datum under consideration with something which it is not. If we say we opine that something is such and such, we tacitly admit that we do not

knowledge in the strict sense merely more or less strongly substantiated opinions which are not fully supported by cognitive evidence cannot dispel in a definitive way skepticism, for example the skepticism expressed in the above quotes from Husserl.¹⁸

I wish to defend here the conviction that within phenomenological realism a way was found, in what I call the "fourth cogito," that can dispel skepticism in a definitive way and achieve this by a truly *receptive transcendence* of knowledge in the grasp of things *in themselves*. The historically speaking first prominent Cogito-Argument that freed Augustine from skepticism and led him to recognize indubitable truths about the really existing world and about an infinity of necessary essences is closest to the fourth cogito of phenomenological realism, which differs in several respects sharply from Descartes' (second) cogito that attempts in vain to sever the evidence that "I exist" from the knowledge of universal and necessary truths (denying their equal evidence and suggesting that the latter could be changed by God). For it is entirely impossible to be certain about "I exist," without knowing with equal certainty the truth of the principle of contradiction.¹⁹ The fourth cogito of realist phenomenology, however, contrasts even more sharply from the Cogito of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* which attributes to the *cogito* a world-constituting role that makes human subjectivity the source of the whole world and can scarcely be reconciled with the rejection of solipsism attempted by Husserl in the fifth *Cartesian Meditation*. When Willard claims that this "fourth phenomenological realist cogito" simply constitutes a "re-run" of the Cartesian and Augustinian *Cogito*, he overlooks entirely the sharp difference between the second and the fourth cogito and the strong critique of the grave deficiencies of the Cartesian cogito by the authors of the fourth cogito. He likewise fails to see the very new development of the many *eidetic* intuitions in necessary essences and the development of this kind of indubitable knowledge as method of philosophy, which distinguishes the cogito of phenomenological

know it. Thus knowledge in the strict and narrow sense of the term implies that we know that we know and thus implies certainty. An *orthé dóxa* or correct opinion, on the other hand, may rightly be termed knowledge in a wider sense of the term and allow us to say that there exists a high probability, for example, that the towering mountains indicated on our map of Nepal are actually there. Yet to „know that they are there" is not knowledge in the narrow and strict sense of the term. As Socrates puts it in the *Theaitetos*, knowledge differs from correct opinion. It is not the same thing as an opinion which happens to be true, even if such an opinion is not blind but if we find some cognitive grasp of things at its root. Sharing this assumption does in no way signal agreement with Husserl's claim that all knowledge less than apodictically certain that includes elements of belief or faith such as sense perception or the perception of real animals and persons (*Weltglauben*), should be excluded from philosophy and, instead of being defended in its rationality by it, be debunked by it as belonging to a naïve belief in the world and to unphilosophical sciences.

¹⁸See on this distinction Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis*, 2nd ed. (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 1976), Part I, ch. 3.

¹⁹See René Descartes, *Discours de la Methode*, in: *Oeuvres de Descartes*, hrsg. v. Charles Adam & Paul Tannery, VI, 1-78; see also Jean-Luc Marion, *Sur l'ontologie grise de Descartes. Savoir aristotélicien et science cartésienne dans les Regulae* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1975, 2nd ed. 1981); the same author, *Sur la théologie blanche de Descartes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981).

realists and phenomenological realism in general (also in authors who do not develop thoughts on the cogito) from the Augustinian *cogito*.²⁰

What I call the realist phenomenological fourth cogito-argument (after Augustine's, Descartes' and Husserl's) provides the reasons and insights which show that the act of cognition is characterized by a transcendent receptive grasp of beings, essences, principles of ontology and logic, and other data that are autonomously existing "in themselves" and yet clearly given in intentional cognitive acts as being irreducible to noemata and purely intentional and constituted objects of conscious acts.²¹

²⁰See the first development of the fourth cogito in Dietrich von Hildebrand, „Das Cogito und die Erkenntnis der realen Welt“, Teilveröffentlichung der Salzburger Vorlesungen Hildebrands: „Wesen und Wert menschlicher Erkenntnis“, *Aletheia* 6/1993-1994 (1994), 2- 27, and the most extensive published development of it in Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987, re-published as e-book and in print in August 2013). See also Dietrich von Hildebrand's analysis of the realist phenomenological method in *What is Philosophy?*, 3rd edn, with a New Introductory Essay by Josef Seifert (London: Routledge, 1991); *Che cos'è la filosofia?/What Is Philosophy?*, English-Italian (Milano: Bompiani Testi a fronte, 2001), especially ch. IV, and J Seifert, *Discours des Méthodes. The Methods of Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology*, (Frankfurt / Paris / Ebikon / Lancaster / New Brunswick: Ontos-Verlag, 2008). Willard fails entirely to recognize this fourth cogito and the development of cognitive transcendence in it when he writes about my *Back to Things Themselves*: "He simply re-runs the Augustinian/Cartesian arguments, and proceeds to deduce (or at least suggest) the general world view of classical realism therefrom." Willard, *ibid.*

²¹In *De Trinitate* (X, X, 14) St Augustine formulates, with great precision, the manner in which the human mind, even when it finds itself threatened by the most radical skeptical doubt, can reach an indubitable certainty of knowledge which is immune to any possible skeptical objection because it reaches that which is both evident in itself and which is presupposed by any skeptical doubt. He writes: *Vivere se tamen et meminisse, et intelligere, et velle, et cogitare, et scire, et iudicare quis dubitet? Quandoquidem etiam si dubitat, vivit; si dubitat, unde dubitet, meminit; si dubitat, dubitare se intelligit; si dubitat, certus esse vult; si dubitat, cogitat; si dubitat, scit se nescire; si dubitat, iudicat non se temere consentire oportere. Quisquis igitur aliunde dubitat, de his omnibus dubitare non debet: quae si non essent, de ulla re dubitare non posset.* On the other hand who would doubt that he lives, remembers, understands, wills, thinks, knows, and judges? For even if he doubts, he lives; if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts; if he doubts, he understands that he doubts; if he doubts, he wants to be certain; if he doubts, he thinks; if he doubts, he knows that he does not know; if he doubts, he judges that he ought not to consent rashly. Whoever then doubts about anything else ought never to doubt about all of these; for if they were not, he would be unable to doubt about anything at all. (St Augustine, *The Trinity*, translated by Stephen McKenna, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970.) In this and in many other formulations, Augustine takes his sole starting point in doubt, more radically even than Descartes, and he overcomes this radical doubt in a more grandiose fashion than Descartes, by showing that the reality of doubt itself necessarily presupposes what will turn out to be two types of indubitable knowledge. On the one hand, I gain the certain knowledge that I myself am, and that thus at least one being and person really exists (who knows *vivere se*). On the other hand, inseparably linked to this knowledge, we also gain insight into the necessary essence of doubt and of all those acts (of cognition, knowing, willing, and others) which are necessarily entailed by doubt.

The starting point for this most fundamental philosophical knowledge (that we can know with certainty) is nothing more than - the doubt about everything. How is it possible that the most negative destructive thought, the radical skeptical doubt of all knowledge, should lead to indubitable certainty? In what follows we shall use the text quoted and other texts of Augustine, Descartes, and Leibniz as guides to our own discovery that indubitable knowledge of truth is indeed the condition of the possibility of radical doubt. Even if I doubt the reality of everything, in this act I still discover with absolute certainty that I live and that I am conscious as subject. This Augustinian discovery of the indubitable knowledge of my own being was also made anew by Descartes and expressed most forcefully in *Meditations II* (3), starting, too, from the most radical doubt:

But I was persuaded that there was nothing in all the world, that there was no heaven, no earth, that there were no minds, nor any bodies: was I not then likewise persuaded that I did not exist? Not at all; of a surety I myself did exist since I persuaded myself of something [or: merely because I thought of something]. But there is some deceiver or other, very powerful and very cunning, who ever employs his ingenuity in deceiving me. Then without doubt I exist also if he deceives me, and let him deceive me as much as he will, he can never cause me to be nothing so long as I think that I am something. So that after having reflected well and carefully examined all things, we must come to the definite conclusion that this proposition: I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or that I mentally conceive of it. (René Descartes, *Meditations II*, 3, translated by Haldane and Ross, Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 150.)

