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Phenomenological Thomism: A Prooemium

Chad Engelland  and Jonathan J. Sanford

Institute of Philosophical Studies, University of Dallas, Irving, Texas, USA

Corresponding author: Chad Engelland; Email: cengelland@udallas.edu

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Abstract

This paper introduces Phenomenological Thomism by accomplishing the three tasks Thomas Aquinas sets for every prooemium. First, to promote goodwill (*beniuolus*), it shows how fruitful Phenomenological Thomism promises to be by arguing that it unites the strengths of two complementary alternatives to the modern starting point. Second, to make teachable (*docilis*), it delineates the principal vectors of phenomenological engagement, including philosophy of nature, philosophical anthropology, ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, philosophical theology, and revealed theology. Third, to arouse attention (*attentus*), it focuses on the theme of manifestation to highlight the challenge of bringing the two traditions together. In this way, the prooemium encourages the further development of Phenomenological Thomism as a research program involving countless scholars and an infinity of tasks.

Keywords: Edith Stein; Intentionality; Karol Wojtyła; Martin Heidegger; phenomenology; philosophical method; Thomas Aquinas; Thomism

When Thomas sets out to write his first commentary on Aristotle, he remarks that Aristotle's *De Anima* does the three things anyone must do when beginning a treatise on a given subject-matter: to garner good will (*beniuolus*) by indicating the value of the subject, to make ready to learn (*docilis*) by indicating the divisions of the subject, and to inspire attentiveness (*attentus*) by indicating the difficulties of the subject.¹

¹In the present treatise on the soul we find, first, an Introduction [*prooemium*]: in which the author does the three things that should be done in any Introduction [*in quo facit tria quae necessaria sunt in quolibet prooemio*]. For in writing an Introduction, one has three objects in view: first, to gain the reader's good will; secondly, to dispose him to learn; thirdly, to win his attention. The first object one achieves by showing the reader the value [*utilitatem*] of the knowledge in question; the second by explaining the plan and divisions of the treatise; the third by warning him of its difficulties'. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, trans. by Kenelm Foster, O.P. and Sylvester Humphries, O.P. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), lectio 1, n. 2. Kevin White documents that early in his career Aquinas referred to these three tasks as

The prooemium is of course a kind of speech act, and Thomas tells us that by nature speaking involves a twofold manifestation: in the first place, we speak to ourselves when we formulate our thoughts and summon knowledge from out of the hidden depths of our memory in order to activate it; in the second place, we speak to others when we, making use of conventional words, express the interior word externally. As a complex unity, to speak is to make something manifest to self and others.² On one occasion, Thomas wonders what there is to teach another when all truth is derived from experience and replies that experience gives us a general and confused knowledge: teaching allows our knowledge to be made more detailed and distinct.³ For Thomas, to contemplate and to share the fruits of contemplation are naturally interrelated.⁴ Hence a prooemium, for Thomas, shares a detailed and distinct knowledge of what makes a topic beneficial, intelligible, and engaging.

John Haldane coined the term 'Analytic Thomists' to name those who engage the work of Aquinas using the methods typical of logical analysis.⁵ In this way, he introduced an approach that exists alongside other contemporary schools of Thomism, such as River Forest, Transcendental, and Existential. Despite this surface similarity, Analytic Thomists differ from these other schools in having only a shared methodological commitment, not a shared doctrinal one. And, of course, analytic philosophy does not have a monopoly on methodological innovation among Thomists: not only have important Thomists of the past century, such as Karol Wojtyła and Edith Stein, followed the method of phenomenology,⁶ but there are many voices contributing today to what has emerged as the common project of Phenomenological Thomism. In our view, Phenomenological Thomism brings out something latent in the thought of the Angelic Doctor, something of perennial value, but also something of great relevance in the conversations of our times. The priority of that perennial value in Aquinas's thought, amongst other reasons, is why we speak of Phenomenological Thomism as opposed to Thomistic Phenomenology.

customary for prologues but by the time he reached his mature years he referred to these three axiomatically as necessary and natural. See Kevin White, 'St. Thomas Aquinas on Prologues', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 98 (2005), 803–13.

²*De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 5.

³*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 117, a. 1, ad 4.

⁴*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, chp. 1. The first office of the wise person is to contemplate and share the truth; the second is to refute the opposing falsehood.

⁵See the special issue edited by John Haldane, 'Analytical Thomism', *Monist*, 80 (1997), 485–618.

⁶Wojtyła writes, 'I am undeniably philosophically connected with the Aristotelian-Thomistic foundation. However, I work on that foundation while taking advantage of the method and achievements of phenomenology to a large extent'. Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, the English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, vol. 1., trans. by Grzegorz Ignatik (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), p. 534. St. Edith Stein made three notable attempts to bridge phenomenology and Aquinas. The first was her dialogue between Husserl and Aquinas, which presented the radical contrast between an egological and a theocentric philosophy; then there was a speculative inquiry into act and potency as the fundamental explanatory principle in scholastic thought; finally, there was *Finite and Eternal Being*, which presented a sweeping account of the structure of finite being as revelatory of the existence and nature of eternal being. Edith Stein, 'Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison', in *Knowledge and Faith*, trans. by Walter Redmond (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2000), pp. 1–63; Edith Stein, *Potency and Act: Studies Toward a Philosophy of Being*, trans. by Walter Redmond (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2009); Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*, trans. by Kurt Reinhardt (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2002).

Though the movement has long been germinating, our aim with this prooemium is to help bring it to its proper fulfillment as an ongoing research program. The means for us to accomplish this goal is to follow the mind of St. Thomas, who says that every prologue must achieve three things: to gain goodwill, to inculcate docility, and to inspire attentiveness. First, to foster a positive disposition to the movement, we make the case that Phenomenological Thomism provides welcome relief for persistent problems in modern thought and enables us to recover themes in Thomas that invite further development. Second, to aid the newcomer, we offer a comprehensive overview of Phenomenological Thomism's seven research areas, covering philosophy of nature, philosophical anthropology, ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, philosophical theology, and revealed theology. Each of these areas is marked by a series of questions inviting significant further inquiry. Third, to highlight what is really worth pondering, we build the case for thinking that Phenomenological Thomism, in joining two heterogeneous senses of manifestation, is eminently challenging and hence worthy of serious thought.

1. Good will (*benivolus*): The value of Phenomenological Thomism

The first task is to make manifest the goodness of the subject-matter, to indicate why there is *prima facie* evidence for being positively disposed toward it. We think Phenomenological Thomism is a fruitful way of philosophizing in the present, and one which avoids many modern pitfalls by means of reanimating some of the more innovative features of Thomistic thought.

With the collapse of German idealism and the rise of positivism, many philosophers in the second half of the nineteenth century keenly felt the need to return to richer sources, but the question was to *which* one: The Neo-Kantians rallied under the banner, 'Back to Kant!' and the Catholics 'Back to Thomas!' At the turn of the twentieth century, phenomenologists set forth under a different banner, 'Back to the Things Themselves!' The idea seems so evident as to be self-evident, namely that the ultimate term of philosophical inquiry is not the understanding of a previous philosophy but instead the understanding of the truth of the matter. Yet such a reminder was needed then and it is needed now insofar as the intellectual framework of modernity itself, established by Descartes, problematized by Hume, clarified by Kant, and brought to an end by Hegel in some ways and Nietzsche in others, must be reckoned with so that we might regain our grip on what's real.

