



Masters thesis

**'D'un usage de la donation en théologie': the question of
revelation through the prism of givenness in the
phenomenological work of Jean-Luc Marion
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**‘D’un usage de la donation en théologie’:
The Question of Revelation through the Prism of Givenness in
the Phenomenological Work of Jean-Luc Marion.**

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**A Thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Theology (*MTh*)**

by

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2023

Abstract: This thesis examines Jean-Luc Marion's contribution to a phenomenal concept of revelation as achieved in D'ailleurs, la révélation, starting from the wider perspective of his anterior works on the formulation and implications of a phenomenology of givenness. 'D'un usage de la donation en théologie (on the use of givenness in theology)' (Jean-Luc Marion, De surcroît (Paris: 'Quadrige' PUF, 2010), p. 32) suggests at least that phenomenology, when it is guided by givenness, does not subsist on its own, that is without the immanent source of a given that it has not itself constituted. The 'question of revelation' is therefore not so much constituted in a thought of givenness as it constitutes already, in theology, the primary given of a response yet to be formulated: aporia constitutes, from the outset, the locus of revelation. Strictly speaking, not only is a revelation unspeakable and even unthinkable, but a revelation would have to contradict its own revealability to appear as such. And yet, is it not precisely from the impossibility for us of a revelation that a concept of revelation remains possible? As a phenomenal possibility, the phenomenon of revelation would, from the immanence of its appearing, operate a critique of the Kritik, as the phenomenon that breaks forth as the accomplishment and negation of all impossibility, thus opening the possibility of unconditionality. Ultimately, a givenness without measure, such as when Christ 'loved [...] to the end' (John 13.1), would perfectly accomplish the phenomenality of revelation that reveals, from its unveiling, all phenomena to itself, according to the principle that 'nothing is hidden (krupton) that will not be disclosed (phaneron), nor is anything secret (apokruphon) that will not become known and come to light (phaneron)' (Luke 8.17).

With thanks to Maria, whose trust carried me throughout, and to the Revd Dr David Hilborn for his encouragement.

**‘D’un usage de la donation en théologie’:
The Question of Revelation through the
Prism of Givenness in the Phenomenological
Work of Jean-Luc Marion.**

*‘Le don réduit se performe de lui-même, avec une liberté inconditionnée...’
Jean-Luc Marion.¹*

To Jean-Georges Gantenbein.

¹ Marion, ‘Esquisse d’un concept phénoménologique du sacrifice’, in *Archivio di Filosofia*, 2008, Vol. 76, No. 1/2, IL SACRIFICIO (2008), p. 14.

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INTRODUCTION

§1. The Question of Revelation – The Question that Questions

Can a revelation be ‘said’? Can any tongue, any rationale (*logos*), utter anything about ‘[w]hat no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived’ (1 Cor. 2.9, NRSV)? In the face of such a question, the force of propositional discourse – a ‘saying something about something (*legein ti kata tinos*)’² – seems very weak and the art of rhetoric equally vain. Besides, why has it become so widely accepted that the content of revelation should be ‘proposable’ and thus presentable? At first sight, is it not rather the profound incapacity to speak of what was not made by human’s hands that has been the experience of those who were nevertheless entitled to speak it out (Mark 16.8)? How shall we speak of what is not made by us and yet is not done without us? Perhaps that ‘whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent’.³ This conclusion would certainly be logically appropriate for a poor concept of revelation that a particular rationale would have already reduced to its logicity. But would that which simply follows a preestablished logic, whether formal or historical, still deserve the name ‘revelation’? In fact, if a revelation was measured by its logic in regard to a *logos* other than its own, would it not *always* appear illogical and thus remain, if not a bad one, at least a strange and contradictory player on the language game field? But perhaps, as its name suggests, revelation points out to an anterior effectivity that does not pertain to the possibilities of any ‘logos’ known *a priori*, such that ‘[w]hat no eye has seen... God *has prepared* for those who love him.’ (1 Cor. 2.9, NRSV).⁴

However, if the first aporia raised in regard to propositional discourse seems to ease off here, it is only to give way to a greater one. As Jean-Luc Marion points out, what has been termed ‘negative theology’ not only tries to express an ‘inexpressible advent (*avènement inexprimable*)’ but also claims to ‘experience the unexperienceable (*l’inexpérimentable*)’ so as to amount to the doubly incongruous task of ‘expressing the unexperienceable inasmuch as inexpressible’.⁵ This greater aporia, that reinforces the difficulty of the question of revelation, nonetheless frees language – and what was understood as non-language (*e.g.* silence) also – from its bondage to propositional discourse towards the limitless possibilities of expression. Here opens at once the dialogical horizon of language that takes it from a ‘saying something *about* something’ toward a ‘speaking *to* someone’; and ultimately a revelation would perfectly achieve this dialogical horizon in communion: receiving a *logos* from *elsewhere*. Thus, a

² ‘*Protasis...esti logos kataphatikos ê apophatikos tinos kata tinos.*’, Aristotle, ‘*Analutica proteron A*’, in *Aristotelis Opera Editit Academia Regia Borusica* (Berlin: Georgium Reimerum, 1831), §1, lines 7-8; See Heidegger’s comment on Aristotelian *logos* and *legein*, *Heraclitus*, trans. Julia Goesser Assaiante and S. Montgomery Ewegen (United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), p. 163.

³ “...whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent”, Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logic-philosophicus* (London: Routledge, 1974), p. 3.

⁴ Our emphasis. Citation of Isaiah 64.4: ‘...no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.’ (NRSV).

⁵ *Le visible et le révélé* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), pp. 119-120.

revelation would not so much deliver a set of propositions than deliver the tongue toward a ‘speaking to God’ in the forms of expression that we commonly term ‘adoration’ and ‘prayer’. A simple observation confirmed the extended possibility of language when Pascal saw that even silence, though it does not give any proposition, remains infinitely effective (expressive) when left to another’s judgement.⁶ To a greater extent, when it comes to revelation, this paradox could well be true, that the greater the silence, the greater the noise, according to this emphatic declaration that ‘...if these were silent, the stones would shout out’ (Luke 19.40, NRSV); there is nothing louder than silence, and noise must cover its noise, hence why ‘[t]he only thing that consoles us for our miseries is diversion...’⁷

Another question gives further confirmation of the difficulty in thinking of a concept of revelation. How could anything or anyone say that which we would not believe even if we were told (Hab. 1.5)? In other words, who could speak that which is all the more unspeakable insofar as it is unthinkable? The aporia of language is preceded by the aporia of the thinkability of revelation. At the end of the road where we stand without method, an ultimate way perhaps opens – that of a desperate call towards *another*: ‘Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?’ (Psalm 24.3, NRSV) That which was never said before and that no language could ever conceive, perhaps more originally and foremost, *appears* (‘Look... and see!’, Hab. 1.5, NRSV). Here we find Wittgenstein again with this brilliant insight among the closing lines of the *Tractatus*: ‘it gives indeed the unutterable. It *shows* itself, it is [what is] mystical.’⁸ If this is so, it would be necessary to speak from what we have seen and heard, and even touched (1 John 4.1-3); and only from what has itself been revealed, will it be possible to speak, according to the principle that ‘God reveals himself...’⁹ From what ‘we have seen and heard’, it will not only be possible to speak, but it will be impossible not to speak (Acts 4.20; John 4.29). A revelation, therefore, more originally, would be a matter of phenomenality according to the principle that the one who speaks, speaks of what he has seen (John 8.38), just as the one who speaks the ‘matters of God (*ta rêmata tou theou*)’ is sent from God (John 3.34). The phenomenality of revelation would therefore have the peculiarity of *not* being constituted in the way of an object – as when ‘it appears to me that...’ – but rather of constituting its phenomenality from its phenomenon as an appearing *showing-itself*.

That revelation is primarily a matter of phenomenality, is not so much a solution as an even greater question, otherwise we would have so far simply stated the obvious. For if revelation asks the question of its phenomenality, it is only to reinforce its impossibility. Not only is revelation unspeakable, but a revelation, strictly speaking, would have to contradict its own revealability to appear as such. As a

⁶ See Pascal, *Pensées* (Genève: Ferni, 1978), Brunschvigg: 105 [134]: ‘si ce n’est que ce silence n’y fasse aussi son effet’.

⁷ ‘*Divertissement...*’, Pascal, *Pensées*, Br: 143 [217]. We used the translation of W. F. Trotter, Pascal, *Thoughts*, translated by W. F. Trotter (New York: PF Collier and Son, 1910), Section II, 171, p. 64.

⁸ ‘Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies zeigt sich, es ist das Mystische.’, Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.522 (p. 161).

⁹ ‘Gott offenbart sich. Er offenbart sich durch sich selbst. Er offenbart sich selbst.’, Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947), I/1: p. 296, and also: ‘Offenbarung wird von keinem Anderen her wirklich und wahr, weder in sich noch für uns. Sie ist es in sich und für uns durch sich selber.’ (p. 322).

phenomenal possibility, a revelation would be nothing less than an effectivity by-passing possibility – *i.e.* an impossible effectivity. From the immanence of its appearing, the phenomenon of revelation would operate a critic of the *Kritik*, as *the* phenomenon that breaks forth as the accomplishment and negation of all impossibility, thus opening all possibilities (or the possibility of unconditionality). Ultimately, the revelation *per excellence*, the revelation of Christ, perfectly accomplishes the phenomenality of revelation that reveals all phenomena to itself, according to the principle that ‘nothing is hidden (*krupton*) that will not be disclosed (*phaneron*), nor is anything secret (*apokruphon*) that will not become known and come to light (*phaneron*)’ (Luke 8.17, NRSV).¹⁰

The crux of the aporia is now at hand as we begin to see the radicality of the phenomenon of revelation. Here perhaps opens the most patent and original question for us as we seek to question the phenomenon of revelation. The truth is that the question of revelation is not so much a question that we ask as it is a question that asks *me*. Were *I* to ask the question, would *I* not immediately cancel all possibilities of revelation? If a revelation leaves *me* unaffected, does it still deserve its name? Therefore, all questioning of revelation is necessarily radical and was *before* I was. When calling revelation to the trial of reason, in a subtle reversal, the seats change so as to find reason on trial itself under the (dazzling) light of revelation that reveals all things, including myself to myself. When it comes to the question of revelation, revelation asks the questions. The phenomenon of revelation summons myself before *me* – as “a man who told me everything that I ever did” (John 4.19) – and *calls* me by name (Isaiah 43.1). From the question of revelation, that returns all questions to the one it reveals, opens the grounds of response – the question is now *me* in question: ‘*Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio*’.¹¹ The call is seen in the response to the extent that the event of revelation gives its name to those it calls. Paradoxically, the response to revelation precedes all questions: ‘...the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart...’ (Deuteronomy 30.14)

This quick overview of the aporia raised by the question of revelation is enough to measure the difficulty of the task of a phenomenal approach to revelation. It is this task that Marion undertakes to its end in his book *D’ailleurs, la révélation*. Our task will be to follow Marion in the long ‘odyssey’ that led to this book and began decades before its publication. It will be necessary to understand as rigorously as possible how Marion’s construction of a strictly phenomenological concept of givenness enables first the freeing of phenomenality from its metaphysical constitution and how it thus opens the possibility of a phenomenal concept of revelation. In this way we must understand with Marion that a phenomenal approach to revelation is also a contribution to a critical history of the metaphysical constitution of its concept and the various forms it has taken throughout.¹² The early state of phenomenology in France and Marion’s philosophical debuts seem a good place to start (§§2-4). This way, we will become familiar

¹⁰ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, back cover.