At first, we have to marvel at the datum of the immediate experience of myself as knowing and existing subject which is an experience of such an original structure that it is entirely irreducible to anything else. To begin with, this knowledge of myself is in no way arrived at by mediation of other premises, but it is immediate and not the conclusion of a logical argument. Descartes has put this well: When someone says, '*cogito ergo sum sive existo*,' he does not deduce existence from thinking by means of a syllogism, but he knows something known through itself (*per se notum*) through a simple intuition of the mind (*mentis intuitu*) . . . otherwise he would have to know first 'everything that thinks exists.' But it is not so: For it is the nature of our mind that it derives the general propositions from the knowledge of the particular. (René Descartes, Reply to Second Objections to *Meditations*, 189. (My translation - J.S.)

Leibniz formulated the immediacy of this knowledge still more clearly: "On peut toujours dire que cette Proposition: j'existe, est de la dernière évidence, estant une proposition, qui ne sauroit estre prouvée par aucune autre, ou bien une vérité immédiate. Et de dire: je pense, donc je suis, ce n'est pas prouver proprement l'existence par la pensée, puisque penser et estre pensant est la même chose; et dire: je suis pensant, est déjà dire: je suis . . . c'est une proposition de fait, fondée sur une expérience immédiate." (G.W. Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais*, IV, vii; *Die philosophischen Schriften*, V, cd. C.J. Gerhardt, Hildesheim, 1965. pp. 391-2.) One can always say that this proposition: I *exist*, is of ultimate evidence, being a proposition which could not be proven by any other one, or an *immediate* truth. And to say: *I think, therefore I am*, does not properly mean to prove existence by means of thinking, for to think and to be thinking is the same thing; and to say: *I am thinking* already implies: *I am*. . . (this) is a proposition of fact which is founded on an immediate experience. (My translation - J.S.)

But it is not enough to characterize the inescapable givenness of my own being in indubitable knowledge by referring to the immediacy of the cognition of my being. We have to add that our own being is accessible to us in an entirely interior fashion - by being

consciously lived from within. There is no more immediate and interior givenness of a being than this self-awareness of the person. It is decisive to see with Augustine that my being is not given here like an object over against me of which I would be conscious, as this occurs in explicit reflective self-knowledge (*se cogitare*). I know myself already prior to any such objectifying as it occurs in conscious reflection - in which my being becomes an object of which I gain consciousness and to which I return - in what Plotinus and Thomas Aquinas called a *reditio perfecta mentis in seipsam*. Augustine distinguishes the immediate self-awareness of my concrete individual being which I constantly possess and identifies it as *nosse se*. He contrasts it in another famous passage with the *cogitare* (*cognoscere*) *se*, saying that only in such a *cogitatio* can a full thematic cognition of the mind itself happen:

Tanta est tamen cogitationis vis, ut nec mens quodam modo se in conspectu suo ponat, nisi quando se cogitat: ac per hoc ita nihil in conspectu mentis est, nisi unde cogitatur, ut nec ipsa mens, qua cogitatur quidquid cogitatur, aliter possit esse in conspectu suo, nisi seipsam cogitando. Quomodo autem, quando se non cogitat, in conspectu suo non sit, cum sine se ipsam numquam esse possit, quasi alia sit ipsa, aliud conspectus eius, invenire non possum. Hoc quippe de oculo corporis non absurde dicitur: ipse quippe oculus loco suo fixus est in corpore, aspectus autem eius in ea quae extra sunt tenditur, et usque ad sidera extenditur. Nec est oculus in conspectu suo; quandoquidem non conspicit seipsum, nisi speculo objecto, unde jam locuti sumus: quod non fit utique quando se mens in suo conspectu sui cogitatione constituit. Numquid ergo alia sua parte aliam partem suam vidit, cum se conspicit, sicut aliis membris nostris, qui sunt oculi, alia membra nostra conspicimus, quae in nostro possunt esse conspectu? Quid dici absurdius vel dici potest? Unde igitur aufertur mens, nisi a seipsa? Et ubi ponitur in conspectum suum nisi ante seipsam? Num non ergo ibi erit ubi erat, quando in conspectu suo non erat; quia hic posita, inde ablata est. Sed si conspicienda migravit, conspectura ubi manebit? An quasi geminatur, ut et illic sit et hic, id est, et ubi conspiciere, et tibi conspici possit; ut in se ipsa sit conspiciens, ante se conspiciua?

Nihil horum nobis veritas consulta respondet: quoniam quando isto modo cogitamus, non nisi corporum fictas imagines cogitamus, quod mentem non esse paucis certissimum est mentibus, a quibus potest de hac re veritas consuli. Proinde restat ut aliquid pertinens ad ejus naturam sit conspectus ejus, et in eam, quando se cogitat, non quasi per loci spatium, sed incorporea conversione revocetur: cum vero non se cogitat, non sit quidem in conspectu suo, nec de illa suus formetur obtutus, sed tamen noverit se tanquam ipsa sit sibi memoria sui.

But so great is the power of thought that not even the mind itself may place itself, so to speak, in its own sight, except when it thinks of itself. And consequently nothing is so in the sight of the mind, except when it thinks of it, that not even the mind itself, by which is thought whatever is thought, can be in its own sight in any other way than by thinking of itself. But how it is not in its own sight when it does not think of itself, since it can never be without itself, just as though itself were one thing and its sight another thing, I am unable to discover. For it is not absurd to speak thus of the eye of the body, since the eye itself is fixed in its own proper place in the body, but its sight is directed to those things that are without, and reaches even to the stars. Nor is the eye in its own sight, for it does not see itself, except when a mirror is placed before it . . . ; and certainly this is not done when the mind places itself in its own sight by thinking of itself. Or does the mind, then, but one part of itself see another part of itself when it sees itself by thinking, as with some of our

members, the eyes, we see other members which can be in our sight? What can be said or thought that is more absurd than this? For by what, therefore, is the mind removed except by itself and where is it placed in its own sight except before itself? Hence, it will not be there where it was when it was not in its own sight, because it is put down in one place after it is withdrawn from another place. But if it has wandered away in order to be seen, here will it remain in order to see? Or is it, as it were, doubled, so that it is both there and here, that is, both where it can see and where it can be seen: in itself in order that it may see, and before itself in order that it may be seen? When the truth is consulted, it does not give any of these answers, since when we think thus, we think only through the feigned images of bodies, and that the mind is not such is absolutely certain to the few minds that can be consulted for the truth about this matter.