'Back to Thomas' and 'Back to the Things Themselves' are in truth complementary. As Thomas states in his commentary on Aristotle's *De caelo et mundo*, 'Philosophy is not studied in order to know what men have thought but rather to know the *truth* of the matter'.⁷ To read Thomas as he wants to be read is to go beyond what he says to the reality that he articulates. Aquinas's balanced realism and phenomenology's attention to the manner of experiencing what's real amount to two parts of one whole, namely an account of transcending that renews contact with what is transcendent. Both have the virtue of sidestepping the framework of modernity that yields the endless dialectic of realism and idealism, dualism and materialism, empiricism and rationalism, and so

⁷In *Aristotelis Libros De caelo et mundo expositio*, ed. by Raymundi M. Spiazzi (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1952), p. 228.

on.⁸ At the same time, phenomenology is in a position to avail itself of what's valuable about the modern venture, and it can do so in such a way that it can constitute a return to and an enhancement of the principles and method available to Thomas Aquinas.⁹ Of course, it matters what exactly one takes phenomenology to be, and what we take it to be will become evident in what follows.

If much of modern philosophy reduces experience to present, subjective, sensory stimuli, worked up by the mind or brain either individually or socially, phenomenology returns experience to transtemporal, objective, categorial structures, encountered by the person together with others.¹⁰ Gabriel Marcel rightly observes, 'For a philosopher worthy of the name there is no more important undertaking than that of reinstating experience in the place of such bad substitutes for it'.¹¹ The fruit of such a reinstatement is reestablishing what Jacques Maritain calls the 'nuptial relation' between mind and things.¹² Phenomenology's rehabilitation of experience also rehabilitates the project pursued by Thomas in his investigations of the texture of what's real. The Thomist Norris Clarke, in this vein, says he is following 'interpersonal phenomenologies' to counter the 'blind spot' of modern epistemology, and he accordingly offers 'the "we are" of interpersonal dialogue' as the proper starting point for philosophy.¹³

At the core of phenomenology is a simple idea with classical and medieval roots, but an idea that has proven revolutionary within the context of modern philosophy, namely that consciousness is not merely inward but is, rather, ineluctably outward. Phenomenology names this essential openness of mind to the world 'intentionality'. In this way, phenomenology reaches back behind the Cartesian inner theatre to recover something of the Platonic correlation of powers with things governed by those powers, memorably expressed in the various divisions of the Divided Line and echoed in Aristotle's frequent reminders of the divisions between sciences. The various acts of perceiving, remembering, and anticipating are correlated with things perceived, things remembered, and things anticipated.¹⁴ The acts of consciousness let these things be encountered as what they are. This act of letting something be present as what it is is called constitution, and it tracks the identity of things through the vicissitudes of experience. One and the same lecture on the chemistry of photosynthesis can be anticipated, perceived, and recalled.

⁸See Alasdair MacIntyre, 'On Not Knowing Where You are Going', *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 84 (2010), 61–74, at 72–73.

⁹For the early hopes and worries of Thomistic thinkers, see Edward Baring's landmark study, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

¹⁰See Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. by J. N. Findlay (New York: Routledge, 2001); Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. by Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Dan Zahavi, *Phenomenology: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2018); and Chad Engelland, *Phenomenology* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2020).

¹¹*The Mystery of Being*, vol. 1, trans. by G. S. Fraser (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), p. 54.

¹²Quoted in W. Norris Clarke, S. J., *The One and the Many* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2001), p. 39.

¹³W. Norris Clarke, S. J., 'The "We Are" of Interpersonal Dialogue', in *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being, God, Person* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 33.

¹⁴See Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 66–76. See also Augustine's *Confessions*, Book 11, chapters 26–28.

Husserl's breakthrough work, the *Logical Investigations*, not only exposed the structure of intentionality but also systematically related two kinds of intentional structures: meaning-intentions and fulfilling-intentions, speech and perception. Husserl worked out how a perceived state of affairs provokes various modes of articulation and how a mode of articulation can be confirmed by a perceived state of affairs. Speech and perception function independently but are inherently related to one another. To speak about something is completed by its perceptual showing, and to see something is completed by its linguistic articulation. In this way, Husserl happens upon the interplay of absence and presence: the meaning-intentions that function in the absence of a thing and the fulfilling-intentions that bring about the presence of a thing. Perception gives us something in the flesh; imagination gives a kind of presence that falls short of this standard.

Phenomenology renews the classical inquiry into the essences of things by bringing about an intuitive givenness of the essence by means of imaginative variation. Taking as its point of departure a perceived or imagined thing, free variation experiments with the suppression or addition of this, that, or the other of its attributes; variations that change the identity of the nature are set aside; variations that do not are retained. What emerges through the course of the retained variations is the perception of a robust identity, a renewed objectivity of essence as presented in and through all these permutations.¹⁵ The method of eidetic intuition allows us to apprehend things such as *justice* and *university*, but it also allows us to register the difference between *hope* and *fear* and all the differences that obtain among intentional acts and their correlates. Moreover, as Heidegger realized, it enables a new mode of research into the categories, including the difference between the intelligibility of things (traditional categories) and the intelligibility of human existence (existentials) and it necessitates a consideration of history and the limits of one's cultural horizons.¹⁶ But it cannot arrive at the essence of experience itself; for that a novel method is necessary.

Phenomenology's rediscovery of intentionality involves elements that are subjective and objective; hence intentionality itself invites inquiry into the peculiar transcendence according to which the subject finds itself outside itself among things. Husserl pioneered the transcendental reduction as a way of arriving at the pre-subjective truth of experience, of working out the systematic correlation of our experiential agency with the self-presentation of things. Heidegger, exploiting resources from Husserl, explores this transcendence as being-in-the-world which he then roots in the temporal interplay of presence and absence. Taking a page from Kierkegaard and the Augustinian tradition, Heidegger emphasizes the existential involvement needed to bring the structure of experience to light.¹⁷

In light of this outline of phenomenological research, we can now press some important questions for the project of Phenomenological Thomism. Is the phenomenological

¹⁵*Experience and Judgment: Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, rev. and ed. by Ludwig Landgrebe, trans. by James s. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 340–48.

¹⁶Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 72.