¹¹ Augustine, *Confessiones*, in *Patrologia Latina*, Tomus 32: Liber IV, Caput IV, 9, cited in Marion, *Certitudes négatives* (Paris: Grasset, 2010), p. 35 (more broadly, see I, §3).

¹² See Jean-Luc Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation* (Paris: Grasset, 2020), subtitle: ‘Contribution à une histoire critique et à un concept phénoménal de révélation.’ (p. 5).

with Marion's main intellectual influence and some notions within phenomenology that will soon become problems to address. In this light, we will then be able to approach some of Marion's early engagements on the phenomenological scene as well as an encounter that has not been without consequence for what we have termed Marion's 'counterapproach' to phenomenology (§§5-7). If we have opted for this term, it is partly for his rather unique approach to Husserl's phenomenology (§10) but also for his inflexible intention to pursue the phenomenological project whilst reversing all previously established phenomenality with the formulation of the saturated phenomenon (§12). The end of the first chapter will open onto the need to more radically undertake the concept of givenness which neither Husserl nor Heidegger explored to its fullest potential, namely the saturated phenomenon or pure phenomenon as a phenomenon *showing-itself*. Givenness will then open the way towards a phenomenal concept of revelation (§8). Since any rigorous concept invites one to confront it with the very realness and corporality of a phenomenal given, the phenomenon of the gift will have to be discussed and debated with the rigour that phenomenology imposes, that is in reducing all transcendences to the immanence of the giving intuition (§9). Marion points to the fact that there are phenomena that are not reducible to the phenomenal horizon of metaphysics. These phenomena appeal to another rationality that nonetheless does not so much decrease or cancel the possibility of their phenomenalisation but rather increases it in the horizon of givenness that paradoxically makes them invisible to the mind that would want to see and thus foresee them from their self-determined standpoint. These invisible phenomena to metaphysics can be described and then formalised in reducing them to the givenness in them (§§10-12). On the basis of a rigorous understanding of the phenomenon as *showing-itself-giving-itself*, we will look more closely at the phenomenon of revelation as the occurrence of the highest degree of givenness, namely, as the phenomenon manifesting most fully the *elsewhere* from which and in which it gives itself (§13). Overall, we will see how the question of revelation finds phenomenological significance when elaborated along the guiding thread of givenness, *i.e.* along the phenomenality that its given phenomena inaugurate from themselves in the immanence of their appearing.

Our hope is to show how Marion's concept of revelation may be relevant to the continuation of both philosophy and theology and all subsequent discourse that aims to be conceptually and phenomenologically rigorous. Finally, every good work seeks to provide concepts that nurture and continue a philosophical and theological discourse toward the highest and sole rigour of things, for only 'things' properly 'happen to me in person' – 'These are not appearances, but apparitions, that surge from an unseen trap of shadow, that at once or almost immediately gather and fix, and constitute themselves as things, things of the world, the one that determines my life and enables me to belong.'¹³

¹³ '...car mes sens ne cessent de recevoir, comme un possible qui jamais ne se répète... des choses qui m'adviennent en personne [...]. Il ne s'agit pas d'apparences, mais d'apparitions, qui surgissent d'une bouche d'ombre invue, qui aussitôt ou presque se réunissent, se fixent, et se constituent en choses, les choses du monde, celui qui détermine ma vie et me permet d'habiter.' Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 1. The 'rigour of things' seems to recall, as a correlate, the 'lucidity' to which Levinas appealed (Levinas, *Totalité et Infini : Essai sur l'extériorité* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1992), 'Preface', p. 5).

CHAPTER I

FRENCH PHENOMENOLOGY AND MARION'S COUNTERAPPROACH: TOWARD A THOUGHT OF GIVENNESS

§2. The Mixed Influence of Husserl and Heidegger in France

In the second half of the twentieth century, the phenomenological thought of Husserl and Heidegger settled definitely in France and reconfigured thoroughly its academic landscape.¹⁴ The introduction of phenomenology in France is legitimately credited to some of its earliest representatives in France such as Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Ricœur, Michel Henry and perhaps Sartre on the margins.¹⁵ Each of these early figures hold at least in part a somewhat symbolic status in virtue of their respective phenomenological projects, that all stemmed from their own rereading and reinterpretation of Husserl and of Heidegger as his main counterpoint.¹⁶ It is within this tension – that is symptomatic of phenomenology's non-dogmatic foundation – that French phenomenologists have to progress. Hence, Philippe Capelle does well to remind us that there is not *a* French phenomenology as if one could talk of one particular and uniform school of thought.¹⁷ On the contrary, phenomenology in France has always been multiform and is probably better described as a movement for which it can be very hazardous to risk a definition. Perhaps this early approximation made by Heidegger, although quite elusive, remains one of the most appropriate and fundamental for phenomenology: 'Our elucidations of the preliminary concept of phenomenology show that its essential character does not consist in its *actuality* as a philosophical "movement." Higher than actuality stands *possibility*. We can understand phenomenology solely by seizing upon it as a possibility.'¹⁸ The reversal of Aristotle's metaphysical principle that

¹⁴ See the sharp and concise analysis of Jean-Claude Monod, 'Introduction', *Revue germanique internationale* (13, 2011), pp. 5-13.

¹⁵ Sartre's 'L'existence précède l'essence' was criticised by Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit* says 'Die "Substanz" des Menschen ist die Existenz (S. 117, 212, 314)', Martin Heidegger, 'Brief über den Humanismus (1946)', in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), Gesamtausgabe Band 9: p. 329.

¹⁶ Philippe Capelle, 'Qu'est-ce que la "phénoménologie française"?', *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* (43/1, 2007), pp. 55-73, p. 61; See also Marion, *The Rigor of Things: Conversations with Dan Arbib* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), p. 72: 'Sartre and Merleau-Ponty each seem to me to be first of all commentators on *Being and Time* and *Ideas II*. Henry and Levinas answer each other because each in his way responds to Husserl.'

¹⁷ Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 59.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of N-Y Press, 1996), §7, p. 34, cited by Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 55; In contrast, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by W. D. Ross and J. A. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), Book IV (Θ), Chapt. 8, 1049b10: 'To all such potency, then, actuality is prior both in formula and in substance; and in time it is prior in one sense, and in another not.' (see also Marion's comment in Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 17).

phenomenology operates certainly marks the ambition of its project, namely a 'breakthrough' opening a 'principally new philosophical method' and a 'beginning' rather than an 'end' for philosophy.¹⁹ But as much as the ambition to reverse metaphysics' core principle marks a new beginning, it certainly also marks its fundamental indeterminateness, because the liberation of possibility from effectivity entails that phenomenology stands *in principle* without – and thus *prior to* – cause (*aitia*) and finality (*telos*). This properly contradicts the epistemology and ontology enclosed in metaphysics understood as onto-theology.²⁰ In short and rather paradoxically, the metaphysical non-foundation of phenomenology can be said to be its foundation, at least in intention.

Both Husserl and Heidegger agree that phenomenology offers the possibility of overcoming ontology in its narrow definition, which could not offer a 'science of being in the absolute sense' but only 'regional ontologies' or only 'regions of Being' (*Seinsbezirke*).²¹ With this ambition to posit itself prior to ontological judgements, it can be argued that phenomenology holds essentially the place of philosophy in the twentieth century.²² The ambition is in the 'return' as opened by the 'to the things themselves'.²³ And this was to be accomplished through the *reduction* (*epochê*), that aims to perform this reconduction (*Rückführung*) to the things themselves.²⁴ It is phenomenology's only *modus operandi*, a counter-

¹⁹ 'My *Logical Investigations* were my "break-through", not an end but rather a beginning.', Husserl, 'Foreword to Second German Edition, Volume I (1913)' in Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, translated by J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001), Vol. I: p. 3; 'une méthode philosophique principiellement nouvelle et [...] une philosophie qui est elle-même d'un type entièrement nouveau', Husserl, 'Lettre de Husserl à Paul Welch, 17-21 Juin 1933', translated by Claudia Serban and Natalie Depraz, *Alter* (28, 2020), §3; Jean-Luc Marion and Guy Planty-Bonjour, eds., *Phénoménologie et métaphysique* (Paris: PUF, 1984), p. 7, cited in Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 68.

²⁰ For the onto-theo-logical definition of metaphysics, see Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), Gesamtausgabe Band 11: '...gründet Sein das Seiende, begründet das Seiende als das Seiendste das Sein.', p. 75 ('Die onto- theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik', p. 51-79); for Marion's analysis of this text see Marion, *Le Visible et le Révélé*, pp. 78-80.

²¹ See respectively: (i) Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), *Husserliana* II: pp. 22-23, cited in Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et donation*, Quadriga 1st ed. (Paris: PUF, 2015), p. 74; (ii) Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie (Ideen I)*, Karl Schuhmann, ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), *Husserliana* III/1: §153 and particularly p. 356[320]; (iii) Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), p. 22, and §6 more generally. For more on the relationship between Phenomenology and ontology in Husserl, see Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §1.