It remains, therefore, that its sight is something belonging to its nature, and the mind is recalled to it when it thinks of itself, not as it were by a movement in space, but by an incorporeal conversion; on the other hand, when it does not think of itself, it is indeed not in its own sight, nor is its gaze formed from it; but yet it knows itself, as if it were a remembrance of itself to itself. (Augustine. *The Trinity*, XIV, vi, 8) Here we see that the *vivere se*, our own conscious being, life, and acts, are known to us more immediately than by reflective thought: in the very performance of consciousness itself. We are our own conscious being and live it, and, in living it, it is given to us in a most interior fashion prior to any objectivizing reflection in which we think of ourselves (*cogitare se*). Moreover, our actions, so we may interpret Augustine's philosophy of consciousness in the light of important contributions of Karol Wojtyła, are reflected by our consciousness, even after they have passed, in a *memoria* which is again prior to any explicit act of reflection. As it appears clearly in moral conscience, we remember ourselves prior to thinking about ourselves, as occurs in explicit reflection and self-knowledge. In fact, as Augustine puts it audaciously in the text quoted above, it is 'as if we were the memory of ourselves.' Our acts are reflected, illumined, and judged in some fashion prior to their becoming explicit objects of reflection. Nevertheless, this immediate, pre-objectivizing acquaintance with our own being, in spite of its indubitable immediacy, is not yet what occurs in the *cogitatio sui ipsius*. For only when we make our being an object of acts of reflection and thought, can it be known fully by us. *Tanta est tamen cogitationis vis* - for so great is the power of thought (of the intentional act of knowledge) that even the mind, which knows itself most immediately and by which we know everything else, can know itself only when it places itself, as it were, in front of his own thought. While on the level of such an intentional subject-object-relation, of cognition, judgment, and thought about our being and life many errors and distortions, which do not exist on the two more immediate forms of self-acquaintance mentioned before, can occur, the philosophical knowledge of our own life (of the *se vivere*) is no less evident and is absolutely indubitable. It is indubitably certain because it makes the evident and immediate cognitive contact with our own being the starting-point of the knowledge: *sum*. The philosophical *cogitatio sui ipsius* grasps the concrete fact of our own being with indubitable certainty.

It might be objected that this is a merely subjective knowledge that we (I) exist, and does not refer to the objective reality of the material world explored by science, the object of our sense-perception and social relations. We reply: far from establishing any merely 'subjective' knowledge, the thrust of Augustine's insight is precisely that not only is the I just as objective a reality as all the trees out there, and all the stars, and the entire material world, but the mind is also far more wonderful than all the mountains, trees, and material beings. Thus in our own being we touch one objective and real being, and one which is far more important and real than the whole material universe. Therefore we can interpret Augustine with Hildebrand and say that the point of the *cogito* really is: 'I am; therefore one objective entity is; therefore being itself is.' *Cogito; (ergo) sum; (ergo) esse est*. In this indubitable knowledge of real facts I not only grasp that I as subject exist, but also that I

doubt, that I do not know, etc. Hence, each and every act of mine is given to me with a certainty similar to the one in which I grasp the reality of the sum in self-knowledge in the strictest sense. And in knowing the vivere me as well as the existence of all the acts in me I grasp also the truth, the truth that I am, and that I think, doubt, lack certainty, judge, and so forth. This indubitable discovery of truth in the Cogito is explicated by Augustine in another important passage:

Deinde regulam ipsam quam vides concipe hoc modo: Omnis qui se dubitantem intelligit, verum intelligit, et de hac re quam intelligit certus est. Omnis igitur qui utrum sit veritas dubitat, in se ipso habet verum unde non dubitet; nec ullum verum sine veritate verum est. Non itaque oportet eum de veritate dubitare qui potuit undecumque dubitare. Ubi videntur haec, ibi est lumen sine spatio locorum et temporum et sine ullo spatiorum talium phantasmate. Numquid ista ex aliqua parte corrumpi possunt, etiamsi omnis ratiocinator intereat aut apud carnales inferos veterescat? Non enim ratiocinator talia facit, sed invenit. Ergo antequam inveniantur, in se manent, et cum inveniantur, nos innovant. (Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, XXXIX, 73, 205-7)

Then conceive the rule itself which you see, in the following way. Everyone who knows that he is in doubt about something, knows a truth, and in regard to this that he knows he is certain. Therefore he is certain about a truth. Consequently everyone who doubts if there be a truth, has in himself a true thing of which he does not doubt; nor is there any true thing (*verum*) which is not true by truth. Consequently whoever for whatever reason can doubt, ought not to doubt that there is truth. Where this is seen, there is a light without the spaces of place and time, and without the deceiving imagery associated with such spaces. Can these truths in any way corrupt, even if every thinker were to die or would long be in the grave? *For the thinker does not make such (truths) but he finds them.* Therefore also before he finds them, they remain in themselves; but when they are found, they renew us. (My translation - J.S.) The truth of these facts, the truth of the proposition that I exist, and that I doubt, is likewise discovered in the indubitably known fact that I exist. So we find in the Cogito countless positive and evident cognitions about really existing facts: "about the fact that we exist and live." On this see also Antonio Rosmini, *Certainty*, transl. from *Nuovo Saggio sull' Origine delle Idee* (Durham: Rosmini House, 1991), p. 107, the text from: " 'Myself' to ,...is alive." It is indeed strange that such an evident fact found so many thinkers to object to it: From Hume's assertion that he found within himself all kinds of impressions but no impression of the self, to Kant and to modern psychological schools of thought, many objections against this insight of Augustinus and Descartes were raised. Certainly the I is not given like impressions or perceptions but clearly it is given, and given in quite another way: as subject, with quite different predicates. The very language of Hume shows that he, too, presupposes a knowledge the self, for example when he says: 'betwixt my impressions...' More common objections against the givenness of the subject I have treated elsewhere. See See Josef Seifert, *Leib und Seele*, pp. 53-60. sine ulla phantasiarum vel phantasmatum imaginatione ludificatoria mihi esse me idque nosse et amare certissimum est. Nulla in his veris Academicorum argumenta formido dicentium: Quid si falleris? Si enim fallor, sum. Nam qui non est, utique nec falli potest; ac per hoc sum, si fallor. Quia ergo sum, si fallor, quo modo esse me fallor, quando certum est me esse, si fallor? Quia igitur essem, si fallerer, etiamsi fallerer, procul dubio in eo, quod me novi nosse, non fallor. Consequens est autem, ut etiam in eo, quod me novi nosse, non fallor. Sicut enim novi esse me, ita etiam hoc ipsum, nosse me. Eaque duo cum amo, eundem quoque quiddam tertium nec imparis aestimationis eis quas novo rebus adiungo. Neque enim fallor amare me, cum in his quae amo, non fallar; quamquam et si illa falsa essent, falsa me amare verum esset. Nam quo pacto recte reprehenderer et recte prohiberer

ab amore falsorum, si me illa amare falsum esset? Cum vero illa vera atque certa sint, quis dubitet, quod eorum, cum amantur, et ipse amor vere et certus est? Tam porro nemo est qui esse se nolit, quam nemo est, qui non esse beatus velit. Quomodo enim potest beatus esse, si non sit? (St Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XI, xxvi). But, without any delusive representation of images or phantasms, I am most certain that I am, and that I know and delight in this. In respect of these truths, I am not at all afraid of the arguments of the Academicians, who say, What if you are deceived? For if I am deceived, I am. For he who is not, cannot be deceived; and if I am deceived, by this same token I am. And since I am if I am deceived, how am I deceived as to my existence? For it is certain that I am if I am deceived. Since therefore I, the person deceived, would be, even if I were deceived, certainly I am not deceived in this knowledge that I am. And, consequently, neither am I deceived in knowing that I know. For as I know that I am, I know this also, that I know. And when I love these two things, I add to them a third thing, namely my love, which is of equal moment. For neither am I deceived in this, that I love, since in those things which I love I am not deceived; though even if these were false, it would still be true that I loved false things. For how could I justly be blamed and prohibited from loving false things, if it were false that I loved them? But, since they are true and real, who doubts that when they are loved, the love of them is itself true and real? Further, as there is no one who does not wish to be happy, so there is no one who does not want to be. For how can he be happy if he is nothing? (Translated by M. Dods, *Basic Writings of Augustine*, vol. II, New York, 1948)