¹⁷See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962). For an account of the movement from Husserl to Heidegger, see Jean-Luc Marion, *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology*, trans. by Thomas Carlson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998).

point of view, as some may think, something extraneous to Thomas? Or might there be phenomenological moments native to his own mode of philosophizing? There are many obvious points to explore: among these is the fact that Thomas handles truth in a novel fashion by placing it in the intellect's correspondence with things so that being is true in relation to the intellect, whether divine or human; in light of this a priori correspondence, which is, for the divine knower, grounded in His being the maker and actual knower of all things, individual beings can then manifest themselves to us.¹⁸ Moreover, Thomas develops a rich phenomenological understanding of the interplay of presence and absence with his account of the passions of the soul and the interplay of the appetitive and apprehensive soul powers.¹⁹ His account of action, unfolding from the distinction between an act of a human being and a human act, expresses keen phenomenological sensibilities.²⁰ There is also a sort of phenomenological character to his philosophy as a whole, one that especially comes to the fore when he pushes philosophy beyond itself in exploratory meditations.

In an early work, Thomas distinguishes between two forms of divine science: philosophical divine science and revealed divine science.²¹ The former reveals God indirectly through his effects; the latter studies God's direct self-revelation as mediated through sacred scripture. Philosophical divine science inquires into finite being as its subject matter and terminates with God as its cause; revealed divine science inquires into the principles of God's self-disclosure in revelation. Even philosophical divine science is based in a kind of manifestation, which begins with what is first for us, creaturely effects, and slowly progresses to what is first in itself but hidden to us, namely God as cause.²² In that same work, Thomas distinguishes three uses of reason in theology: to demonstrate the preambles to the faith, such as the existence of God; to offer analogies for divine mysteries, as Augustine does frequently; and to refute heresy.²³ Thomas shows himself to be the most innovative phenomenologically when he seeks and finds analogies for divine mysteries. The final volume of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is particularly rich in this respect.

Thomas's account of the modes and scales of generation, which he develops in order to find a likeness to the divine generation of the eternal Son, naturalizes intentionality. He develops a scale of emanating fecundity which achieves a kind of fulfillment in the intentional relation.²⁴ Plants undertake a movement that culminates in the production of other plants. Animals undertake local movement in order to satisfy desire for sensed goods and in this way their movement achieves a partial return to themselves. Intellectual beings undertake an intentional movement that brings themselves beyond

¹⁸*Disputed Question on Truth*, q. 1, a. 1. On the innovation of this correspondence, see Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy & the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 256–62.

¹⁹*Summa theologiae*, I-II, 22-48. See also Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of 'Summa Theologiae', 1a2ae 22-48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Nicholas E. Lombardo, O.P., *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011).

²⁰*Summa theologiae*, I-II, question 1, article 1. Indeed, it is this very distinction that serves as the touchstone for Wojtyła's efforts to join phenomenology to Thomism in *Person and Act*, especially the first two chapters.

²¹*Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4.

²²See also *Commentary on Romans*, chapter 1, lectio 6.

²³*Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3.

²⁴*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 4, trans. by Charles O'Neil (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1975), c. 11.

themselves in order to return to themselves and their power of knowing; intellects, then, can exceed the natural movements of the lower orders by making a complete return to themselves. Now such intellectual powers ramify into human, angelic, and divine. The lowest grade, the human, begins outwardly in sense experience but terminates inwardly with understanding. Sensible accidents present the outward aspects of a thing but the intellect as it were enters into the thing's interior, that is to say its nature, and it does so by means of grasping, within itself, what the thing is.²⁵ The inwardness of the thing corresponds to the inwardness of understanding. Thomas, inspired by sacred scripture, but describing natural principles of our intellectual operation, calls the inward aspect of the intellect's relation to what is itself interior to the thing 'the interior word'. 'For, in the act of understanding, the intellect conceives and forms the intention or the essence understood, and that is the interior word'.²⁶ When we speak we give voice to our understanding and, thanks to conventional signs, utter the exterior word that expresses our interior word. Thomas distinguishes the following: (1) understanding a thing, (2) understanding the intention itself reflectively, and (3) the intellect itself. In Thomas's phenomenology of the act of understanding, the generation of the interior word is instantaneous. 'Now, the conception and birth of an intelligible word involves neither motion nor succession. Hence, at once it is conceived and it is; at once it is born and is distinct; just as that which is illuminated, at the moment of being illuminated, is illuminated because in illumination there is no succession'.²⁷ Thomas undertakes this phenomenology of understanding, the experience of making sense of things, and the self-awareness it both implies and enables, in order to clarify the intelligibility of the theological doctrine of the Trinity, but in endeavoring to make sense of this theological mystery, he develops novel philosophical resources, focusing on the structure of experience and the inwardness of self-knowledge, that are of great phenomenological importance.²⁸

The phenomenological character of these investigations expresses something that is eminently natural to us. In support of this, Thomas explains the fittingness of natural kinds: they are needed so that they might be experienced, known, and named.

In the state of innocence man would not have had any bodily need of animals—neither for clothing, since then they were naked and not ashamed, there being no inordinate motions of concupiscence—nor for food, since they fed on the trees of paradise—nor to carry him about, his body being strong enough for that purpose. But man needed animals in order to have experimental knowledge of their natures [*ad experimentalem cognitionem sumendam de naturis eorum*]. This is signified by the fact that God led the animals to man, that he might give them names expressive of their respective natures.²⁹

²⁵ *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4, c. 11, n. 15.

²⁶ *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4, c. 11, n. 13.

²⁷ *Summa Contra Gentiles* 4, c. 11, n. 18.

²⁸ In an early lecture course in which Heidegger develops his understanding of the phenomenological method in its most detailed form, he says the goal of phenomenology is to articulate the 'verbum internum' of the phenomenon. *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. by Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 43.

²⁹ *Summa Theologiae*, trans. by English Dominicans (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948), I, q. 96, a. 1, ad 3. On this passage, see Jean-Louis Chrétien, *The Ark of Speech*, trans. by Andrew Brown (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

The original vocation of the human stewardship of nature is not, as Descartes would have it, the mastery and possession of recalcitrant nature, the sort that can be mastered only by being obeyed; the original vocation of the human is to experience, know, and name things, to be what Heidegger poetically calls ‘the shepherd of being’.³⁰ Our natural vocation is to experience and denominate natures.

‘So there is a bit of Thomism embedded in Heidegger’, scrawled Husserl in the margins of his copy of *Being and Time*.³¹ The passage that prompted this comment was Heidegger’s citation of Aquinas’s derivation of the transcendentals to substantiate the claim that relating being to the human being does not constitute a vicious subjectivization of reality.³² Both Heidegger and Aquinas have the same text of Aristotle in mind: ‘The soul is in a way all things’.³³ Heidegger was not much of a Thomist, for he had done his early work as a Catholic graduate student in the Scotist school (indeed his commentaries on Aquinas lack the intensity of his readings of Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, and Nietzsche), and yet the focus of *Being and Time* and its stated esteem for the analogy of being led him to be regarded for a time as a ‘Catholic phenomenologist’, a term which he found nonsensical, though not because of an aversion to Catholic thinkers but rather because he regarded philosophy at the time as an apriori science akin to mathematics.³⁴ Despite Heidegger’s reticence, there is a rich history of relating Heidegger and Aquinas.³⁵ The fact that Aristotle figures so prominently in their respective works makes a rapprochement possible. To be sure, Thomas principally roots manifestation in the existing essence intrinsic to the thing, an essence that corresponds with its creative exemplar, and Heidegger focuses exclusively on the moment of manifestation with no thematization of essence, existence, or exemplarity. They share only that Aristotelian sense of openness to being.