²² 'Pour une part essentielle, la phénoménologie assume, en notre siècle, le rôle même de la philosophie', *Réduction et donation*, p. 5; Husserl, *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy (Ideen I)*, translated by Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Hackett, 2014), p. 7: '...the idea of which is to realize the idea of absolute knowledge, is rooted in pure phenomenology...'; Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, translated by Matthias Fritsch Jennifer and Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 16: 'Phenomenology is not a preliminary science of philosophy but philosophy itself.'; For *contra*, see Jocelyn Benoist, *L'idée de la phénoménologie* (Beauchesne: Paris, 2001), pp. 25ff. But he would still have to concede that philosophy is where thought is dynamically engaged in moments of reinterpretations and contestations. This is indisputably the case for phenomenology which within its own movement satisfies this condition. The question remains open as to whether similar dynamics are at work in what is, essentially, the posterity of Wittgenstein. See Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 68.

²³ 'Judging rationally or scientifically about matters, however, means orienting oneself to the *things themselves* [*Sachen selbst*], or, more precisely, it means *returning* from talk and opinions to the *things themselves*, questioning them as they are *themselves given*, and setting aside all prejudices alien to them.', Husserl, *Ideen I*, §19, p. 41, our emphasis; tr. en., *Ideen I*, p. 35. Note how the *return* implies directly to question these *things themselves* in their *self-giveness*.

²⁴ Marion, *Réduction et donation*, §5 ('Les deux sens de la réduction'), p. 114. We will use the word '*reconduct*' and '*reconduction*' in English as literal translations, respectively, of *reconduire* and *reconduction*. In French, the assonance of the two terms (*re[con]duction*) reflects perfectly in their lexical proximity, their essential correlation.

method rather than a method (*meta-odos*) according to Marion.²⁵ Husserl's breakthrough was to lead the way towards the intentionality of consciousness and reduction.²⁶ Later on, Husserl would be confronted with the problem of 'constitution' (the need for a universal teleological principle) within his theory of intentionality, which exposed the limits of his phenomenology as transcendental idealism.²⁷

In spite of this, Husserl shows the vitality of thought of a genuine philosopher, where the 'end of metaphysics' after Nietzsche opened a space for a philosophical renewal and a liberation of new (or forgotten) modalities of thought. Any genuine thinking must, as he said, be preceded by and proceed from what can be termed a Cartesian moment: 'First, anyone who seriously intends to become a philosopher must "once in his life" withdraw into himself and attempt, within himself, to overthrow and build anew all the sciences that, up to then, he has been accepting.'²⁸ If all philosophers after Descartes must reinterpret his writings for themselves,²⁹ it remains certainly the case in contemporary French philosophy, now with this more express requirement that they must also take up position from within the *hiatus* opened by Heidegger's dissent with his master Husserl.³⁰

Husserl's non-dogmatic basis and the long 'ascesis' of the phenomenological method is certainly what led to the pluralism of positions within the posterity of phenomenology: 'the structure of the master's work implied that there would not be a Husserlian orthodoxy.'³¹ But in philosophy, the quality of thought is not so much measured by its coherence as by the possibilities it opens.³² Differing

The reduction, in the two senses of the term is both a restriction and a reconduction to givenness: 'the reduction reduces to nothing else than givenness – it reconducts to it only and above all to its benefit. The reduction exerts therefore the two meanings that to which it hints (*la réduction ne réduit jamais qu'à la donation – ne reconduit qu'à elle et surtout à son profit. La réduction excerce ainsi les deux sens que l'on peut y entendre*)', Jean-Luc Marion, *Étant Donnée*, Quadrige 2nd ed. (Paris: PUF, 2013), §1, p. 26. It is Heidegger who first establishes the equivalence: 'Für uns bedeutet die phänomenologische Reduktion die Rückführung des phänomenologischen Blickes...', Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), Gesamtausgabe Band 24: §5, p. 29.

²⁵ Marion, *Étant donné*, I, §1, pp. 10-16 ('Une contre-méthode').

²⁶ Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, p. 84.

²⁷ The aristotelian 'God' of Husserl could well be this last (idolatrous and ideal) principle that would enable to found the mediation of *ego*'s work (teleology, transcendentale subjectivity) within the *ego* itself and thus declaring the autonomy of the *ego*, *i.e.* the absolute consciousness of which the entelechy is 'God', Jocelyn Benoist, 'Husserl : au-delà de l'onto-théo-logie ?', *Les études philosophiques*, 1991, No. 4 (PUF), pp. 438sq.; 'Thus the supreme culmination of the problem of the phenomenological philosophy is the question of the 'principle' of the teleology concretely comprised in its universal structures. (*C'est ainsi que le couronnement suprême de la problématique de la philosophie phénoménologique est la question du « principe » de la téléologie comprise concrètement dans ses structures universelles.*)', Husserl, 'Lettre...', *art. cit.*, §8.

²⁸ Husserl, *Cartesian meditations: an introduction to phenomenology*, translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1999), p. 2. See László Tengelyi, 'La philosophie comme ouverture du monde', translated by Guillaume Fagniez, *Les études philosophiques*, 2016/1, No. 116 (PUF), pp. 123-126.

²⁹ Among the most important: Pascal, Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, etc., Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, pp. 41sq.

³⁰ 'la phénoménologie française ou plus exactement, les phénoménologies françaises sont inintelligibles si elles ne sont pas rapportées d'abord et essentiellement à la rupture entre Husserl et Heidegger.', Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 60.

³¹ 'La structure de l'œuvre du maître impliquait qu'il n'y eut pas d'orthodoxie husserlienne', Paul Ricœur, *À l'école de la phénoménologie*, édition de Poche (Paris: VRIN, 2004), p. 182[156]. Also cited from another source by Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 56.

³² 'As soon as a sentiment rises to the tonality of fire, as soon as it is exposed [...] to the metaphysics of fire, we can be sure that it will accumulate a sum of opposites.', Gaston Bachelard, *La psychanalyse du feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), p. 188. In this regard, a parallel can be drawn between thought and the sublime, see Longinus,

emphases on the Logical Investigations have given scope for fruitful philosophical discussions, e.g. between Derrida and Marion. Marion will notably explore the inner tensions at play in phenomenology by expanding on the principle of principle, §24 of the *Ideen I*, where the phenomenological equivocality is contained in a nutshell.³³

Throughout the years the divide grew between Husserl and his closest disciple. The principle of non-presupposition certainly offered a unique start to phenomenology as method, aiming to reduce the knowledge of objects to their intentionality in consciousness.³⁴ However, it was in itself pragmatically acceptable only to a certain extent, i.e. until one turned the question of the intentionality of Being into the Being of intentionality – which is what Heidegger in fact did. Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, despite or perhaps in virtue of being an incomplete work,³⁵ contains fewer detours and hesitations than Husserl's cautious and slow elaboration of his transcendental phenomenology, whose ascesis had been progressively conquered through a 'method of "phenomenological reduction"'.³⁶ Heidegger showed more 'intellectual energy' than Husserl at a time when the latter had 'low self-confidence'.³⁷ The distance that Heidegger took from his master is symptomatic of Husserl's struggle to generate a consensus of interpretations around his writings – most of his life, he deplored the misunderstandings of his concepts.³⁸ Whereas for Husserl, the method (the *reduction*) highlights the intentionality of the Being of the region of pure consciousness, for Heidegger phenomenology becomes a method towards the Being of being (ontology).³⁹ Whereas for Husserl, phenomenology does not need ontology since it is preoccupied with beings as such, for Heidegger, it is rather the opposite: phenomenology becomes

On the Sublime, in Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, *Classical Literary Criticism*, translated by T.S. Dorsch (London: Penguin Books, 1965), Chapter 33 ('Superiority of Flawed Sublimity to Flawless Mediocrity'), p. 143.

³³ See Marion's analysis, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, chapt. III, 4, pp. 84ff.

³⁴ '...dem Prinzip der Voraussetzungslosigkeit. [...] den strengen Ausschluß aller Aussagen, die nicht phänomenologisch voll und ganz realisiert werden können.', Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), Husserliana XIX/1: Einleitung §7, p. 24, cited in Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 84.

³⁵ Heidegger often referred to his intention of a second volume for *Sein und Zeit* which never appeared in the end. Husserl confirms it in a letter to Alexander Pfänder in regard to Heidegger: '...he [Heidegger] referred me to his future second volume [of *Sein und Zeit*]', Husserl, 'January 6, 1931, to Pfänder', translated by Burt C. Hopkins, in Edmund Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–1931)* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), p. 23.

³⁶ 'To turn off previous habits of thinking in their entirety, to recognize and tear down the mind's barriers in which those habits envelop the horizon of our thinking, and then to apprehend, with complete freedom of thinking, the genuine problems, the philosophical problems that need to be posed in a completely new way, problems that only the horizon freed of barriers on all sides makes accessible to us—these are hard, exacting demands. [...] We shall proceed from the natural standpoint, from the world as it stands opposite us, [...]. We shall then develop a method of "phenomenological reductions." Adhering to this method allows us to set aside the barriers to knowledge that are essentially part of every natural manner of research', Husserl, *Ideen I*, pp. 4-5 ('Introduction').

³⁷ Husserl, 'January 6, 1931, to Pfänder', in *op. cit.*, pp. 480sq.

³⁸ '...the frequent misinterpretations of my Logical Investigations...', *Ideen I*, p. 7; The confusion over the phenomenological and eidetic reduction led to mistaking Husserl for a Platonist, Thomas Sheenan, 'Introduction', in Husserl, *Psychological...*, p. 30. See also, 'neo-Kantian critic have discerned in *Ideen* a mix of inconsistent platonic realism and subjective idealism... ([*les critiques néo-kantiens ont cru discerner dans les Ideen un mélange inconsistant de réalisme platonicien et d'idéalisme subjectif*]', Ricœur, 'Introduction du traducteur', in Husserl, *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie*, translated by Paul Ricœur (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p. xxvii; other mistakes of interpretation have also been made on account of the different meanings of 'consciousness' (p. xxvi).