My own being and my acts can never be only an unreal object of conscious acts, without really being in themselves. Noémata of the form of seeming and appearance have no other being except the 'thin' existence which they possess as pure object of our consciousness. Augustine's and Descartes' insight is precisely that it is impossible that our own being and acts only appear to be. They are real existing beings and part of my real being. Any possible deception, any error in which we are duped by seeming facts that are not, presupposes this absolute Archimedean point of the real being of the subject who is deceived and who therefore cannot be deceived in the cognition that he exists. Any form of theory which interprets the being of the subject as a merely constituted object of some transcendental consciousness (which would also constitute itself) falls into the same untenable contradiction pointed out by Augustine, and denies the eternal truth which Augustine uncovers: that any possible object of thought and constitution presupposes the non-constituted reality of the subject, and therefore of one real being. Yet, with equally indubitable evidence, I find, says Augustine, that I cannot doubt without remembering what I am doubting about. Again, this state of affairs is not just found in myself as the individual fact of my own doubt discussed above. Rather, I grasp from the very essence of doubt that no man, no thinking subject in any possible world, could doubt without having some awareness and cognition of the object of his doubt. This intentional structure of doubt as necessarily going beyond an immanent state of consciousness towards something which is doubted, is disclosed as belonging to the very essence of doubt itself. Moreover, we can see that this object of doubt must possess a certain structure, that is, it cannot be simply a man, a rose, etc. which I doubt. Rather, only a 'state of affairs,' the 'being-b of an A,' can be the object of doubt: only that something exists, or that something has or does not have a certain predicate can be the object of doubt.

I doubt not simply the one state of affairs but I doubt whether or not it obtains. This 'whether or not' which characterizes the complex object of doubt reveals another essentially necessary fact about the object of doubt. In doubt we always regard at least two contradictorily opposed states of affairs (Sachverhalte): that something is or is not X. Thus the radical doubt of all truth implies that it is not certain whether or not there is truth. I doubt all truth, that is, I am uncertain of whether or not it is.

But if this is the case, Augustine explains in an earlier version of his cogito, I grasp at the foundation of doubt also the universal principle which Aristotle calls the ‘first and most certain of all principles,’ namely the principle of contradiction. For if it were not impossible that one and the same thing, A, possesses and does not possess existence, or a predicate b, then the meaning of doubt would be entirely undermined. Doubt, in order to be meaningful at all, presupposes the absolute validity of the principle of contradiction. I grasp that either there is truth or there is no truth, but both cannot occur at the same time and in the same sense. If they could both be, A and its contradictory opposite, then doubt would not make sense any more. In *Contra Academicos*, the early dialogue of Augustine which is the first purely philosophical writing of a Christian and which presents a critique of skepticism, a view, Augustine himself had once adopted, he shows that again infinitely many true disjunctive propositions follow from the truth of the principle, of contradiction:

Count, if you can how many there are: . . . if there is one sun (only), there are not two: one and the same soul cannot die and still be immortal, man cannot at the same time be happy and unhappy; . . . we are now either awake or asleep: either there is a body which I seem to see or there is not a body. Through dialectic I have learned that these and many other things which it would take too long to mention are true; no matter in what condition our senses may be, these things are true of themselves. It has taught me that, if the antecedent of any of those statements which I just placed before you in logical connection were assumed, it would be necessary to deduce that which was connected with it. . . . (St Augustine, *Contra Academicos*, II, xiii, 29.)

Hence the most radical skeptic sees that a thing cannot be and not be in the same sense and at the same time. The unfolding of this knowledge would make us understand how many additional evidences it implies, and how all the things Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* and Pfänder’s *Logik* unfold about the essence of the principle of contradiction, about the distinction between its ontological and its logical sense, about the difference between the principle of contradiction and a mere psychological law, about the immediate knowledge in which it is given, about the difference between its evident objective truth and its mere presupposedness by thinking, and so on are contained within and are implicitly recognized in the most radical doubt. They form part of the nucleus of indubitable truth without which the person cannot live and perform any conscious act at all, including doubting. Moreover, everybody who doubts also understands (intelligit) that he doubts. This implies the truth that no apersonal unconscious being could ever doubt. Doubt presupposes not only the directedness towards an intentional object of doubt but also the self-awareness and self-consciousness which permits the unique act of reflection, the *intellectio* that I think and doubt. A being which would be totally absorbed in objects and which could not take the step back involved in reflection, a being which could not bend back over itself in what Augustine calls an entirely immaterial conversion over itself and in what Thomas Aquinas called the *reditio mentis completa super seipsam*, also could not doubt. This fascinating act, in which the subject is both subject and object of reflection, is again necessarily implied - at least as a possibility - by doubt. The type of consciousness which suffices for feeling physical pain, which animals undoubtedly have, would not suffice for doubt, because doubt presupposes a higher mode of personal consciousness that permits the *intelligere se dubitantem*. Moreover, not only do I understand that I doubt but I also know that I do not know. This *scit se nescire* refers again to the absolutely universal fact that in order to doubt I have to know that I do not know. First of all, when I doubt, at least in the sincere doubt which is not just a pretext and a rejection of knowledge, I actually do not know the fact of which I am doubting. For it is impossible for me to doubt the indubitable truths which I have just discovered. I can only doubt if my knowledge is uncertain in virtue of some

The “Fourth Cogito” of Phenomenological Realism can be shown to gain access to the real existence of our own person and to eternal truths as well as to other persons and the absolute personal being. Only philosophy, and only a philosophy which proceeds systematically and is founded on ultimate evident truth, can give an account of the existence of indubitable evidence and I will argue that phenomenological realism has, though this is hardly recognized by the wider philosophical community, wholly refuted the claim that certainty of self-transcending knowledge about things in themselves is impossible.²² How so? I can only give the outline of an answer:

deficiency, and if there is, for this reason, some dubitability in my conviction about a state of affairs (Sachverhalt). But the mere lack of (certain) knowledge is not sufficient for doubt. Rather, I also have to know that I do not know, in order to doubt. This is another reason why doubt necessarily presupposes a subject that is capable of the act of reflection and of grasping the absence or limits of knowledge.

Thus, not only do I understand that I doubt but I also know that I do not know. This scit se nescire again refers not only to the fact that I know in myself and you in yourself that we do not know something when we doubt, namely that we do not possess the knowledge concerning that which we doubt. More than this empirical fact, we discover also a strictly necessary and universal Sachverhalt or even a host of such states of affairs: that I do not know, at least not know with certainty, the fact which I doubt about. If I said I doubt what I know with indubitable certainty, I would lie. It is intrinsically impossible to doubt that which I know with indubitable certainty and therefore I understand that an omniscient being who knows perfectly cannot doubt anything. Even for a man it is impossible, except in the insincere form of a masked rejection of the truth, to doubt the indubitable facts about the essence of doubt once he has discovered them. I can only doubt if my knowledge is uncertain in virtue of some deficiency, and if there is, for this reason, at least some minimal dubitability in my convictions concerning that which I doubt. But the mere fact of my not knowing is not enough for me to doubt. It is again of the intelligible and necessary essence of doubt that I have to possess some awareness that I do not know in order to doubt, I have to know that I do not know. This step involves again various elements. One of them is reflection. I have to be able to bend back over my own acts and to notice their presence or absence, I have to be aware of my own acts and understand: yes, I know, or yes, I believe. I have also to be able to question my knowledge, to ask myself whether I know or whether I do not know. Only after such a questioning of my knowledge do I come to the understanding that I do not know. If I never had any question about whether I know or do not know, I would not doubt. Of course, someone can also be shaken into such a question by an external reason. He can be so clearly aware that he was in error by being victim of a Fata Morgana that he is almost forced to call his knowledge into question and thereby also to ask himself whether his senses are mistaken or not. Nevertheless, without any such question he would not come to know that he does not know.