³⁰‘Letter on ‘Humanism’, *Pathmarks*, ed. by William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 252 and 260.

³¹*Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Sheehan and Richard Palmer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), p. 285.

³²*Being and Time*, 34. This passage contains a judgment that Heidegger worked out in the course of a sometimes sympathetic analysis of Thomas several years earlier. See Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Phenomenological Research*, trans. by Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 120–47. For a critical evaluation of Heidegger’s interpretation, see James Orr, ‘Heidegger’s Critique of Aquinas on Truth: A Critical Assessment’, *New Blackfriars*, 95 (2014), 43–56 and Jonathan Lyonhart, ‘Re-thinking Truth: Assessing Heidegger’s critique of Aquinas in light of Vallicella’s critique of Heidegger’, *New Blackfriars*, 103 (2022), 326–36.

³³*De Anima* 3.8, 431b21.

³⁴‘It has been said that my work is Catholic phenomenology—presumably because it is my conviction that thinkers like Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus also understood something of philosophy, perhaps more than the moderns. But the concept of a Catholic phenomenology is even more absurd than a Protestant mathematics’. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, rev. ed., trans. by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 20.

³⁵Among many others, see Chad Engelland, ‘“Rational Animal” in Heidegger and Aquinas’, *Review of Metaphysics*, 71 (2018), 723–53; Mirela Oliva, ‘Trinity and Difference: Gadamer and Heidegger on Aquinas’, *Philosophy of Religion Annual/Internationales Jahrbuch für Religionsphilosophie*, 13 (2014), 195–221; Sean McGrath, ‘The Logic of Indirection in Heidegger and Aquinas’, *The Heythrop Journal*, 54 (2013), 268–80; Caitlin Smith-Gilson, *The Metaphysical Presuppositions of Being-in-the-World: A Confrontation Between St. Thomas Aquinas and Martin Heidegger* (New York: Continuum, 2010); John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham, 1982); and Johannes B. Lotz, S. J., *Martin Heidegger und Thomas von Aquin. Mensch—Zeit—Sein* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1975).

Husserl and Scheler did not engage Aquinas in a substantial manner in their published texts, and perhaps not at all.³⁶ Yet the central phenomenological theme of intentionality itself was brought to Husserl's attention by his teacher, Franz Brentano, the one-time Dominican and Catholic. To be sure, Brentano, under the pressure of the modern framework of cognition, interpreted this medieval structure of experience in a Cartesian fashion, which prevented him from reaching the intentional object, yet he was able to introduce a term, 'intentionality', that would work itself out in Husserl's hands to recover its true world-directedness in the breakthrough text, *Logical Investigations*.³⁷ Heidegger saw the decisive return to medieval thought here when he remarked: 'In the middle ages and in Greek philosophy, the whole man was still seen; the apprehension of inner psychic life, what we now so readily call consciousness, was enacted in a natural experience which was not regarded as an inner perception and so set off from an outer one'.³⁸ Against the Cartesian bifurcation of the inner and the outer, phenomenology wields intentionality, touched upon by the medievals, and clarified in its transcendental significance by Husserl and his progeny.

2. Teachable (*docilis*): Explaining the plans and divisions of Phenomenological Thomism

The second task before us is to provide an overview of the movement in its various manifestations as well as to indicate horizons for future work. Pope St. John Paul II, who thanked God for being able to participate in the movement, regarded phenomenology as rekindling a fundamental *openness* to the world, to others, and to the question of God, and he described it as 'an attitude of intellectual charity'.³⁹ What does this openness see?

2.1. Philosophy of nature

With River Forest or Aristotelian Thomism, Phenomenological Thomism recognizes hylomorphism and with it attentiveness not just to material and formal causation, but efficient and final as well, as crucial organizing principles in Thomas's thought. It finds in phenomenology a method for rejuvenating appreciation for hylomorphism and reflection on causal patterns for making sense of things. As Edith Stein shows, the neglect of the body in a figure such as Heidegger can be remedied by developing a phenomenologically enriched concept of animate embodiment, which complements the work of Merleau-Ponty, Hans Jonas, and other phenomenological authors, and which

³⁶At the same time, Scheler does admit to having an affection for the historical Thomas, rather than for what he regards as the enlightenment-era Thomistic rationalism then prevalent in German universities. *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. by Bernard Noble (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 20. Scheler astutely observes the analogy of phenomenology and negative theology. Both phenomenology and philosophical theology proceed principally by denying rather than by ascribing attributes to their object. The point is to induce others to turn and see for themselves the unique intelligibility of the subject in question. *On the Eternal in Man*, 171–72. This analogy must be kept in mind as an analogy lest God be identified with the condition for the possibility of experience or the condition for the possibility of experience be identified as God.

³⁷See Heidegger's account of the originality of phenomenology in relation to Brentano, *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 46.

³⁸*History of the Concept of Time*, 15. Translation modified.

³⁹<http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2003/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20030322_hanover.html>.

connects to the Aristotelianism of Aquinas.⁴⁰ Life is not only discovered via the first-person perspective whereby we reflect on ourselves as living, experiencing beings, but also via the second-person perspective whereby we reciprocally encounter the experiencing lives of others on display through the interplay of animate movement.⁴¹ Phenomenology in this way constitutes a principled challenge to the Cartesian bifurcation of inner and outer which ushers in what come to be two unrelated sciences of life: the science of the mind, pursued in the *Meditations*, and the science of the machine, mechanistic biophysics, pursued in the horizon of an empirico-mathematical methodology. In truth, as phenomenology shows, natural bodily movement makes manifest outwardly the inwardness of experience. The concept of life, especially the life of understanding, unites the Aristotelianism of Thomas and the Aristotelianism of phenomenology.

A leading question of phenomenological philosophy is the question of intersubjectivity, or the reciprocity of different points of view, thanks to the embodied character of our experience. Thomism can see in this theme kinship with the Aristotelian thesis that agency makes affectivity manifest, that action reveals desire and perception. Phenomenological Thomism can bring the two together in order to affirm that the very natural dynamisms rightly celebrated by Aristotle in living, effecting, perceiving, and understanding, serve to fill in the context for how the reciprocity and mirroring of intersubjectivity unfolds phenomenologically.⁴² However, here questions arise. Does deploying phenomenology, with its near endless demand for descriptions of layered proximate and remote causes, with hylomorphism and its texture of actuality and potentialities enable us adequately to specify the underlying causes? Because of the stubbornness of material being to explain itself, how far can one push hylomorphic descriptions to yield meaning? Moreover, because presence is an achievement not only of temporality but also of embodied agency, does it not admit of a corporeal elucidation in addition to a transcendental one? In this way, the real interplay of hylomorphism and phenomenology still very much needs to be developed in its constitutive dimensions.⁴³

2.2. Philosophical anthropology

Aquinas's account of the interplay of apprehensive and appetitive powers is richly phenomenological. Apprehensive powers make something present; appetitive powers relate to something, whether present or absent, with the interest that good things should be present and bad things absent. Within this general framework, Aquinas boldly insists that whereas knowledge presents someone in a mediated way, love targets someone in his or her very selfhood, in the very act of being.⁴⁴ Cognition takes the

⁴⁰See Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 3rd edn, trans. by Waltraut Stein (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1989), pp. 40–89, and 'Sentient Causality', in *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, trans. by Mary Catherine Baseheart and Marianne Sawicki (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 2000), pp. 2–128.