³⁹ Marion, *Réduction et donation*, pp. 80-81.

method towards the truth of Being (*Fundamentalontologie*⁴⁰), i.e. 'phenomenology upholds the title of ontology because it moves from beings towards Being.'⁴¹ He had the boldness to assert that the phenomenology of Husserl was still non- (or not yet) phenomenological – 'phenomenological by intention only (*vermeintlich*)'.⁴² Heidegger's confidence was at its height and he saw Husserl's critique as confirmation that he had advanced phenomenology further than his master.⁴³ In effect, he sought to free phenomenology from its own impediment, namely the unresolved and unaddressed question of the transcendental ego and of its constitution. This question will be at the heart of Heidegger's *Daseinsanalyse*.⁴⁴ Phenomenology would not ultimately reconduct to the things themselves but to their phenomenality. It is crucial to understand that Heidegger reopens here the paradox of apparition that initially motivated phenomenology, that is the immanent equivocality of phenomenality itself – i.e. the difference between the appearance (*Erscheinung*) and the appearing (*Erscheinendem*).⁴⁵ Heidegger argues that 'the primary question of Husserl is absolutely not the question of the character of Being (*caractère d'être*) of consciousness',⁴⁶ and it is indeed this question, the *Seinsfrage*, that phenomenology must undertake, because phenomenology is after all not so much about the 'return to the things themselves' as it is about the 'traditional idea of philosophy'. The phenomenology of Husserl 'goes back to the things themselves, but only to a certain point' (the being-object).⁴⁷ The aim of Heidegger is therefore to reverse the ideal of an absolute science as conquered by intentionality and reduction in order that they might instead contribute to disclosing the *alêtheia* of Being through a questioning of the (mode of) phenomenality of this Being of intentionality (the *Dasein* as *in-der-Welt-sein*).⁴⁸ In short, for Heidegger, phenomenology opens the ontological difference between Being and beings.⁴⁹

⁴⁰ Heidegger, 'Brief über den Humanismus', in *op. cit.*, p. 357.

⁴¹ 'Tandis que pour Husserl la phénoménologie rend caduque l'ontologie parce qu'elle se préoccupe, à sa place et mieux que cette dernière, de l'étant, pour Heidegger, la phénoménologie relève le titre d'ontologie parce qu'elle déplace des étants jusqu'à l'être.', Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, p. 82.

⁴² Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), Gesamtausgabe 20: §13, p. 178, cited in Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §2, p. 87.

⁴³ Heidegger and Jaspers, 'May 24, 1926', in Walter Biemel and Hans Saner, eds. *Briefwechsel 1920-1963* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), p. 64.

⁴⁴ In a letter to Husserl, Heidegger writes: '...the mode of Being of the human *Dasein* harbors within itself the possibility of transcendental constitution (...daß die *Seinsart des menschlichen Daseins...gerade in sich die Möglichkeit der transzendentalen Konstitution birgt*)', Heidegger, 'October 22, 1927', in Edmund Husserl, Walter Biemel, ed. *Phänomenologische Psychologie: Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), Husserliana IX: p. 601.

⁴⁵ '...fordert innerhalb der Immanenz eine Unterscheidung zwischen Erscheinung und Erscheinendem.', Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, p. 11, line 21; 'Der Terminus Erscheinung ist freilich mit Äquivokationen beschwert', Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), Husserliana XIX/2: Beilage 5, p. 766; Marion, *Réduction et donation*, pp. 82sq., pp. 94-97.

⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Prolegomena*, *op. cit.*, §20, p. 147, cited in Marion, *Réduction et donation*, p. 84, translation ours.

⁴⁷ Marion, *Réduction et donation*, p. 86, translation ours.

⁴⁸ See Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §2, p. 87: 'Method for itself – transgression of itself up to its own intention that is named : the Being of the intentional. (*Méthode [phénoménologie] pour elle-même – transgression d'elle-même, jusqu'à sa propre intention, qui se nomme : l'être de l'intentionnel.*)'

⁴⁹ 'Between Husserl and Heidegger, at once is played the difference between being and Being. (*Entre Husserl et Heidegger, d'emblée la différence se joue avec la différence entre l'étant et l'être.*)', Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §2, p. 82.

Having gathered some elements of Heidegger's subversive undertaking of Husserl's phenomenology, we are now able to see how 'this rupture by which the transcendental subjectivity is poured onto the horizon of a radical ontology and on the intentionality subverted to the call of Being, was not only influential, but constitutes a *paradigm* for a comprehensive entry into all history of French phenomenology, from Levinas, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Ricœur, Henry and Derrida, up to Maldiney, Richir, Marion, Franck, Chrétien and Lacoste.'⁵⁰

§3. A First Encounter

It is in this profound and yet dynamic rupture that Marion will make his debut as a philosopher, as will be the case with all those of his generation who studied in a time where Heideggerian influence in the academy was at its height in France. The first great philosophical influence that Marion received was in his first year of preparatory class (*hypokhâgne*) at the *Lycée Condorcet* where he was taught by Jean Beaufret, an eminent reader and friend of Heidegger. If the introduction of Heidegger's concept in France goes indisputably to the first generation of French phenomenologists (Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Levinas), it must be said however that Jean Beaufret was without ambiguity Heidegger's first ambassador or representative in France, in the sense that of him can be said that he was truly 'Heideggerian' in the fullest sense of the word. Jean Beaufret was neither a critic of nor a commentator on Heidegger.⁵¹ In many ways and despite – or maybe on the contrary, thanks to – his rather rare works on Heidegger, Beaufret was the first one who did not speak so much *about* Heidegger as he *spoke* Heidegger. He was attuned to and in tune with his thought, he spoke *his* language, and was thinking with him. What is striking about Beaufret is that he was Heidegger's best follower by rather choosing to think in his method than simply to talk of methodology.⁵² This is the reason why this first encounter on Marion's path was so impactful and remarkable. In hindsight, Marion realised that he had been more influenced by Heidegger through Beaufret, whom he had never mentioned in class, than he probably could have been through any commentaries, or perhaps even through reading Heidegger's own writings:

⁵⁰ 'Cette rupture par quoi la subjectivité transcendantale est reversée sur l'horizon d'une ontologie radicale et l'intentionnalité subvertie à même l'appel de l'être, ne fut pas seulement influente, elle constitue un *paradigme* pour une entrée compréhensive dans toute l'histoire de la phénoménologie française...', Capelle, *art. cit.*, p. 60, emphasis ours.

⁵¹ The introduction of Heidegger in France by Jean Beaufret is directly assumed by Marion in *The Rigor of Things*, p. 8, we must read it as him being the first representative of Heidegger in France. On the distinctive role played in France by the 'teachers' of Heidegger and the main phenomenologists in France, *i.e.* the 'commentators', see Pierre Jacerne, 'The Thoughtful Dialogue Between Martin Heidegger and Jean Beaufret: A New Way of Doing Philosophy', in David Pettigrew, ed., *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception* (New York: SUNY Press, 2008), p. 59ff.: 'Jean Beaufret did not introduce Heidegger to France, he was neither his commentator nor his mediator.'; see also, Dominique Janicaud, 'Towards the end of the "French Exception"?', in *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception*, pp. 29ff, for a more global overview of Heidegger's reception in France.

⁵² 'In other words, it is not a question of speaking about something. What configures Heidegger's discourse is the way in which Being opens in a clearing as world, and that is what we must seek to see and to hear, acquiring thereby a new language.', Pierre Jacerne, 'The thoughtful dialogue...', *art. cit.*, pp. 59sq.

'He put Heidegger into our heads, but without citing him. It was more like a direct performance of Heideggerian thought than a course on Heidegger. That is probably why he had such an impact on us.'⁵³

Of the two significant encounters that we have chosen to describe in this chapter, this one happened at a very early stage of Marion's philosophical education, at a time when he was even still debating whether to go down a literary route or a philosophical one. It is not unlikely that Jean Beaufret, besides the influence of some of Marion's friends (Rémi Brague, etc.), contributed to orient his choice towards philosophy.⁵⁴ With this first encounter, Jean-Luc Marion was not only influenced by Heidegger; he had been shaped from the outset into the modality of thinking of Heidegger, even before he read his most significant works.⁵⁵ But maybe even more important and more lasting than the fact that Beaufret taught him Heidegger, was this encounter itself, where Marion had the chance to be in the presence of someone who did not only speak about philosophy (as a historian can do only to a certain extent) but mainly *philosophised* with his students and in front of them – the thinking was happening in class.⁵⁶ This is enough to explain how Beaufret's lectures were so impactful on Marion. But on top of that, a lecture with Beaufret also came with the perhaps equally puzzling experience of having a lecturer that would always and only quote his sources in their original language. Thus Marion understood early that *doing* philosophy was also about discerning the common language ('the *same*', correspondences) that cuts across different tongues: 'Beaufret took at face value the Heideggerian principle of "not telling stories" and to speak only in thinking. [...] he would jumble the chronologies; accordingly, when he demonstrated something, relating a sentence in Kant to a sentence in Descartes and another one in Aristotle, [...] "they are saying the same; not the same thing, but the same.." [...] It implied that philosophers, especially within metaphysics, precisely respond to each other, that they remain in permanent correspondence. This is the correspondence that allows us to do what we call "the history of philosophy," that is to say, to show how metaphysics is unfolded.'⁵⁷ We see here how Marion learned early on that the entry into philosophy is always preceded by the capacity to *do* history of philosophy as something that someone *does*, i.e. by digging out the correspondences, as opposed to someone 'telling stories'.

§4. An Original Intuition

As he recalls it, in the same year as his encounter with Jean Beaufret, a 'simple idea' occurred to Marion whilst walking with a friend in the garden of Luxembourg, on what was to be otherwise a rather ordinary day. The persisting memory of this day marks however the force of impact of this idea, of this *that* that struck him that day and confirmed itself as an 'event' to which he would not stop 'going back' over the course of his intellectual journey. As he was walking among the trees, Marion was 'struck' by

⁵³ Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8sq.

⁵⁶ In the case of speaking about philosophy or doing history, one should speak of studying the history of ideas as opposed to the history of philosophy, this latter being relevant only insofar as it guides a genuine philosophical intention. On the link between history of philosophy and philosophy, see *Ibid.*, pp. 139ff.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 7sq.

this idea that “the question of Being” was not the first question, but that it is raised, like a reflection (*reflet*) — a reflection more than an effect — from a more primordial situation, which we could call, let's say, creation.’⁵⁸ In other words, Marion sees that the question of Being that determines beings ontologically is preceded by something more primordial, something that – given its indetermination and especially given its indifference in regard to Being – it resolves, at first and quite broadly, to name ‘creation’. The primary determination is not therefore that phenomena manifest beings. Nothing indicates that that which shows itself in phenomenality or that which gives itself has *to be* in order to show itself. Whether ‘creation’ *is* or *is not* is irrelevant toward its phenomenality because of its anteriority – ‘Being comes after an entirely different event; it comes as its trace, its remnant, and its deposit. [...] whether *to be or not to be* is not the first question.’⁵⁹ What matters is *not* that the tree or this friend ‘is’ but rather that they mean something to *me*, *i.e.* that the tree on my right is majestic and that my friend is telling me about last night. That something ‘is’ is not a big deal, what matters is what their existence means. It is no less than Marion's entire world that had been reconfigured around this crucial idea that day. But it would be unfair to ascribe to it too much phenomenological significance as it is not for another decade or so that Marion will decisively turn toward phenomenology with *Réduction et donation* (1989).