²²On the essence of certainty and knowledge see especially the following works: Plato, *Gorgias*; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV (Gamma); Aristoteles, *Posterior Analytics*; Thomas von Aquin, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*, esp. X ff., St. Bonaventure, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Scientia Christi*, IV, in: *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera omnia*, edita studio et cura PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura, ad Claras Aquas (Quarracchi) ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventura, 10 volumina (1882-1902), V; Adolf Reinach, „Über Phänomenologie“, in: Adolf Reinach, *Sämtliche Werke*. Textkritische Ausgabe in zwei Bänden, Bd. I: Die Werke, Teil I: Kritische Neuausgabe (1905-1914), Teil II: Nachgelassene Texte (1906-1917); hrsg.v. Barry Smith und Karl Schuhmann (München und Wien: Philosophia Verlag, 1989), pp. 531-550; ‘Concerning Phenomenology,’ transl.

(1) Husserl's above quoted thesis that cognitive transcendence and certainty about things and states of affairs in themselves is excluded, clearly implies a self-contradiction because even knowledge of the most mind-dependent fictitious object, for example of a purely fictitious intentional object such as the house in a dream, necessarily *presupposes* not only the "immanent transcendence" Husserl attributes to it, but likewise knowledge of truly 'transcendent facts,' such as the knowledge of my actually perceiving such objects (albeit in the dream), that the house which appears in the dream has five rather than four windows, and so on. If it were not 'really so' that I am dreaming, and 'really so' that I dreamt of a house with five windows instead of one with only four, then the fiction could not be constituted. Thus the knowledge of facts which are truly transcendent to my mind and exist in themselves, not merely as *noemata* of my noeses, is the condition of the possibility of any knowledge of merely 'immanently transcendent' objects of the sort Husserl has in mind. Hence his rejection of the possibility of such a truly transcendent knowledge, while at the same time retaining the assertion of a knowledge of immanently transcendent objects, is absurd; and such absurdity does not at all attach to the assertion of a truly transcendent knowledge, as Husserl believes, but to its negation.

This point is no less evident than the one Husserl himself made so clearly, namely, that any image-theory of knowledge presupposes precisely what it denies: a knowledge which grasps not only a subjective image of reality but the reality itself in the light of which alone the image could be recognised as image. This case is objectively quite different from ours because transcendent knowledge is in no way a mere subjective character or image the coincidence of which with the transcendent reality would have to be known. Nevertheless, Husserl rejects the claim of transcendent knowledge by likening it to some sort of 'intentional image' (as Hartmann earlier suggested in his critique of Husserl's critique of the image-theory of knowledge),²³ the correspondence of which with reality could never be known. But this conception of knowledge is no less inadequate than the image-theory as characterisation of the intentionality of consciousness, and can be refuted with arguments very similar to those which Husserl had employed in *Logical Investigations* against the more primitive image-theory that distorts the structure of intentionality. *For any knowledge of 'immanently transcendent' intentional objects to be possible at all, presupposes the knowledge of*

by Dallas Willard, *The Personalist* 50 (Spring 1969), pp. 194-221. Reprinted in *Perspectives in Philosophy*, ed. Robert N. Beck (New York: Holt, Reinhart, & Winston, 1961 and 1969); also translated as "What is Phenomenology?," by David Kelly, *Philosophical Forum*, 1, pp. 231-256. Vgl. dazu Dietrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, 3rd edn, with a New Introductory Essay by Josef Seifert (London: Routledge, 1991), bes. S. xii ff., and Kap. iv. Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism (London: Routledge, 1987), Antonio Rosmini, *Certainty*, transl. from *Nuovo Saggio sull' Origine delle Idee* (Durham: Rosmini House, 1991); *Die Philosophie und ihre Methode* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 1976). Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 1976), "Theory of the Three Facts" in: Max Scheler, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, transl. by David R. Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

²³Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (4. Auflage). Berlin, Walter de Gruyter & Co 1949.

'*transcendently (truly) transcendent*' objects. And knowledge of transcendent objects is not only a precondition for the formation of the very concept of 'immanent transcendence,' but is also presupposed in any concrete case of knowing an immanent intentional object. Without knowledge of things or facts which are truly 'transcendent' and not dependent on pure consciousness, no 'immanent intentional object' could ever be known. For example, without knowing the transcendent objective fact, the absolutely existing state of affairs that I see an object and live, I could never know the purely immanent object of a dream.²⁴ It is astonishing that a man of Husserl's genius, who had brilliantly shown very similar absurdities of any relativism and of the image-theory of knowledge in *Logical Investigations*, came to overlook such an evident fact that excludes also the "transcendental relativism" of denying "transcendently transcendent" knowledge of things in themselves.²⁵

(2) Husserl's denial of the real transcendence of the act of knowledge and his claim of its a priori impossibility is built on an equivocation and confusion of two entirely different things: a) the evident truth that of course we can know absolutely nothing if the object of knowledge does not become the intentional object of our intentional act of knowing it and if it does not "constitute itself as *object of our consciousness* (noema) before our mind"; b) the wholly unfounded and contradictory claim that things that exist in themselves can never become present to our consciousness *in their not just being intentional objects of consciousness*. This idea that all intentional objects of consciousness could just be *nothing but* intentional objects of consciousness and that autonomous being as such – really existing beings, for example persons, and essential necessities existing in themselves – cannot become object of intentional cognitive acts, but only be objects of some *Weltglauben*, is a false and contradictory assumption that has nothing to do with the former true one. Also Millán-Puelles has, in masterful phenomenological analyses, shown this with overwhelming clarity.²⁶

²⁴See also Gerold Prauss, in: W. Marx (Hg.), *Philosophie und Psychologie* (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 201.

²⁵A very little known character trait of Husserl described in Hildebrand's *Memoirs* and in his *Selbstdarstellung*, in: *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, Bd. II., hrsg. von Ludwig J. Pongratz (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1975), pp. 77-127, can provide a partial explanation of this riddle. There Hildebrand reports on conversations which he had with Husserl, in which the latter showed himself deeply worried and almost "anxious" in the face of philosophical critics, particularly Neo-Kantians, who charged the *Logical Investigations* with a "naïve realism and dogmatism." On an earlier remarkable critique of transcendental phenomenology and of transcendental Thomism as a kind of "transcendental relativism" see Walter Hoeres, *Kritik der transzendentalphilosophischen Erkenntnistheorie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969); ders., "Critique of the Transcendental Metaphysics of Knowing, Phenomenology and Neo-Scholastic Transcendental Philosophy." *Aletheia* (1978) I,1, 353-69.

²⁶Antonio Millán-Puelles has very well pointed out this false and contradictory equivocation in his *Teoría del objeto puro*, Colecciones Cuestiones Fundamentales (Madrid: Ediciones RIALP, 1990). Ins Englische übersetzt von Jorge García-Gómez: *The Theory of the Pure Object*, hrsg. v. Josef Seifert in der Reihe „Philosophie und Realistische Phänomenologie. Studien der Internationalen Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein“ (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1995), Bd. 2.

(3) What was said in the context of uncovering the self-contradiction implied in any denial of really transcendent knowledge already implied one fact and one being which is known by us and which could never be just constituted by our consciousness or be a mere object of our consciousness: namely, our own conscious life. Husserl admits this, but interprets this ‘I’ as identical not with the empirical and *really* existent ego, but with a transcendental ego which is no “little corner of a really existing world”. Whether this ego and consciousness are declared transcendental or empirical, however, the fact that I know their existence and that no possible doubt can be thrown upon it cannot meaningfully be denied. But, if this is so, it is here that I touch upon a ‘really transcendent’ being, my own objective reality. I know: *cogito, sum* (Descartes); *si enim fallor, sum* (Augustine); *si cogito, etsi fallor, sum; ergo esse est.*²⁷ There is no good reason offered by Husserl for rejecting the real transcendence of this knowledge which attains a being that cannot be constituted by my consciousness or coincide with a mere *noema* nor with a purely ideal object that is not a real part of the really existing world. Also the intrinsically transcendent fact so sharply stressed by Max Scheler as “first evidence”: that there is (truly) something and not nothing cannot be just a *noema* of my noesis.²⁸ I know that there is truly something and not nothing. Since truly transcendent knowledge, which Husserl calls into question, is therefore both real and possible as self-given and as the condition of the possibility of any knowledge of immanently transcendent intentional objects, the rejection of a knowing grasp of being *as it truly is in itself* shows itself as not only self-contradictory, but as running counter to the evidence of transcendent knowledge, an evidence which is even *part of* the evidence of the absolutely evident and “immanently transcendent” cognition admitted by Husserl: the cognition of purely intentional objects and phenomena.