⁴¹Chad Engelland, *Ostension: Word Learning and the Embodied Mind* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014).

⁴²Karol Wojtyła, 'Participation or Alienation?' in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. by Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 197–208.

⁴³In this regard, Sokolowski's innovative approach to the body as a kind of lens through which we experience the world is exemplary. *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, pp. 225–37.

⁴⁴*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 82, a. 3.

object into the orbit of the knower; volition puts the subject in orbit about its object: love decenters the knowing subject. This kind of attention to intentional modification is redolent of contemporary phenomenological analyses, such as Levinas's discourse on the difference between totality and infinity and Marion's discussion of the difference between an idol and an icon. At the same time, Thomas has the resources to provide a more comprehensive account of the unified person, so loving and so loved.⁴⁵ Not far from Thomas, says John Paul II, is the thesis from the dialogical philosophers that our 'existence ... is always a coexistence'.⁴⁶

Two of the most significant cases of Phenomenological Thomism concern the question of philosophical anthropology in its contemporary aspect. Edith Stein's influential approach to sexual difference comes by means of a radical appropriation of the Thomistic understanding of the soul-body unity.⁴⁷ Karol Wojtyła's 'metaphysics of shame', which he develops in dialogue with Scheler, constitutes a kind of revelation of the being of the human being.⁴⁸ Shame shows that persons are bound up with their bodies, and bodies with their persons. Stein and Wojtyła both work out a concept of personal development as an unfolding of one's personal being through acts that make personhood manifest as such.⁴⁹

Personalists are right to see in the person the highest reality in all of mundane nature, yet this reality is made manifest through the experience and being of the person. Phenomenology has the resources to explore the inwardness that comes with this personal reality. Phenomenological Thomism has the resources of bringing together the language of experience and the language of principle to account for the single reality of this experiencing being.⁵⁰ Yet here again questions arise. What is missing from personalism alone? How does the phenomenological exploration of inwardness complement the hylomorphic account of principle? In terms of personal acts, how does the similitude of knowing interface with the unmediated intentionality of love?⁵¹ How can love of the particular drive knowledge of the particular's particularity, so that love enables knowledge of the concrete as such?

2.3. Ethical theory

While there are far more treatments in phenomenology of epistemological and metaphysical themes than ethical ones,⁵² one of the fruits of Phenomenological Thomism

⁴⁵Cf. Jonathan J. Sanford, 'Scheler versus Scheler: The Case for a Better Ontology of the Human Person', *American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 79 (2005), 145–61.

⁴⁶*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, trans. by Jenny McPhee and Martha McPhee (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 36.

⁴⁷*Essays on Woman*, 2nd edn, trans. by Freda Mary Oben (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1996), p. 45.

⁴⁸*Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), pp. 174–93. The analysis forms the phenomenological core of what will become known as the theology of the body.

⁴⁹See Stein, *Potency and Act*, 168–221; Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 161–291.

⁵⁰See Chad Engelland, 'The Personal Significance of Sexual Reproduction', *The Thomist*, 79 (2015), 615–39, and Mark Spencer, *The Irreducibility of the Human Person: A Catholic Synthesis* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022).

⁵¹W. Norris Clarke, S. J., pursues elements of this question in his 1993 Aquinas Lecture, *Person and Being* (Marquette, WI: Marquette University Press, 1993).

⁵²Though not a work of Phenomenological Thomism, Irene McMullin's, *Existential Flourishing: A Phenomenology of the Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), takes up questions of virtue

is clarification of human agency and how it is at work in natural law and virtue theory. Agency is a robustly experiential category that calls for thoroughgoing phenomenological analysis, as Wojtyła has done in his major philosophical work.⁵³ Natural law, promulgated through God's eternal law, is manifest through the inclinations of human nature, inclinations that are in some sense revealed by the virtuous agent who brings them to completion and as such serves as an exemplar of the *bonum honestum*.⁵⁴ Phenomenological method proves essential in distinguishing such inclinations of our nature from the sentiments operative in Humean sentimentalism, the rational choice theory in utilitarianism, or the commands operative in deontology. Human nature informs and shapes our choices through thoughtful experience of such natural inclinations.⁵⁵ Phenomenological reflection enables, as well, deep reflection on the sort of person we ought to endeavor to be, the character we ought to develop, and applies a methodology that enables us to carefully navigate myriad distinctions between genuine and merely apparent virtue. Phenomenological Thomism brings into foreground not just the acquired virtues, both moral and intellectual, but theological as well.

In addition to Phenomenological Thomism opening new areas for reflecting on natural law and virtue theory, consider how Emmanuel Levinas, whom Wojtyła warmly welcomed to the Vatican, focuses on the ethical significance of the encounter with the bared affectivity of the other displayed in the face. Levinas's emphasis complements the embodied sense of responsibility for others that is at the heart of love on the Thomistic analysis.⁵⁶ Scheler similarly articulated the *ordo amoris* and in this way reanimated not only an ancient Augustinian theme with reverberations in Pascal but he also went a long way to accounting for how the natural law might be promulgated in our hearts.⁵⁷

What is the shortcoming of the various attempts to ground phenomenological ethics in authenticity? How does Thomism stand vis-à-vis critiques of such authenticity in the figures of Scheler or Levinas? What are the sources of moral precepts? Do they originate in some primal calculus written into our natures, or can they be experienced in terms of the basic inclinations inscribed into our natures, or is there some

theory from a phenomenological and Aristotelian perspective. The essays collected in *Phenomenology and Virtue Ethics*, ed. by Kevin Hermberg and Paul Gyllenhammer (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), indicate the range of phenomenological reflection on virtue theory.

⁵³ *Person and Act and Related Essays*. See also Robert Sokolowski, *Moral Action: A Phenomenological Study* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017), who criticizes the distinction of interior and exterior in Thomas but otherwise emphasizes continuity with his thought, 211.

⁵⁴ Robert Sokolowski writes, 'To be able to respond to the natural law—indeed to let it become actual as law, to show by one's actions what can be done, and thus to make others see what should be done—is to be a certain kind of person: not one who simply conforms to things set down, but one who lets the good appear, to himself and to others, in what he does', in *Pictures, Quotations, and Distinctions: Fourteen Essays in Phenomenology* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), p. 291. On the relation of natural law to contemporary virtue theory, see Jonathan J. Sanford, *Before Virtue: Assessing Contemporary Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), pp. 227–54.