No less intriguing is the notion of ‘event’ that the experience of the garden of Luxembourg already points toward. The ‘event’ or ‘what happens’ is what Marion will conceptualise later as one of the four topics of the saturated phenomenon. And a fundamental characteristic of this specific type of phenomenality is its banality. Marion's experience in the garden already prefigures the banality of saturation in some ways. ‘The banality that is open to all, does not equate to frequency, and even sometimes opposes it.’⁶⁰ If the ‘common phenomenality [...] fixes the norm’ of frequency, then, in the age of the multiplication of technical objects, saturated phenomenality would rather be characterised by its exceptionality and rarity.⁶¹ The appearing of a same phenomenon can be twofold depending on the ‘double interpretation, that only depends on the requirements of my always changing relation to them.’⁶² See for example, the phenomenon of three colours perceived in intuition that can either be subsumed under a chosen concept or simply be *seen* as it *arrives* in the artwork (*tableau*), that is, as an intuition that saturates all available concepts: ‘This saturated phenomenon is not to be constituted or understood as an object; one must just confront it, undergo it just as it happens (*il n'y a qu'à s'y confronter, à le subir tel qu'il advient*).’⁶³ Just as in the ‘event’ that Marion underwent, the saturation can occur to everyone without pre-existing conditions. It is rather a matter of *seeing* what is actually given in the appearing, and to receive it for what it gives.

⁵⁸ Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, pp. 1-2, modified.

⁵⁹ *Idem*.

⁶⁰ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 155, our translation (unless otherwise stated).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

This experience of the garden is in fact not without some resemblance to that of other thinkers who can often single out one particular and even foundational 'event' on their own path. This event remains throughout like one's path's original signature, forever guaranteeing its own intrinsic 'originality' as that which characterises it most essentially.⁶⁴ And yet paradoxically, this most essential character that follows in the trace of the 'event' is never inborn – neither one's own nor from one's *ousia* – but is always given from *elsewhere* and depending on something *other*. With that comes this very paradox that my innermost originality – what is most essential to me – is never myself but is radically coming from what I am most estranged from.⁶⁵ Paradoxically, the *elsewhere* would unfold as *intimor meo intimeo*. We will come back to this later.

This partial description of the event prefigures the possibility of more radical ones which may lead to equally radical hermeneutics, in, for example, accounts of conversion. We refer to those of Paul, Augustine, Pascal or Luther – to name just a few.⁶⁶ Long after his memorable walk in the Garden of Luxembourg, Marion would formulate the concept of event within the wider framework of saturated phenomenality, and ultimately look at its radicalisation in the phenomenon of revelation. In fact, Marion's whole *corpus* is overarched by the question of the 'event' understood as 'the approach of presence starting from the present understood as gift'.⁶⁷ This conviction that 'what matters always happens' will remain with Marion throughout. It is from the description of what actually happens, that is from the phenomena themselves, that phenomenology is to be grounded: '[t]his is the way in which rigor is unleashed, but the rigor of things, not what we impose on them or think we can force on them.'⁶⁸ And where phenomenology leads to non-appearing in the ontological difference or *differance*, Marion is convinced that this difference plays from within phenomenality through the figures of the 'event' and 'the gift' in particular. These are not to be traced back to a 'nothing' or *differance* outside phenomenality, but to givenness that defines, from within the immanence of all phenomena, the mode and measure of their appearing (phenomenality).

⁶⁴ An unerasable mark of time in the flesh according to its principle of individuation that is temporality. See Marion, *De surcroît*, Quadrige 1st ed. (Paris: PUF, 2010), pp. 119-120, more broadly see 'Chapitre IV', III and then IV ('La facticité individuante') on the facticity of *my* flesh and the act of taking flesh as individuation.

⁶⁵ See Marion, *Certitudes Négatives*, I, §§2-7, and especially 'La proscription', I, §5. Marion brilliantly exposes that one's *I* is always fundamentally unknown and strange to the *me* which can at most be grasped as the *object-me*.

⁶⁶ Augustine, Confessions, translated by J.G. Pilkington, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Series I* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1855), Vol. I: Confessions, Book IX. See Gaston Boissier, 'Étude d'histoire religieuse : IV. La conversion de Saint Augustin', *Revue des Deux Mondes (1829-1971)*, Vol. 85, No. 1, 1888, pp. 43-69; – we think also of Pascal and the 'night of fire' (The memorial), see Charles Bossut, ed., *Œuvres de Pascal, Discours sur la vie et les ouvrages de Pascal* (Paris : Detune, 1779), t. 1: p. 43-44; the thunder in Erfurt for Luther, see Matthieu Arnold, 'Luther jusqu'en 1517', in Martin Luther, *Les Quatre-Vingt-Quinze Thèses (1517)*, translated by M. Arnold (Strasbourg: Olivetan, 2014), p. 10; etc...

⁶⁷ Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. xii ('Preface').

⁶⁸ *Idem*.

§5. *The Question of Being in Question*

That the existence of a thing – the question of whether it *is* or *is not* – is not any more the primary and ultimate definition of a being, raises immediately the status of the question of Being. By being involved for a short period with the '*Nouveaux philosophes*' Marion was assigned the task, rather advantageous to him of deconstructing Heidegger in the sense of proceeding to an *Abbau*.⁶⁹ This is what he will start with *L'idole et la distance* and complete with *Dieu sans l'être*. Having done this early enabled Marion to progress in phenomenology towards still unexploited possibilities.

Among Marion's peer, Jacques Derrida too was occupied with deconstructing reminiscences of *Hinterwelt*. In *Supplément de copule*, he argues for a semantic evolution of the copula which eventually led to a lexical crystallisation in the substantive form of 'to be' (*Être*) as 'being' ([l']*étant*) – showing therefore how, in European languages, the copula not only ended up having a grammatical function in predication, but also a substantial one, that subsists in *presence* ('being' as *present participle* used as a substantive).⁷⁰ Whereas Derrida explores the correlations of 'being' and 'presence' through their semantic evolution within a specific syntactical system, Marion's idea, however, is concentrated on the side of the percept, namely the given and the giving intuition. Although both Derrida and Marion came to a common junction when addressing the question of the given, their way of coming about it underlined their quite radically opposite approach to phenomenology.⁷¹ We will now address what makes Marion's approach to phenomenology quite unique. We will also understand better how objectness and beingness had at first occupied the forefront of phenomenology before converging toward the problem of the given.

First of all, we must take a short detour towards Husserl's two understandings of the use of the word 'Being' (to be).⁷² On one side, we find the propositional form that is itself an aspect of the categorial form to which the copula belongs. This is the side of categorial judgment. In these, the copula is at work in statements such as 'The paper *is* white'. On the other side and on a level that does not pertain to predication, we find '*the given as such*' (state of affairs). In this case, '*being in the sense of truth is experienced but not expressed*', in the '*adequate perception of truth*'. Whereas the predicative assertion can only achieve partial agreement with the object, the act of self-evidence (truth) is 'the total coincidence of the meaning-intention of our assertion with the percept of the state of affairs itself.' Being is thus applied to the corresponding '*objective correlates*' of truth as 'the rightness of objectifying assertion and meaning'.⁷³ The role of the copula is here reasserted but it is now this notion of '*being in*

⁶⁹ Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Jacques Derrida. 'Le supplément de copule. La philosophie devant la linguistique', *Langages*, n°24, 1971, pp. 14-39.

⁷¹ See Kevin Hart, 'Introduction', in Kevin Hart (ed.), *Counter Experience: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p. 13: 'Marion is more surely in relation with Husserl, more occupied in synthesis of fulness and their possible disappointment.'

⁷² It is only with Heidegger that 'Being' (substantive of the infinitive 'to be') will receive a definitive capital 'B'. Yet, in English, we must always distinguish 'Being' (infinitive-substantive) from 'being' (participle) to reflect the difference between *Sein/sein* and *Seiende*.

⁷³ Husserl, 'Investigation VI', in *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II, Part II: §39, pp. 263-267.

the sense of truth' that will interest Husserl; 'being' is not, insofar as it 'has nothing to do with the real forms of unity which bind objects into more comprehensive objects'. This is in direct resonance with Kant's saying that '*Being is not real predicate*' because 'Being is nothing in the object'.⁷⁴ Two things can be said here of Husserl's phenomenology: (1) the object is the result of a *sense-giving* act, that is of a consciousness oriented intentionally towards its object. The object is always given in percept as the correlative objective content of an intentional act of meaning.⁷⁵ What is present is always present just as we have intended it.⁷⁶ (2) Being and State of affairs (*Sachverhalt*) are the objects of an act of perception or judgement. The phenomenological status of 'Being' in Husserl finds a direct consequence in all subsequent dealing with the question. Marion sums it up briefly and precisely thus: 'I never perceive "sense data" but always already units of meanings (*ensembles de significations*)'.⁷⁷

Now, what is groundbreaking in Husserl is that *neither* perception *nor* judgement are to be accepted as pertaining to a *reflection* on the 'sphere of "inner sense"' ('*logical categories*'): 'the thought of a Judgement fulfils itself in the *inner intuition* of an *actual* judgement.'⁷⁸ This means that Judgement is 'self-evident' ('judgemental intuition') just as 'the state of affairs' on another level 'stands to the *perception* of it'. Prior to reflection, perception and judgement 'must be *experienced*', and it is from this experience that concepts of perception and of judgements can arise or be '*self-given*' to us.⁷⁹ And similarly, 'the concept of Being can arise only when *some being, actual or imaginary, is set before our eyes*. If "being" is taken to mean predicative being, some *state of affairs* must be given to us, and this by way of an *act which gives it, an analogue of common sensuous intuition*.'⁸⁰ The introduction of a given (state of affairs), apparently indifferent to Being because prior to ontological judgement, is telling: 'In perception an object is given to us as having full-bodied existence. We *call* it something which now is, in so far as our percept serves as our basis for judging *that it is*.'⁸¹ But in Husserl, the link is never completely broken as judgement is 'the *becoming aware* of the state of affairs supposed.'⁸² The 'act of presentation' therefore must always be presentable, that is that the state of affairs gives only insofar as it can become self-evident in judgement, *i.e.* objectified. But, that perception and judgement come as 'self-given' remains an important step toward a certain privilege of givenness over Being.