(4) Moreover, any instance of our knowledge of necessary essences and *Wesensgesetze* disproves the claim that we only know immanent intentional objects and can never attain certainty about objects which are truly ‘transcendent’ to human consciousness or existent in themselves.²⁹ For, in the knowledge of

²⁷Cf. the development of what I term here “the fourth cogito” in Dietrich von Hildebrand, “Das Cogito und die Erkenntnis der realen Welt,” *Teilveröffentlichung der Salzburger Vorlesungen Hildebrands: “Wesen und Wert menschlicher Erkenntnis”*, *Aletheia* 6/1993-1994 (1994), 2- 27.

²⁸Max Scheler, “Vom Wesen der Philosophie. Der philosophische Aufschwung und die moralischen Vorbedingungen,” in Max Scheler, *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (Erkenntnislehre und Metaphysik), *Schriften aus dem Nachlass Band II*, herausgegeben mit einem Anhang von Manfred S. Frings (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1979), S. 61-99. See likewise the same author, “Theory of the Three Facts” in: Max Scheler, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, transl. by David R. Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

²⁹On this point I have a profound disagreement with Millán-Puelles’ phenomenological masterwork, who interprets such “essential necessities” as “pure objects.” See Josef Seifert, “Preface” to Antonio Millán-Puelles, *Teoría del objeto puro*. 977 pp. Colecciones Cuestiones Fundamentales (Madrid: Ediciones RIALP, 1990); *The Theory of the Pure Object*, English translation by Jorge García-Gómez (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), pp. 1-12; and “El papel de las irrealidades para los principios de contradicción y de razón suficiente”, Ibáñez-Martín, J.A. (coord.), *Realidad e irrealidad*.

necessary truths we grasp something of which it is precisely evident that it is *absolutely* necessary and not necessary only relative to our minds. We grasp that ‘in itself’ no person who is subject of error can be deceived as to his existence or his free will,³⁰ that in itself and in any possible world guilt cannot exist without freedom of the will, rights cannot inhere in a material being, the quality of the colour orange lies between yellow and red, nothing can be willed that is not first conceived in thought or knowledge, and so on *ad infinitum*. But in truly grasping the *absolute* necessity of such states of affairs grounded in necessary essences, we understand, by the same token, that these essential laws apply to all possible and real beings of a certain kind and that our knowledge here grasps the truly ‘transcendent’ structures of ‘things in themselves,’ i.e., states of affairs and laws that are *in themselves* and provide the eternal laws for all real and possible worlds *in themselves*.

(5) Certainly, this capacity for knowledge of something really transcendent to our consciousness is ‘astonishing,’ as Husserl calls it, and worthy of being marvelled at. But this does not mean that it is impossible. On the contrary, it discloses itself to be both given and possible. The philosophical wonder at the arch-datum of the receptive transcendence of man in knowledge, a datum which is so fundamental that it is necessarily presupposed by any attempt to deny it, is no argument against the datum. It is likewise false to hold that this amazing character is found only with regard to truly transcendent knowledge and that the knowledge of ‘immanent’ objects does not entail this marvel of transcendent knowledge, therefore raising none of the problems the knowledge of ‘transcendent’ beings and states of affairs does raise. No, both are clearly possible, and the knowledge of “immanent objects” of consciousness such as fictions admitted by Husserl necessarily implies, as we have seen, the knowledge of states of affairs transcendent to the intentional cognitive acts in which they are given: knowledge of some real being and of some ideal and necessary states of affairs which *absolutely cannot just be objects of consciousness* and are *themselves given in their transcendent reality*. And both are ‘astonishing’ data, the (immanent) transcendence of each intentional act to its object that, however fictitious, is never part of the stream of consciousness (neither Don Quixote nor Sancho Panza are part of the stream of my consciousness) and the full transcendence of knowledge of states of affairs which are really real or intrinsically necessary.

(6) With reference to the problem of bringing the *Leistung* (achievement) of transcendence itself (of a relating of the act of knowledge to the transcendent) to evidence, it is likewise not true to say with Husserl that the achievement of transcendence defies a priori its being brought to evidence. For not only do we perform transcending cognizing acts, but the fundamental feature of ‘transcendence’ can itself be known with indubitable certainty and is itself given due to the peculiar reflective structure of cognition which the Scholastics (Thomas Aquinas and others) emphasised so much, following the lead of ancient philosophy (particularly of Plotinus) and early medieval thought (especially

Estudios en homenaje al Profesor Antonio Millán-Puelles, (Madrid: RIALP, 2001), S. 119-152.

³⁰Cf. Josef Seifert, “In Defense of Free Will: A Critique of Benjamin Libet,” *Review of Metaphysics*, Volume LXV, Nr. 2, December 2011.

Augustine). Wherever an act is both knowledge and accompanied by evidence,³¹ the knowing subject does not merely 'go' and 'look' out of himself at a being or essential law which he understands to be independent of his consciousness. He also returns, to speak figuratively, from the object known to himself and becomes aware of the achievement of transcendence. Thus, this knowledge of the transcendence (which is *part* of the evidence of transcending knowledge), too, answers Husserl's difficulty. It implies the self-givenness of the transcendence of knowledge. In performing authentic knowledge (always transcendent knowledge in the narrower sense) we become laterally aware of its existence and nature which is mirrored also in the 'reflective dimension' of consciousness,³² a phenomenon very similar to what has been called *Vollzugsbewußtsein*.³³ It can then be made the object of explicit reflection and, above all, of knowledge of the universal *essence* of transcendent knowledge. The instances of indubitably certain knowledge of which we have spoken, make it clear both that such transcendence in knowledge is in principle possible and what its essence is, as well as that it is

³¹This cognition has been termed 'knowledge in the narrower sense' by the present author in an earlier work. See Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit*, Part I, Chapter 3. Apart from the passages on the transcendence of man in knowledge from Augustine's work quoted there, see Ludger Hölscher, *The Reality of the Mind. Saint Augustine's Philosophical Arguments for the Human Soul as Spiritual Substance*, Boston, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

³²See Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, See also Josef Seifert, 'Karol Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher and the Cracow/Lublin School of Philosophy,' *Aletheia II* (1982).