⁵⁵ Scott Roniger, *How is Natural Law Promulgated? A Phenomenological Approach to Thomas Aquinas's Natural Law Theory* (CUA dissertation, 2017).

⁵⁶ See Nigel Zimmermann, *Facing the Other: John Paul II, Levinas, and the Body* (London: Lutterworth, 2015).

⁵⁷ Max Scheler, 'Ordo Amoris', in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. by David R. Lachterman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern, 1973), pp. 98–135.

combination of both? Can Phenomenological Thomism yield a union of the within and the without, of the heart and the mind, to present the unified experience of moral action and development?

2.4. Epistemology

With Transcendental Thomism, Phenomenological Thomism recognizes the work of the intellect in constituting our experience of things. The phenomenological doctrine of intentionality problematizes the subject-object and idealist-realistic divide. Aristotle's insight that the soul is in a way all things unites the transcendentalism of Thomas and the transcendentalism of Husserl and Heidegger. The difference is that Thomas more explicitly highlights the central role of *res* in the correspondence, and Heidegger the role of manifestation.⁵⁸ Since Husserl enacts the transcendental turn to save the reality of essences, there is no reason to pit phenomenology against realism.⁵⁹ Rather, phenomenology is the thoroughgoing account of experience that renders the transcendence of the essence possible. Constitution lets the entity be seen in its reality.

Can this compatibility of phenomenology and realism really be maintained? After all are not Husserl and his later students famously indifferent to the question of reality? Two points should be kept in mind. First, accomplished interpreters maintain that this reading of Husserl is erroneous.⁶⁰ Second, even if, contrary to the apparent truth of the matter, it were the correct reading of Husserl, phenomenology as a philosophical program remains more committed to returning to the things themselves than to the doctrines of its founder.⁶¹ In either case, this objection to phenomenology dissipates. Not only is phenomenology not an obstacle to realism; its account of presence

⁵⁸On the importance of *res* in Aquinas against the backdrop of its neglect in modernity, see Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Recovery of Wonder: The New Freedom and the Asceticism of Power* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

⁵⁹He even claims to be more realistic than realists. 'Letter to Abbé Baudin of June 8, 1934', *Briefwechsel VII: Wissenschaftlerkorrespondenz*, ed. by Karl Schuhmann (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), p. 16. Cited in Dan Zahavi, *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity: A Response to the Linguistic-Pragmatic Critique*, trans. by Elizabeth A Behnke (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001), p. 14 n 23.

⁶⁰See Robert Sokolowski, *Husserlian Meditations: How Words Present Things* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974); *Presence and Absence: A Philosophical Investigation of Language and Being* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); and *Phenomenology of the Human Person* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); John Drummond, *Husserlian Intentionality and Non-Foundational Realism: Noema and Object* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990); Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Chad Engelland, *Heidegger's Shadow: Kant, Husserl, and the Transcendental Turn* (New York: Routledge, 2017). Of course not all read Husserl this way. See, for example, Josef Seifert, *Back to 'Things in Themselves': A Phenomenological Foundation for Classical Realism* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

⁶¹Sokolowski gives a robustly realistic interpretation of phenomenology, commenting, 'I do not think that phenomenology has to be interpreted in this phenomenalist manner, even though many writers and scholars who work in that tradition may take it that way. But we need not be limited by the ideas of Sartre or Merleau-Ponty, for example; why can we not interpret phenomenology in our own way, and take advantage of the manner in which it allows us to treat the modern problem of appearance?', *Christian Faith & Human Understanding*, 305, emphasis added. Richard Colledge argues that more recent formulations of phenomenology dovetail nicely with Thomism in his 'Thomism and Contemporary Phenomenological Realism: Toward a Renewed Engagement', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 95 (2021), 411–32.

as other than what is present is the only way to keep essences from dissolving into psychological constructs. We can have our realism and our phenomenology too.

2.5. Metaphysics

With Existential Thomism, Phenomenological Thomism affirms the reality of essences and the irreducibility of existence. Phenomenology aims to give a transcendental account of the condition for the possibility of experiencing the essence of what is as well as the essence of experience itself. Thomas not only thinks about experiencing what is but also the metaphysical bestowal of the gift of existence to that which is.⁶² Phenomenology's account of experience in terms of presence is in many respects superior to Thomas's account of experience, but it does not and should not replace his insistence on *res* as the content of experience or the existence of that experienced thing which is superior to the phenomenological account.

Phenomenology expertly sketches the contours of experience that enables us to meet with the truth of things. But the further question of this truth concerns the causal principles that account for the content of these truths. The causality of essence remains other than the constitution of experience. As it is for second philosophy, so too for first, questions of causality are especially pertinent. Can phenomenology help clarify how essences are causally constituted? What is the experiential basis for distinguishing actuality and potentiality? How does the act of existence show up as an act rather than a simple fact? Thomism is committed to the experiential basis of its concepts and therefore should welcome the renewed optics afforded by phenomenological research.

2.6. Philosophical theology

God not only shows up for revealed theology; he is also arrived at through reason reflecting on the cause of the things that have been made. The postmodern charge of ontotheology applies to the question concerning the possibility of experiencing that which is; it does not apply to Thomas's reflections on the bestowal of existence and the God-world difference it implicates. Heidegger and Thomas are compatible in their fundamental projects, which are not co-extensive: Heidegger thematizes the experience of being in which God the creator does not appear, whereas Thomas thematizes the gift of existence in which God the creator shows up as the hidden cause of all. Heidegger's inquiry has nothing to do with creation, and Thomas's account of creation *ex nihilo* has nothing to do with issuing a 'doctrine of being' (to be sure, he does have thoughts in that direction) but creation remains other than yet another iteration of Heidegger's fated history of being. The difference between God and world remains other than and more fundamental than the difference between being and entities.⁶³ Thomas does not

⁶²See Angus Brook, 'Is it possible to be a phenomenological Thomist? An investigation of the notions of *esse* and *esse commune*', *New Blackfriars*, 97 (2016), 93–110.

⁶³See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord*, vol. V: *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, trans. by Oliver Davies, Andrew Louth, Brian McNeil C.R.V., John Seward, and Rowan Williams (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), pp. 624–27; Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, 2nd edn, trans. by Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith & Reason*; Thomas Pruffer, *Recapitulations* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), pp. 35–40; and Chad

close the difference between creaturely and creative being in terms of univocity; he does not close the difference in terms of ontotheology. But, in leaving open the difference, he invites us to map more clearly the different, overlapping domains. What is the interface of the *esse* thanks to which things are and the *esse* thanks to which things are intelligible as beings? What is the difference in meaning between them? How can we arrive at an understanding of the world itself, gathered under the designation ‘common being’, *ens commune*, in contrast to that which we know to be unfathomably *ipse esse subsistens*? How can the agency of donation be described and understood as the context for making sense of creation *ex nihilo*?⁶⁴ Moreover, taking a less metaphysical track, how can phenomenology help clarify what Thomas calls the untutored natural perception of God through the natural order of the world, which he sees as analogous to perceiving the soul of another through the ordering movement of the other’s body?⁶⁵