This breakthrough is crucial for Marion and a question is now opened with regard to the purpose of the reduction: 'in reading Husserl, the reduction enables us to authenticate that which, while really given

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, §43, p. 277.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, §39, p. 265.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, §37, p. 261.

⁷⁷ Marion, *La rigueur des choses* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), p. 123; See also, Husserl, 'Investigation VI', in *op. cit.*, §5, pp. 197-198, where intentionality (meaning) remains an independent correlative of intuitive determinations in the noematic sphere: 'This achievement ["complete determinateness" given in intuition] does not entail that a part of the meaning must itself lie in the intuitive sphere', and '*perception is an act which determines, but does not embody meaning.*'

⁷⁸ Husserl, 'Investigation VI', in *op. cit.*, §44, p. 278.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 279sq.

⁸¹ Husserl, 'Investigation V', in *op. cit.*, §28, p. 139.

⁸² Husserl, 'Investigation VI', in *op. cit.*, §44, p. 278.

first, ends up allowing the constitution of the phenomenon or its reconstituting of the object as *object*. But what link does the given maintain with the object?'⁸³ A simple experience of thought is enough to have a glimpse of the relevance of this question: 'no one has ever seen a being straightaway or immediately; we see trees, a lawn, the bars of a window, a house. We always see essences that are already determined, existences that are already identified by essences. To consider the unity of these essences or of these individuals as beings, one must reduce them to what they are not, that is, to a pure and strict being, to the detriment of what they are, namely essences identifying existences.'⁸⁴ The ambition of phenomenology to 'return to the things themselves' is in itself paradoxical. Why would we need to return to them if they were immediately given? 'The supposed immediacy of appearing itself results from an operation, even if just an interpretation.' The need for a return to the things themselves comes from this very paradox that '[t]heir immediacy hence must be gained via mediation'.⁸⁵ Marion's experience in the garden of Luxembourg certainly points toward his later idea that both Husserl's and Heidegger's reductions, respectively to object and to being, were not the best ones to express the intrinsic determinations of the given in itself. Why not seek from then on a way to reduce the given to its givenness, that is to the given *insofar as* given?⁸⁶

§6. *Second Encounter*

Prior to expanding on the question of givenness, we must first mention a second encounter which had a determining impact on the course of Marion's career. This encounter happened years before his decision to pursue a phenomenological route, and yet it has certainly provided him with the right methodology that would later on contribute to his counter approach to phenomenology. Ferdinand Alquié, his professor of philosophy at Sorbonne University, introduced him to a philosophical method that was very much in line with Marion's 'quest for paradoxes that has always guided and motivated [him] in philosophy'.⁸⁷ Marion owes him the capacity 'to have learned how to read a philosophical text, how to take it apart and put it back together, how to translate it, how to verify or to refute it'.⁸⁸ For seven years Marion would follow Alquié's lectures and would be shaped to 'the art and manner of working in the history of philosophy. [...] he really made [him] work and progress. He was an extraordinary reader of texts.'⁸⁹ He pushed Marion to develop a philosophical method that can seem quite counterintuitive or at least diametrically opposed to Gueroult, who thought more conventionally, *i.e.* that in order to make sense of an author one had to systematise him. Alquié, on the contrary, thought completely otherwise: 'Alquié thought that understanding an author amounts to showing how he manages not to be systematic,

⁸³ Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. 74.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75; See *e.g.* Husserl, *Ideen I*, §3, pp. 10ff, on the intuition of essences.

⁸⁵ Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. 73.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75 : 'why the given, such as it appears, would find itself reduced to a different authority than to the given itself.'

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14 and 15.

to abandon expected, foreseeable, and a priori constructions, in order to recognize the things themselves as well as the demands and the flaws behind which they disguise themselves; the apparent contradictions often provide the symptoms of the essential paradoxes. This was a great lesson, for it is sometimes when an author wants to smooth out contradictions with all his might that he stops genuinely thinking. Alquié thus taught us to read the texts with a scrupulous honesty.⁹⁰ This lesson would remain with Marion thereafter. Marion's interest in philosophy has always been fuelled by paradoxes and things untold in texts: 'what is most strange and what basically interests me first in a philosophy has to do with what in it cannot be thought or described and what nevertheless often remains perfectly accessible.'⁹¹ This has been Marion's approach to Heidegger in *Dieu sans l'être*, but first and foremost, it has been the case with Descartes.

Throughout his career, Marion's work has been interwoven with readings and studies on Descartes, from significantly before his first work on phenomenology up to his very recent publication of *Questions cartésiennes III*. Since the beginning he has been applying the rigorous method mentioned above. His work on a translation and interpretation of the *Regulae ad Directionem Ingenii* was the first one. Through this, Marion certainly showed that a text can never be read in enough detail and will never cease telling us things, depending on the approach and scope with which we read it. What was decisive for him was the suggestion of Beaufret that the *Regulae* were to be read as a direct critique of Aristotle's theory of science.⁹² Moreover, Marion found out that most interpretations of Descartes remained confined to a largely unquestioned rapport between Descartes and the Scholastic. Alquié was unaware of Suarez and therefore could not see that Descartes was alluding to him in his *Letters* of 1630. This growing awareness of Suarez' writings eventually shows that one cannot fully appreciate Descartes' intentions without a solid understanding of the late scholastic period, which appeared more and more as to be distinguished from what had so far simply been attached to classic Thomistic positions.⁹³

Marion's first interest in Descartes might not seem immediately relevant to the question of revelation but it certainly played a role in the unique approach that he would later take. Through his reading of Descartes, we see the methodological process that Marion would rigorously apply in all subsequent works. Firstly, we see in Marion's approach that he does not hesitate to return to some important authors, even if it means going against the apparent *status quo* within an intellectual community. It is this same attitude towards the rigour of interpretation along with appropriate knowledge of history that would lead Marion to undertake a new interpretation of Kant, Husserl and Heidegger, which would support his deployment of a phenomenology of givenness. Moreover, Marion's early studies on Descartes proved to have been absolutely indispensable to his undertaking of phenomenology a number of years later. It is Descartes that offered the pivotal point that would not only enable a combined reinterpretation of Kant

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 43sq.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

and Husserl in his light, but also perhaps even the pivotal point that enabled Marion to clearly and without ambiguity locate precisely the often blurred line between metaphysics and phenomenology. 'By reading Descartes [...] one encounters all the great periods of philosophy and all the great philosophies.'⁹⁴ In fact, and this time more to the credit of Beaufret, Marion had learned that a philosopher should 'not only be read under a magnifying glass [...] but also by telescope [...]. One must see him in comparison with distant peers and distant points of reference in order then to measure their differences. [...] In a sense, the great philosophers encounter one another in a direct relationship'.⁹⁵ This is what pushed him to directly put Aristotle and Descartes in conversation with each other, rather than to discuss first the state of the Aristotelian corpus in the 17th century. His study on the *Regulae* was thus made much more fruitful for the intellectual community. Alquié has certainly been decisive too. His constant invective to pay attention to the *Same* reinforced this conviction in Marion, that thinkers are indeed in direct relationship with distant peers. Every thought is in some ways dialogical. One does not think alone. Around a similar time and perhaps more essentially and more concretely, Marion also realised that this 'method', prior to being a method, was primarily a matter of facts, and something real. The 'Spiritual life' was also 'essentially dialogical'. In the prayer of eucharistic adoration, which his friend Maxime Charles introduced him to, Marion could see clearly that 'Someone' was 'here now, before me, infinitely more than me'.⁹⁶

After Descartes, Marion was quite naturally drawn toward Husserl, who quite clearly attempted to be more Cartesian than Descartes himself.⁹⁷ Phenomenology offers the possibility to pursue ways that have been opened by predecessors without having to close them, let alone to leave them.⁹⁸ This is why, after ridding himself of his Heideggerian 'armour', Marion was able to pursue the way opened by Husserl's phenomenology in a less loaded manner than his peers, and at the same time to pursue Husserl's initial ambition further than he himself even dared to. Any good philosopher is first and foremost a good historian of philosophy. In fact, '[o]ne can and must take the history of philosophy as a proof of the historical nature of philosophy itself' and '[i]t is therefore right to maintain that philosophy develops intrinsically and essentially as a history.'⁹⁹ It is primarily in a close return to Husserl's initial project and to what he had left open, that Marion is able to provide both philosophy and theology with concepts within which we now think and often wrestle. Phenomenology seeks not to organise the charge of theology and philosophy for itself, which is what metaphysics attempted in its *ontologia* (onto-theology), nor does it respond to *reason* with absence of reason (*nothingness*) – the temptation of nihilism. Phenomenology seeks to follow *another* rationality, the rationality that unfolds in the immanence of the

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42: '...tell me who Descartes is, and I will tell you the state of philosophy in the era in which you work.'

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁹⁸ *Idem.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

phenomenal given. The rigour of phenomenology (and of thought by extension) concerns and depends on the rigour of things, in that it seeks to reduce phenomena not to a logic of appearing but to the reason of phenomenality, which is a matter of discerning how and how much phenomena give themselves *from* themselves. The field of phenomena is much vaster than any finite reason could constitute.¹⁰⁰ This would lead Marion to establish this last principle for phenomenology: 'as much reduction, as much givenness'.¹⁰¹

§7. Heidegger and the Question of God – the Idea of a Return to Givenness.

With *Dieu sans l'être*, Marion takes early on a decisive step away from Heidegger's conditioning of phenomenology to the question of Being that had been conventionally assumed to be an 'unsurpassable horizon' (*horizon indépassable*).¹⁰²

Heidegger reshaped Husserl's 'return to the 'things themselves' (*die 'Sachen selbst'*)¹⁰³ into a 'backtracking' (*Schritt zurück*) to the Being of beings (*Sein des Seienden*).¹⁰⁴ Heidegger seemed to have indeed convincingly argued that the scientific attitude (including that of Husserl) could only address being in its multiple dimensions if it was standing itself in the nothing¹⁰⁵ – therefore, to question the 'nothing' on which beings stand opens us up to the metaphysical truth, the Being of the questioning being becomes himself the question – 'Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?'¹⁰⁶ This question becomes the foundation of the *Dasein* that reflexively finds itself always already comprised in Being according to this 'wonder of wonders, *that being is*' – the ontological difference is given absolute anteriority as the question of *Dasein* suffices to found beings in Being. Hence, the obverse of Being is the nothing as experienced from the standpoint of beings,¹⁰⁷ which means that every ontic determination must be thought in its constitution starting from the *Dasein*, since it already has a 'sufficient concept' in itself. 'God' is therefore posited in regard to this being (*Dasein*) as 'another' being of which the primary question is 'to know ontologically the relation of the *Dasein* to God.'