³³See on this notion of *Vollzugsbewußtsein* Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Die Idee der sittlichen Handlung*, 2. Auflage (unveränderter reprographischer Nachdruck, zusammen mit der Habilitationsschrift "Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis" - Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), S. 1-126, pp. 8 ff.; Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Moralia*. Nachgelassenes Werk. Gesammelte Werke Band V. (Regensburg: Josef Habel, 1980), pp. 208 ff.; Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Ästhetik*. 1. Teil. Gesammelte Werke, Band V (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1977), pp. 32-40, 49-57; Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Ethik*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, Stuttgart o. J., 1971?), pp. 202 ff., 212, 242; Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Ethics*, 2nd edn (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), pp. 191 ff.; 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), pp. 2- 27; Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Transformation in Christ. Our Path to Holiness*. Reprint of 1948 (New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press. 1989), ch. 4; *Die Umgestaltung in Christus*. Über christliche Grundhaltung, 5. Auflage in den Gesammelten Werken Band X, (Regensburg: Habel, 1971), Kap. 4. See also the first part of Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* (Boston: Reidel, 1979); first part. cf. also the corrected text, authorized by the author (unpublished), Library of the International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality Liechtenstein, Schaan. See also Josef Seifert, "Karol Cardinal Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher and the Cracow/Lublin School of Philosophy" in *Aletheia II* (1981); the same author, *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987), 144 ff., 176 ff., 181-198, 249 ff., 286 ff., see also the passages indicated in the Index of Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves*, under consciousness, and constitution. See likewise Josef Seifert, *Leib und Seele. Ein Beitrag zur philosophischen Anthropologie* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 1973), pp. 45 ff.; Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit. Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, ^{2nd ed.} 1976), 59 ff., 65 ff., 118 ff., 212 ff., 233 ff., 150 ff., 161 ff., 203 ff.

actually achieved in a particular instance (e.g., in the *si enim fallor, sum* which grasps both our own being and innumerable universal truths).³⁴

III. Conclusion: Summarizing the Recognition of the Transcendence of Knowledge in Early and Contemporary “Realist Phenomenology” and the Fourth Cogito

The fact that we find here not only the transcendence of knowledge itself, but also the evident givenness of it as a transcendent grasp of ‘being in itself,’ makes the knowledge of our own being and the knowledge of necessary essential facts two Archimedean points for human knowledge. In these Archimedean points we touch upon the foundation of ultimate certainty of knowledge.

We may conclude summarizing the key elements of the fourth cogito of phenomenological realism and at the same time phenomenological realism as such:

1. Its link to the first of all ontological evidences that there is something rather than nothing (Scheler) and its reading the *cogito* as: *Cogito; sum; ergo esse est* (Hildebrand).

2. The receptive, self-transcendent structure of the knowledge of my own real being in the cogito which does not lock me in a Cartesian “isolated I” or lead to subjectivism or Kantian idealism, as many realists and idealists alike believe, but frees me from any subjectivism, relativism, and immanentism.³⁵

3. The discovery of equally evident universal truths, metaphysical and logical principles, and essences or “ideas” in the Platonic sense; and the recognition of their absolute, mind-transcendent necessity and other marks which

³⁴See on this Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987, re-published as e-book and in print in August 2013), ch. 5. This text does not coincide with the second revised and augmented edition published on the (old) IAP-Homepage nor with a third and definitive (but not yet published) edition of the work. The new Hungarian edition of this work, *Vissza a magánvaló dolgokhoz*, (Budapest: Kairosz Kiadó, 2013), translated and introduced by Mátyás Szalay, represents the most definitive and considerably enlarged edition of the work. Especially the section on the realist phenomenological *cogito* is further elaborated and enlarged by a detailed analysis and critique of Kant’s charge that the *Cogito* argument is built on an equivocation of the *ego cogitans* as object and subject of consciousness. See also the masterful doctoral work of Raquel Vera González, *Crítica a la ontología y gnoseología del yo en Paul Natorp desde la perspectiva de la fenomenología realista*, published electronically on <http://eprints.ucm.es/10062/1/T31456.pdf>.

³⁵See Dietrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, 3rd edn, with a New Introductory Essay by Josef Seifert (London: Routledge, 1991) ; Adolf Reinach, ‘Concerning Phenomenology,’ transl. from the German (“Über Phänomenologie”) by Dallas Willard, *The Personalist* 50 (Spring 1969), pp. 194-221. Reprinted in *Perspectives in Philosophy*, ed. Robert N. Beck (New York: Holt, Reinhart, & Winston, 1961 and 1969); Josef Seifert, *Back to Things in Themselves. A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (London: Routledge, 1987; electronic re-edition, 2013); the same author, *Discours des Méthodes. The Methods of Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology*, (Frankfurt / Paris / Ebikon / Lancaster / New Brunswick: Ontos-Verlag, 2009).

make them an *objective a priori* instead of subjective a priori forms of perception and thought and which makes their knowledge a “receptively transcendent act” of grasping “things in themselves”.³⁶

4. The evidence of the contingency of the *ego cogitans* and the ascent from it to what Scheler called the second most evident knowledge: that of an absolute being; this step, if taken from the cogito-experience, bears important similarities to Descartes’ cogito of the Third and Fifth *Meditation*, as well as to Anselm of Canterbury (Aosta)’s ontological argument for the existence of God but elaborates more the self-transcendence of the cognitive act and the intrinsic transcendence of the necessary divine essence than both previous thinkers and elucidates a central thesis of Husserl in *Logical Investigations*.³⁷

³⁶See Dietrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, 3rd edn, with a New Introductory Essay by Josef Seifert (London: Routledge, 1991), ch. 4. See also Josef Seifert, *Ritornare a Platone. Im Anhang eine unveröffentlichte Schrift Adolf Reinachs*, hrsg., Vorwort und übers. Von Giuseppe Girgenti. Collana Temi metafisici e problemi del pensiero antico. Studi e testi, vol. 81, (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2000); and “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), S. 407-424.

³⁷See Alexandre Koyré, *L’idée de Dieu dans la philosophie de St. Anselme* (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1923); (Reprise, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1984). See likewise Edith Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinne des Seins*, in: Edith Steins Werke, Bd. II, Hrsg. L. Gerber, 2. Aufl. (Wien, 1962); 3. unver. Aufl. (Freiburg: Herder, 1986); see also Josef Seifert, *Gott als Gottesbeweis. Eine phänomenologische Neubegründung des ontologischen Arguments*, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), 2. Aufl. 2000; the same author, *Erkenntnis des Vollkommenen. Wege der Vernunft zu Gott*, (Bonn: Lepanto Verlag, 2010); the same author, “Der vergessene Protophänomenologe Anselm: Anselm von Canterbury’s ‘Ontologisches Argument’ und die Methode der realistischen Phänomenologie von Edmund Husserl bis zur Gegenwart, *The Paideia Project* (20ieth World Congress of Philosophy in Boston August 10-15, 1998); See E. Coreth, *Metaphysik* (Innsbruck 1980), pp. 82 ff. E. Coreth chooses this very question as the starting point for philosophy, arguing also from the even more fundamental question about the right method. No doubt the question, as long as its implications are not discarded, can indeed be a starting point of philosophy.

Another essentially necessary fact which is presupposed by any act of doubt is the will to be certain and to avoid error. Any genuine doubt, which is not merely a skeptical revolt against truth, presupposes the desire for knowledge. This implies again a whole world of related facts. In seeking to know, the one who doubts also understands what knowledge is, and that only a receptive-discovering contact with being, in which that which is the case manifests itself to the spirit, is knowledge, not any mere assuming, narrative or positing of something that does not coincide with that which is.

Thus, the nature of truth is also discovered in doubt, the nature of truth as a unique sort of conformity between judgments and the states of affairs posited in them. Along with the nature of truth which I wish to attain, the essence of the error which I wish to avoid in doubt is also known. For I could not doubt if I did not wish to avoid error. Then it would make no sense to doubt. And error is understood to be a false opinion or conviction, the falsity of which I do not know and which presupposes a certain semblance of truth, without which I would not err, and contains some truths without recognition of which I would never have come to err. Thus knowledge, conviction, judgment, truth, error, certainty, uncertainty - all of these are given in the act of doubt, and countless further essentially

necessary facts about each of their natures can be brought to evidence simply by carefully attending to the act of doubt. Insofar as doubt contains the question about truth, one could also unfold the necessary essence of the question both as act and as thought, and show that the latter cannot be true or false, and so on.