2.7. Revealed theology

In his early commentary on Boethius’s *De Trinitate*, Aquinas distinguishes between a philosophical theology in which God is studied through his creaturely effects and a revealed theology in which God is studied through his self-disclosure. Yet such an understanding of theology is eminently suited to phenomenological method. Indeed, Thomas points out that most theological truths cannot be demonstrated; instead, what can happen is the refutation of critics and the elucidation of analogies. Here where conceivability is key, the phenomenological language of experience is indispensable. Phenomenological Thomism makes itself manifest in a variety of forms, including Sokolowski’s *Eucharistic Presence: A Study in the Theology of Disclosure*, which exhibits a renewed way of doing theology.⁶⁶

In the post-conciliar debates, much trades on whether one follows the philosophical foundation of Rahner, that is a basically neo-Kantian one rooted in the apriori structure of the subject, or whether one follows the philosophical foundation of von Balthasar, that is a basically phenomenological one rooted in the free manifestation of form to the person. The choice is in effect between the analysis of existentials, embodied in Rahner’s 1936 *Spirit in the World*, and the analysis of manifestation, embodied in von Balthasar’s 1947 *Truth in the World*.⁶⁷ Can Rahnerian categories accommodate the gratuity of revelation and the transcendence of its content? Can von Balthasarian

Engelland, ‘Three Versions of the Question, “Why Is There Something Rather than Nothing?”’ *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 94 (2020), 73–89.

⁶⁴A good start is made by Kenneth Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1982).

⁶⁵*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 38. Along these lines, see Chad Engelland, ‘*Deus Absconditus*: A Dialogue’, *New Blackfriars*, 103 (2022), 795–808.

⁶⁶(Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993). See also his ‘The Revelation of the Holy Trinity: A Study in Personal Pronouns’, in *Christian Faith & Human Understanding*, pp. 131–50, and Robert Sokolowski ‘God the Father: The Human Expression of the Holy Trinity’, *The Thomist*, 74 (2010), 33–56.

⁶⁷Karl Rahner, S. J., *Spirit in the World*, trans. by Wiliam Dych, S. J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic*, vol. I: *Truth of the Word*, trans. by Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985).

categories retain their efficaciousness without a more robust account of the human subject and its field of experience? Revelation, that is, the irruption of God into the world, cannot be accommodated by natural categories, yet a phenomenology of surprise and of saturation can help explain the paradox in a way compatible with Thomistic principles. Phenomenological Thomism is well positioned to renew the post-conciliar theological landscape by articulating a concept of experiencing the manifestation of things that enables thoroughgoing and radical transformation.

3. Attentive (*attentus*): Warning of difficulties

The third task is to excite an engaged interest by acknowledging challenges to the movement. In what remains of this prooemium, we will focus on the tension that exists between phenomenology and Thomism concerning the central question of manifestation. We will argue with phenomenology that intentionality is not a real relation, but we will also argue with Thomas that it does involve real content. The manifestation of things is not a causal transaction between the mind and the world. But the manifestation of things does involve the natural causality of the things themselves.

If a Thomist casts a critical eye over phenomenology, what stands out as a lacuna is the attempt to account for presence without fully accounting for that which is present. The intended being as such, both as essence and as existence, remains unexplained in Husserl's philosophy. As Robert Sokolowski observes in his landmark study of constitution in Husserl: 'In providing only subjectivity as a condition of possibility, Husserl is left with the content of constitution as an explained residuum, a pure facticity which escapes the principles of his philosophy. We suggest that it would be necessary for him to complete his thought with investigation of another "condition of possibility", one which would encompass the facticity of what is actually given in constitution'.⁶⁸ Stein and Wojtyła, while similarly underscoring the validity of the reduction for thematizing experience, make the same criticism.⁶⁹ The active causal properties of things, manifesting themselves through their effects in regularly patterned ways, are strangely absent from the phenomenological field of eidetics. There are instead explorations of ideal essences and a lifeworld of meaningful experience, but no sense of the cosmic causality of natural dynamisms. Yet that there are such things is manifest in the field of experience, and indeed the phenomenological account of intersubjectivity prominently involves the animate movement of others, as we have noted. Hence, to follow phenomenology in renouncing ideological blinders is to be able to see once again what was once plain to all: natural kinds exhibit regular patterns of movement that make sense and help explain what they are. Kenneth Schmitz's *The Gift: Creation* pioneers a

⁶⁸Robert Sokolowski, *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 218. Sokolowski performs this in the above mentioned book, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*. Note that Sokolowski does not follow the critique of Husserl as succumbing to a kind of idealism; rather, he asserts the need to round out Husserl's account of experience by attending to metaphysical questions about the things genuinely experienced by us in their transcendence.

⁶⁹Stein, 'Husserl and Aquinas', 29, and Edith Stein, 'Freiheit und Gnade' und weitere Beiträge zu *Phänomenologie und Ontologie (1917 bis 1937)*, ed. by Beate Beckmann-Zöller und Hans Rainer Sepp (Freiburg: Herder, 2014), pp. 166–67; Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 476.

way of recovering efficient causality as a communication of actuality along the lines of giving and receiving, and this is the sort of bridge of phenomenology and nature that we have in mind.⁷⁰ Thomism can help phenomenology rediscover how causality in nature and of existence arises in the experience of things.

If a phenomenologist casts a critical eye over traditional forms of Thomism, the first item that stands out as incompatible with the things themselves is the appeal to mediating principles in cognition. Again, Sokolowski observes: 'Aquinas's insistence that the thing we directly know is the thing itself and not an idea of the thing is reassuring, but the constant use of the term *similitudes* for intelligible species, concepts, judgments, and even arguments does seem to "substantialize" them to an uncomfortable degree'.⁷¹ The intelligible species may not be that which is understood (the *quod*), but it is that by which (the *quo*) what is understood is understood.⁷² That is, to explain my understanding of a tree, Thomas wants me to appeal to the sensible forms manifest to my senses, to appeal to the unified sensible subject manifest to my interior or common sense, and to appeal also to the intelligible species, not as the object understood but as that by which the object is understood. But why must we imagine this sort of psychological machinery? Are the various stages of this machinery given as such to experience by carefully charting presence and absence? Or are they merely posited theoretical entities, invoked for some other reason? The justification seems to be that we want to give a causal account of the content of understanding. But the causal account of the content of our understanding should stick to explaining the content, not explaining the manifestation of the content, for in doing so the difference between change and presence, as well as causation and manifestation becomes problematically obscured. Intentionality, we could say, is not a real relation. There is therefore no need to ground it in real mental entities. The appearance of things is not itself a thing. Instead, what we perceive and understand are the things themselves. Appearing belongs to that which appears rather than that to whom it appears.

Is it really the case that similitudes are experienced by us inwardly, or is it rather the case that we can handle everything we need to merely by talking about our take or slant on things, keeping all the emphasis on the intersubjective reality?⁷³ Can phenomenology not help Thomism to ward off the danger of representationalism and remain more resolutely realistic? Can Thomism not help phenomenology to ward off the danger of subjectivism and remain more resolutely realistic? In this way, might not the alliance represented by Phenomenological Thomism constitute in fact a watershed moment in the overcoming of modern thought, both by eliminating its anticipation in similitudes and its continued influence in a world without natural kinds?