Marion will deconstruct, especially in '4 – L'écran de l'Être' (*Dieu sans l'Être*, pp. 58-75), what he discerns to be in Heidegger's thought the conditions of possibility of an idolatry. Heidegger can be content in his 'indecision' toward 'a possibility of Being for God' (*ein mögliches Sein zu Gott*) since he is primarily concerned with 'ontologically interpreting the *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world (*die*

¹⁰⁰ Jean-Luc Marion, *De surcroît*, p. v: 'Il y a plus de phénomènes sous le soleil que la métaphysique, et même la phénoménologie transcendantale, pouvait le laisser paraître.'

¹⁰¹ Marion, *De surcroît*, chapter I.

¹⁰² Jean-Luc Marion, *La rigueur des choses*, p. 130 ; 'a fixed horizon' in the translation of Gschwandtner, Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. 78.

¹⁰³ Husserl, *Ideas I*, §19, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁵ 'Einzig weil das Nichts im Grunde des Daseins offenbar ist, kann die volle Befremdlichkeit des Seienden über uns kommen.', Heidegger, 'Was ist Metaphysik?', in *Wegmarken*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁰⁷ "Dies schlechthin Andere zu allem Seienden ist das Nicht-Seiende. Aber dieses Nichts west als das Sein", Heidegger, 'Nachwort zu: »Was ist Metaphysik?«, in *Wegmarken*, p. 306, and "Das Nichts ist das Nichts des Seienden und so das vom Seienden her erfahrene Sein", Heidegger, 'Vom Wesen des Grundes', in *Wegmarken*, p. 123.

ontologische Interpretation des Daseins als In-der-Welt-sein)'.¹⁰⁸ Thus 'God' too would have to respond to Being in the face of the ontological difference in which 'he' is also inscribed.¹⁰⁹ But this 'implies a suspension; this suspension implies in turn, from an anterior point of view (because it is exterior), an aim that suspends any ontic position; this aim, the *Dasein* performs it, and no term could appear that might not be aimed at nor seen by it.'¹¹⁰ By recognising the conceptual idolatry of Heidegger that went as far as conditioning 'God' (as ontic being) to Being, Marion was able to envisage the possibility of phenomena that might not have to respond to Being, that is, that may not be reducible to the Being of the *Dasein* – that is neither to the disclosure (*erschlossen*) of his Being nor to any of its possibilities (*Möglichkeiten*).¹¹¹ It is no surprise therefore that the being 'God' was the place to start in order to deconstruct Heidegger's determinations of all things to *Dasein*, because God, above all, should be the first one who does not have to answer to Being, and in fact who does not even have to 'be' – 'God can only, without idolatry, give himself to thought (*se donner à penser*) from himself: [*i.e.*] give himself to thought as love, thus as gift; give himself to thought as thought of the gift.'¹¹²

But one does not simply break from a conceptual framework by mere denial of a theory or set of concepts.¹¹³ It was necessary for Marion to carry out Heidegger's project to its limit so as to make his deconstruction successful. Marion tried first to be as Heideggerian as he could, so much so that he may well have gone further than he himself dared to go. After all, to the question: 'is it lawful to posit as identical Being and God?', Heidegger confessed that if he had to write a theology – something that he sometimes contemplated – 'the term of *Being* would not in any case intervene'.¹¹⁴ And maybe more than that, it could be that Marion took this paradox formulated by Heidegger more seriously than himself: 'The more radical philosophy is, the more determinately it is on a path away from God; yet, precisely

¹⁰⁸ Heidegger, 'Vom Wesen des Grundes', in *Wegmarken*, p. 159; see also Marion's development in *Dieu sans l'être*, 4th ed. (Paris: PUF, 2013), p. 67.

¹⁰⁹ See Martin Heidegger, *Die Technik un die Kehre* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1962), p. 45, cited in Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, p. 105.

¹¹⁰ Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, pp. 67sq.

¹¹¹ See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §12. If any such thing is possible – that there might be (be it only as a possibility) a type of phenomenality that may not fall under the unveiling of Being, nor the ontological relation to *Dasein*, then phenomenological rigour seem to impose this question: can we describe any type of phenomena for which their impossibility becomes the condition of their possibility? And conversely that they might be possible only as impossible? Briefly speaking, this two-sided question will be addressed by Marion and Derrida in two equally different ways.

¹¹² Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, p. 75

¹¹³ 'it is always with new concepts that we fight the deficiencies of some preestablished concepts (*c'est toujours avec des concepts nouveaux qu'on combat les déficiences de certains concepts établis*).', Jean Greisch, 'Introduction', in *Dictionnaire de la Philosophie* (Paris: Encyclopaedia Universalis, 2019), p. 7.

¹¹⁴ '...dürfte in ihr das Wort » Sein « nicht vorkommen.', Martin Heidegger, *Seminare* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1978), Gesamtausgabe 15: pp. 436sq., cited in Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, III.2, p. 92 sq.; see also further: '...theology does not need to defend itself before philosophy, for neither does she need to prove or to interpret "Being".', Heidegger, 'Berichte aus der Arbeit der Evangelischen Akademie Hofgeismar', Bd. I, 1954, translated by Jean Greisch, in *Heidegger et la question de Dieu* (Paris: Grasset, 1980), pp. 334-335, cited in Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, p. 93, our translation.

in the radical actualisation of the 'away,' it has its own difficult proximity to God.'¹¹⁵ The death of 'God' in the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics does not close the question of God, on the contrary, it opens it all the more. Because, if anyone, God is certainly the only one able to survive his own death: the 'death of God' is immediately followed by 'the death of the death of God'.¹¹⁶

Such a conclusion is not a mere rhetorical device. It would have been so if the question of 'God' had been *used* as a last resort in an attempt to save the *metaphysica* from its definitive closure. But after Heidegger such dialectic is no longer possible. One has to acknowledge that it is no longer possible for the *metaphysica specialis* (*theologia* in this instance) to back and sustain the *metaphysica generalis* (*ontologia*) and *vice-versa*. Heidegger showed that both of them are established on a common foundation in 'the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics'¹¹⁷ and 'it is a fact that the thought of the foundation, precisely because it can give an account of being in its totality, might as well be denied as foundation. [...] The foundation ensures the legitimacy of metaphysics, but not of itself.'¹¹⁸ In other words, metaphysics gains the principle of identity between the *cogitatio* and its *cogitata* (representations) only to renounce the *ego cogito* an 'effective *sum*'.¹¹⁹ The *ego* (*cogitans*) is never attained by the *cogitare* who knows only objects. To compensate for this lack of foundation, the *cogitatio* becomes the first and last instance as *causa sui* (autonomy) towards its own finality achieved in totality (*mathesis universalis*). All that is, namely objects, are now conscripted to the finite realm of the thinkable (*cogitabile*) and the unity of the *cogitatio* thus becomes the finality of knowledge.¹²⁰

Even under the banner of 'supreme being', 'God' becomes thought of in terms of his knowability, that is insofar as his Being is thinkable and it is the Being of this particular being that is the matter to think. This leads therefore to 'Being' becoming the common foundation for all beings insofar as

¹¹⁵ Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), Gesamtausgabe 61: p. 197. We used the translation of Bret W. Davis, in Bret W. Davis, *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts* (Durham: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), p. 240.

¹¹⁶ '...de la 'mort de Dieu' s'ensuit immédiatement la 'mort de la mort de Dieu' Marion, 'L'impossibilité de l'impossible', in *Archivio di Filosofia*, 2010, Vol. 78, No. 1, pp. 21-36, p. 24; see also, Marion, *Certitudes négatives*, II, §8, p. 93. Marion remarkably encapsulate the paradoxical proximity with God in the 'away' – or the attempt to do away with God – when he describes 'the impossible phenomenon' (§8) of God: 'every conceptual atheism remains regional, [and] thus provisory (*tout athéisme conceptuel reste régional, donc provisoire*)' and 'each refutation refutes itself, since it always refutes, by definition, an inadequate definition of the essence of « God », opening at once the field (*carrière*) to any new possible definition (*chaque réfutation se réfute elle-même, puisqu'elle ne réfute jamais qu'une définition par définition inadéquate de l'essence de « Dieu », ouvrant du même coup la carrière à toute nouvelle définition possible*)' (p. 92).

¹¹⁷ See chapt. 'Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik (1957/57)', in Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*.

¹¹⁸ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 81.

¹¹⁹ Marion, 'Générosité et phénoménologie: Remarques sur l'interprétation du cogito cartésien par Michel Henry', in *Les Études philosophiques*, Janvier-Mars 1988, No. 1, p. 55.

¹²⁰ Kant's formulation of the 'logical prescription' of the principle of reason is as follow: 'to bring to *our* knowledge the highest rational unity possible to us' (*die höchste uns mögliche Vernunftseinheit in unsere Erkenntnis zu bringen*)', Kant, *Kritik, op. cit.*, p. 325, our emphasis). Hence why metaphysics does not so much identify objects with phenomena as it substitutes objects to phenomena and thus rids phenomenality of phenomena by taking away their right to appear.

thinkable (*cogitabile*).¹²¹ Hence, the noematic primacy reestablishes ontology and secures it all the more despite attempts that claim the opposite (Kant, Husserl). Since everything that is knowable must be reduced to its thinkability, the *philosophia prima* becomes 'the science of the knowledge of being in general'.¹²² In the last instance and still under the noematic primacy, Heidegger shows that it is still beings in general that found Being. That is, briefly speaking, the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics.

What does Heidegger conclude? 'The *Being* of these beings (*Das Sein dieses Seienden*), however, must become comprehensible in a distinctive *lesein* (a letting be seen) (*sehen lassen*), so that this *Being* is comprehensible from the very beginning as what it is and already is in every being.'¹²³ Phenomenology as *sehen lassen* is now the method towards *Ontology* ('O') in a distinctive *lesein* that differs from the *logos* that was only concerned with beings as 'encountered in the world'. Hence, anything (any being) falls under the Being of beings (*Sein des Seienden*), even 'God' who even whilst being in a specific mode of Being (divine) has been proven to be one of the foundational beings of onto-theo-logical dialectics.