Insofar as nobody doubts who does not prefer knowledge to error and to doubt, I also perceive that some axiological knowledge is gained in doubt. The value of knowledge and truth when compared to falsity and error, the superior value of knowledge when compared to doubt, are known in doubt. Likewise, the difference between the purely intellectual disvalue of error as opposed to the moral disvalue of the person who does not even seek truth or who lightly claims its possession, can be known by delving into the nature of sincere doubt. One can also see that, apart from their intrinsic value as a positive importance which they possess in themselves, knowledge and the desire and love of truth are goods for the person who possesses them and error is an evil for him. In order that genuine doubt be possible, also hierarchical gradations of values and goods for the person must be known. The doubting subject must understand that it is a greater evil to err than to doubt, for, otherwise, he would have no motive to doubt rather than putting forth blind claims. He must understand that his doubt differs from a cynical rejection of truth as well as from an untrue hypocritical claim to certainty where it is lacking.

Finally, everyone who doubts judges that he ought not to assent rashly. In this, again the doubting subject has to make at least two judgments: that he does not possess sufficient knowledge to give his assent to a proposition, and that he ought to abstain from judging if he possesses insufficient knowledge to warrant the judging assent. The doubt is then recognized as the response due to this situation and as preferable to the blind assent of the one who judges lightly. The existence and essence of time - in the transition from the moment in which I doubt to that in which I gain certainty, and in the impossibility of doubting and being certain about the same thing and in the same sense - can also be known by grasping the essence of doubt. At this point we see, however, a new fact: what we discover as the condition of doubt is not restricted to the knowledge of the existence of our own acts and of ourselves as subjects, on the one hand, and to the insights into universal essences of personal acts, on the other. Our starting point in the cogito³⁷ shall not restrict us to knowing the objective nature of the most important being in the universe, the person and his acts. Rather we shall gain access, too, from this same starting point, to similarly indubitable facts in the sphere of universal ontological and logical principles which Aristotle investigates in book IV of the *Metaphysics* or in his *Organon*. We gain knowledge about being, truth, reason, logical consistency and countless other things - all hidden even in the most radical doubt and only waiting to be opened to the searching mind. In fact, nothing forbids to recognize that perhaps in the evidence of the cogito and with the evidence of our own being, nay in a certain way prior to it, we gain knowledge of such universal essences as that of being as such, which Aristotle and Avicenna, and with them many other philosophers regarded as the first and most evident fact, is known by us, or the first principles of being, that of identity, of contradiction, and others such as that of the excluded middle. For indeed, we could not know that we exist, and even not doubt, as it shall turn out, without knowing already such essentially necessary principles of being. Why do we then not start with their knowledge as the first beginning of philosophy? Why with the subject and the cogito? Why with doubt? The starting point for epistemology and philosophy as such in the reflection on the most radical doubt does not imply, that we ought to start or have to start with doubt. No, there is no single starting point for philosophy and epistemology. We could very well start with us having sense-perceptions and proceed from there to those evidences which we can attain from the evidence of the senses. We could start also with our knowing that something is rather than nothing (Scheler),³⁷ with the judgment (Lotz) or the question (Coreth),³⁷ or with being and the

5. The undeniable existence and empathetic knowledge of other real persons and of the world co-given in the human conscious experience of the world, an experience that is particularly entailed in the experience of social acts directed by their essence to real other persons and in love (Edith Stein, Adolf Reinach, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Paola Premoli de Marchi, Gian Paolo Terravecchia) and overcomes solipsism in a real and not again immanent sense, as in Husserl's Fifth *Cartesian Meditation*.³⁸

While it is of course impossible in a short lecture to show all of this with sufficient clarity, this paper may be sufficient to convince the listener or reader that the recognition of the transcendence of knowledge and its receptive openness towards beings and states of affairs as they are in themselves that distinguishes realist phenomenology is the fruit of careful and critical phenomenological and philosophical research and distinctions, and in no way constitutes a naïve and ingenuous realism. It is the fruit of a strenuous "seventh voyage" and in no way a

principle of contradiction (Aristotle) or that of identity (Leibniz) as an even more fundamental ontological principle.

Yet all these evidences are also to be found in the cogito, as we shall see. And while they are included in the evidence of the cogito, with its link to the really existing world as well as to that of many pure Wesenheiten, these other evidences do not clearly and specifically point to the existence of ourselves and to the evidence of the cogito. In fact, they do not contain any direct reference to the order of existence and thus lack one of the two sides of the evidence of the cogito. Moreover, without the evidence to be unfolded in the cogito, no other evidence is possible because nobody can be certain about anything if he can doubt that he himself exists, because certainty always involves a moment of reflection: of knowing that I know. Precisely for this reason alone the other starting points which offer themselves to the philosopher are more restricted and, I believe, inferior to those contained in the cogito. The last remarks lead us to recognize a further point: the starting point in doubt or in the cogito has the great advantage that it spells out a general structure of all certain knowledge, which remains unspoken if we use other evidences as starting point. This silent presupposition and condition of all other evidences consists in that certain knowledge can never be about anything at all without also involving the certainty about the knowing subject. For certainty is always linked to a moment of reflection that I am certain of X. A completely self-forgetting evidence in which no evidence of the knowing subject would be contained, is impossible. On this see especially Antonio Rosmini, *Certainty*, transl. from *Nuovo Saggio sull' Origine delle Idee* (Durham: Rosmini House, 1991), pp. 107 ff.

³⁸ See Edith Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, (Halle a.d.S.: Buchdruckerei des Waisenhauses, 1917), Reprint (München: Kaffke, 1980). See also Adolf Reinach, „Die apriorischen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Rechtes“, in: Reinach, Adolf, *Sämtliche Werke. Textkritische Ausgabe in zwei Bänden*, Bd. I: *Die Werke*, Teil I: Kritische Neuausgabe (1905-1914), Teil II: Nachgelassene Texte (1906-1917); hrsg.v. Karl Schuhmann Barry Smith (München und Wien: Philosophia Verlag, 1989), 141-278; see Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft. Untersuchungen über Wesen und Wert der Gemeinschaft*, 3., vom Verf. durchgesehene Aufl., Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Gesammelte Werke IV* (Regensburg: J. Habel, 1975). See also Paola Premoli De Marchi, *Uomo e relazione. L'antropologia filosofica di Dietrich von Hildebrand* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1998). See likewise Gian Paolo Terravecchia, *Fenomenologia delle relazioni interpersonali. Il contributo di Reinach e von Hildebrand alla filosofia sociale*. Internazionale Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein. Diss. 1998; *Filosofia sociale. Il contributo di Dietrich von Hildebrand*. Pref. Josef Seifert (Milano: Diade, 2004).

mere return to the past or to “the early times of the phenomenological movement.” It is thus both essential to early phenomenology and to eternal truth, to *philosophia perennis*.³⁹

³⁹On the notion of the „seventh navigation“ see Balduin Schwarz, *Wahrheit, Irrtum und Verirrungen. Die sechs großen Krisen und sieben Ausfahrten der abendländischen Philosophie*, hrsg. v. Paula Premoli/Josef Seifert (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1996), and the Preface of the editors; see also Josef Seifert, “Die ‘Siebte Ausfahrt’ als Aufgabe der Internationalen Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein (1986-1996). Rede zur 10-Jahres-Jubiläumsfeier der Internationalen Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein am 26. Oktober 1996,” in: Mariano Crespo (Hrsg.), *Menschenwürde: Metaphysik und Ethik* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998), pp. 19-55; and Josef Seifert, “The Seventh Voyage of Philosophy,” *Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, XI 1999: 83-104, and the Preface of the editors to Balduin Schwarz, *Der Irrtum in der Philosophie*, 2. Auflage, ed. by Stefan Schwarz, Josef Seifert, and Wolfram Schrems, (Frankfurt a.M.: Ontosverlag/Gruyterverlag, 2013).