⁷⁰Kenneth Schmitz, himself a student of both Étienne Gilson and Eugen Fink, also argues for the compatibility of Marcel's phenomenology and Thomistic existential metaphysics. See 'The Solidarity of Personalism and the Metaphysics of Existential Act', in *The Texture of Being: Essay in First Philosophy*, ed. by Paul O'Herron (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), pp. 132–45.

⁷¹Robert Sokolowski, *The Phenomenology of the Human Person*, 298.

⁷²*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 85, a. 2.

⁷³See Sokolowski, 'Exorcising Concepts', in *Pictures, Quotations, and Distinctions*, pp. 173–85.

Both traditions expose themselves in the way they speak to the very positions to which they are mortally opposed; both can slide into a kind of denial of intentionality by migrating appearances indoors. Together, however, they can more effectively establish the reality of real being. Thomism can contribute the reality of natural causality in delivering to our awareness real content, thus avoiding the danger of de facto idealism and its attendant worries. Phenomenology can contribute the reality of appearance, thus avoiding the danger of de facto representationalism and its attendant worries.

An example may help to illustrate both the significance as well as the difficulties at hand. How can we understand a natural kind such as 'Armadillo'? Sensory experience alerts us to the presence of movement in our surroundings: not just the rustling of leaves by the wind but something intermittent, something purposive. We spot the banded gray creature foraging in the woods, which we understand to be alive and actively exploring in relation to our own experience of life. Repeated such encounters and more careful investigations give us the sense of how creatures that look that way typically behave and why they do so. 'Look, it is hungry so digging for grubs'. 'Look, it is scared and so leaping straight up in the air'. Later we share our knowledge of armadillos with those not privy to our repeated experience and investigation of them. When we do so, we are relating them to armadillos, the very things that look a certain way and act in a typical way. We are not relating them to mental entities, whether our own similitudes, our phantasms or intelligible species, but the things themselves. When our interlocutor later sees an armadillo with her own eyes, she does not, as it were, think, 'Oh, so that is the original for my friend's mental signs'. Rather, she thinks, 'Aha, an armadillo'.

We have a handle on what the armadillo is, not merely by an actively performed eidetic variation, but by a receptively registered one: our witness and registration of typical or atypical behavior and/or form. We are agents of experience and understanding; but that which is understood, if natural, is a co-agent of its being understood. Manifestation is not only a feature of the agency of experience, it is also a feature of the natural kinds at work. Aquinas says nature only 'becomes manifest' (*manifestetur*) through action: 'Of course, an effect does not show [*ostendit*] the power of a cause unless by virtue of the action which proceeding from the power terminates in the effect'.⁷⁴ Phenomenology describes eidetically and metaphysics explains causally one and the same reality. They are complementary methods because the texture of experience and the texture of being are cut from the same cloth.⁷⁵

Thomas radically challenges our Cartesian picture of the body, and phenomenology gives us the wherewithal to register his wisdom in doing so. Our souls are not in our bodies. Rather our bodies are in our souls, which range out intentionally to be with the things we experience.⁷⁶ To understand makes our souls present to things in a

⁷⁴*Summa Contra Gentiles* III, c. 69, n. 18. W. Norris Clarke, S. J., notes the Aristotelian background to Thomas's thesis that action is the self-revelation of being. *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being—God—Person*, 54.

⁷⁵Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Other Essays*, 181. 'To reduce what is contained in the experience investigated by the method of phenomenology to what constitutes the object of metaphysics is not an unjustified "jump" but a "discovery"'. *Person and Act and Other Essays*, 6.

⁷⁶*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 8, a. 1, ad 2: 'Although corporeal things are said to be in another as in that which contains them, nevertheless, spiritual things contain those things in which they are; as the soul contains the body'. Compare what Thomas here says to the sense of 'in' operative in Heidegger's *being-in-the-world*.

new, heightened way, rather than making those things somehow present in our bodies. Experience is not a causal transaction that terminates in our skulls; experience is rather the opening of a field of presence in which things, acting as they do, can manifest themselves as the kinds of things they are.

4. Conclusion

Thomas celebrated Augustine for taking from the Platonists whatever was compatible with Christianity.⁷⁷ That note of appreciation also indicates Thomas's own self-understanding in performing the same work vis-à-vis Aristotle, yet with the added complication of needing to retain what was essential in the Augustinian heritage. How would Thomas see the task given to us today? To appropriate the methods and discoveries of phenomenology as part of an integrated strategy for understanding and experiencing reality is not only something Thomas would recommend but it is also something deeply compatible with his Aristotelian and Augustinian principles. Through bodily movement, things make their natures manifest to us, and in doing so, give us much to think about together.

Thomas was a student of Aristotle whose theory of the syllogism specified the gold standard of medieval scientific investigation. In this way, it is no surprise that Analytic Thomists find in Thomas a mine of arguments ripe for extraction and analysis. And he surely has much to say in the contemporary analytic debates on philosophy of mind and ethics. Yet Aristotle's account of the scientific demonstration, the *Posterior Analytics*, culminates in its final chapter with a discussion of the all-important question of where the premises and principles needed for syllogisms come from. Indeed, it is well known that when Aristotle sets out to investigate something he expends most of his effort endeavoring to arrive at principles rather than deploying syllogisms. In fact, he tells us he cannot prove the reality of nature or the identity of intelligibility, though he can show that the denial of either one is self-defeating.⁷⁸ And, it is just with the art of arriving at principles of what things are that phenomenology especially recommends itself. In this way, the twin expertises of Analytic and Phenomenological Thomism target complementary aspects of Aristotle and Aquinas.

We have suggested above that phenomenology gathers together the foci of the River Forest Thomists, the Existential Thomists, and the Transcendental Thomists and locates their projects within the more comprehensive phenomenological field of experience. Phenomenological Thomism, as a methodological Thomism, can complement and strengthen existing schools of interpreting Thomas while demonstrating their basic underlying compatibility. It thereby can resist the fragmentation that brought about the general decline of Thomism in the academy.⁷⁹ It also can make significant and new contributions to philosophical inquiry.

Why a prooemium? Phenomenological Thomism has long been percolating, yet its decided advantages, its fundamental contours, and the best way of addressing its obvious challenges are not as widely known and appreciated as they might be or as they

⁷⁷*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 84, a. 5.

⁷⁸See Engelland, *Ostension*, 111–18, and Engelland, 'With What Must We Begin?', *Communio*, 50 (2023), 473–93, respectively.

⁷⁹Gerald McCool, S. J., *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989).

ought to be. Of course, a prooemium can barely scratch the surface, and a thousand tasks remain to be accomplished in bringing to fruition the inquiry here outlined. Our wills, our intellects, and our irascible passion thus stirred, may we be moved to advance the common work of Phenomenological Thomism.

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