Contrary to Heidegger, Marion argues that the 'end of metaphysics' does not subjugate the question of 'God' to the question of Being but rather frees it from dependency on Being. To ask the question of God therefore does not proceed from an *ad hoc* decision, since it reappears in phenomenology as a consequence of its closure in metaphysics. The enlarged phenomenality that Marion sketches with the idol and the icon enables him at first to disqualify Heidegger's concept of God as a redoubling of the metaphysical idolatry.¹²⁴ If, just as the idol and the icon cannot be reduced to Being because they do not pertain to beings or do not subsist in beingness, then the revelation too should be considered as a radical phenomenal possibility, that is as a phenomenon constituting itself so as to inaugurate a unique and unprecedented phenomenality. This is why, for Marion, beyond ontology and the thought of Being, the thought of gifts¹²⁵ – which derives from a radical undertaking of givenness and of phenomena as *giving themselves* – suggests a wider *logos* than that of metaphysics, even an *anti-logos*, capable of engaging

¹²¹ The '*aliquid quo majus nihil cogitari potest*' of St Anselm (*Proslogion seu Alloquium de Dei existentia*, Caput III, in *Chefs-d'œuvres des pères de l'église* (Paris: Au bureau de la bibliothèque ecclésiastique, 1838), Vol. XV: p. 428) thus falls under the thought of Being as being on the mode of the divine (*summum cogitabile*).

¹²² Marion, *De surcroît*, pp. 10-16: 'La primauté noétique permet ainsi non seulement de refonder la « philosophie première », mais encore d'y rattacher l'ontologie, ou plutôt ce que la métaphysique a toujours entendu sous ce nom moderne – la science de la *connaissance* de l'étant en général, en tant que réduit à la l'intelligible, c'est-à-dire au *cogitabile*, tel qu'il répond aux conditions *a priori* de son apparition à un *ego cogito*.' (p. 13). Marion points back to Clauberg who already argued that 'the universal philosophy [must begin] by the *Ente cogitabili*, just as the first philosophy, beginning from the singular, considers nothing before the *Mente cogitante*', *Metaphysica de Ente quae rectius Ontosophia...*, in *Opera philosophica omnia* (Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1691), p. 283.

¹²³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 42, English translation modified.

¹²⁴ Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, II. La double idolâtrie.

¹²⁵ French allows us to say *le don* (*la pensée du don*) with the definite article even when no specific gift is intended. This means that saying *le don* in French refers implicitly to the concept of gifts (*concept du don*). In order to respect English grammar, we translate *le don* into 'gifts' or 'a gift' when no specific gift is intended whilst bearing in mind that it is nonetheless an accurate and phenomenal description of *the gift* that Marion is after. This clarification will be particularly relevant when reaching §9.

with phenomena that would otherwise remain inaccessible in the horizon of Being. 'To open Being/being to the instance of a gift implies then, at the least, that the gift may decide Being/being. [...] *The gift delivers Being/being.* [...] Being/being is distracted by the gift that precedes it and that abandons ontological difference to it only in that it first annuls it. The gift, in liberating Being/being, in liberating being from Being, is itself finally liberated from ontological difference—[...] [the gift is] the freeing of the first instance, charity. For the gift itself is liberated only in its exertion starting from and in the name of that which, greater than it, comes after it, that which gives and expresses itself as gift, charity itself. Charity delivers Being/being.'¹²⁶ The phenomenality of gifts would achieve its highest possibility in a phenomenon *giving itself* radically: the phenomenon of revelation. For God, if he made himself 'knowable', would be known only insofar as God giving himself, that is on a mode radically foreign to the *cogitabile* and the *revelabile*. And unless God gave himself he would remain unknowable precisely because there is nothing else to know apart from his gift, *i.e.* apart from what he gives to know: Himself. When it comes to gifts, similarly as when it comes to love and in the exact same logic, to receive the gift (*le don*) means to know the gift and to know the gift means to receive the gift (*connaître le don signifie recevoir le don*).¹²⁷

The reason of gifts, that manifests itself in the phenomenon of gifts and that phenomenology has the task to investigate, finds echoes – as it will appear – in the task of theology that wants to know the *ratio donationis* according to a formulation of Thomas Aquinas that 'a gift is properly a givenness that cannot be given back (*datio irredibilis*) [...] and hence does it carry gratuitous givenness (*importat gratuitam donationem*). Besides, the reason of gratuitous givenness is love (*Ratio autem gratuita donationis est amor*)'.¹²⁸ 'Whilst love characterises the Trinity fully, it designates (*dénomme*) the Holy Spirit proper, because in giving out of (*par*) love it enables every gift. [...] It gives the gift of giving (*le don de donner*). It loves such as to *make* one love (*il aime de telle sorte qu'il fait aimer*). [...] it does not appear only as gift, nor as the one who gives the gifts [...], but foremost as the one who inaugurates givenness.'¹²⁹ A gift therefore unveils (from) itself¹³⁰, in the immanence of its *showing-itself*, the reason of the gift (*ratio*

¹²⁶ Marion, *God without Being*, translated by Thomas A. Carlson, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 148 (French: pp. 101sq.).

¹²⁷ 'The silence that is suitable to the ~~God~~ who reveals himself as agape in Christ consists in remaining silent through and for agape: to conceive that if ~~God~~ gives, to say ~~God~~ requires receiving the gift and—since the gift occurs only in distance—returning it. To return the gift, to play redundantly the unthinkable donation [*viz.* givenness], this is not said but done. Love is not spoken, in the end, it is made.', *Ibid.*, p. 154 (French: p. 107).

¹²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* in *La somme théologique* de Saint Thomas, *Latin-Français en regard* (Paris: E. Belin, 1861), vol. II: pp. 98sq., cited from another edition in Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 513.

¹²⁹ Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 513.

¹³⁰ The verb used by Marion in French is (*se*) *découvrir* ('to uncover') and corresponds to the substantive *le dévoilement* ('uncovering'). In English, 'to uncover' can hardly be used as a transitive and even less so as a reflexive. We will therefore admit a strict conceptual equivalence of 'to uncover' with 'to unveil' which offers more flexibility of use in English. However, this should *not* be translated back to the French *dévoilement* ('unveiling') which is associated to Heidegger's concept of *décèlement* ('unsealing' or 'disclosure'), which is precisely the concept against which Marion introduces the logic of *découverte* ('uncovering'). We will therefore maintain the use of the lexeme 'uncover' where possible and otherwise use the lexeme 'unveil' where a transitive or reflexive verb is needed.

donationis) as that which even gives theology to itself. Prior to being a 'task' then, theology is constituted in and from the gift that gives it to itself; and so, for the rational activity that theology eventually deploys (hermeneutics), this means that an anterior and greater passivity always precedes it so much so that all activity is always already an act of response. This theological principle coheres with the phenomenological principle of the anteriority of givenness in all phenomenality. If the theological rationale corresponds exactly to the intrinsic rationale of phenomena, it shows also that the metaphysical rationale does not stand on any concrete phenomenal grounds, but rather on the derivate, inverted, and construed phenomenality of objects. The correlation between theology's rationale and phenomenality is once more confirmed in the phenomenon of gift. For if phenomenology seeks to reduce all phenomena to *the given* in it according to this last principle '*autant de réduction, autant de donation*',¹³¹ theology knows that it has no other aim than to see the gift (*idete potapên agapên dedôken êmin o patêr*, 1 John 3.1). Givenness, through and through, is not so much a matter of phenomenality as it is the matter of phenomenality. The reason of the gift (givenness), which comes with the phenomenalisation of the gift itself, is brought to completion in the revelation of Christ according to the phenomenological principle already formulated by Bernard of Clairvaux that '*vero dando Spiritum per quem revelat, etiam ipsum revelat : dando revelat et revelando dat (giving really the Spirit by which he reveals, he also reveals himself: in giving he reveals and in revealing he gives)*'.¹³²

Marion's counterapproach to phenomenology has enabled the freeing of the gift from its transcendental and ontic determinations (conditions) in order for it to deploy itself freely in the more suitable and vaster horizon of charity. Givenness unfolds in a phenomenality that it deploys from itself and from the immanence of its manifestation in the form of *gift giving itself*. Givenness, as a last instance for phenomenology also gives the first principle of phenomenality: that the phenomenon is to be received for what it gives as that which *gives itself* and *shows itself* in and from *itself*. 'Givenness determines as much and in the same sense the gift as the phenomenon, because the phenomenon shows *itself* as such and from itself insofar as it gives *itself*'.¹³³ From now on, and insofar as we seek to aim toward the highest order of thought that is charity,¹³⁴ the ground of givenness lies open before us.

¹³¹ Marion, *De surcroît*, p. 22.

¹³² Bernard de Clairvaux, *Sermon sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, VIII, 3, in J. Leclercq et al. (ed.), *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), t. X: p. 180, cited in Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 61. This paragraph echoes §13 (*infra*, pp. 55ff.) where more will be said on the *ratio donationis* and the erotic phenomenon.

¹³³ Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 195.

¹³⁴ Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Léon Brunschvigg (Genève: Ferni, 1978), #793 (Lafuma #308).

CHAPTER II

TOWARD A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF REVELATION

§8. Givenness as a Threshold for the Question of Revelation

In *Dieu sans l'être* Marion was able to distance himself from Heidegger's ambition of a fundamental ontology by the possibility of regarding Being as another horizon of phenomenality, albeit wider than that of objectness. This was made possible by taking into consideration phenomena that were not reducible to their difference with Being because they were not inscribable in any ontic horizon – the death of 'the death of God' outside the horizon of beings was the most striking example of such phenomena. It is with this in mind that Marion was able to conduct his phenomenological investigations in *Réduction et donation* not as a 'systematic expository', as if phenomenology was simply following a chronological thread in its elaboration, but rather as articulated enquiries that tie around what is now reopened as a question: what was the first intention of phenomenology? And how far can reduction be performed? Or rather, how far would reduction reduce in view of and from the phenomena themselves?

Marion was able critically to reengage with Husserl's initial project based on the contribution of Heidegger, who advanced phenomenology toward things themselves (*Sachen selbst*) further than him, precisely because of his intent to question Being in the mode of a 'question-at-end [*Zu-Ende-Fragen*]'. Being is transcendence (*transcendenz*) as phenomenality (mode of Being, *Seinsart*) – character, *Seinscharakter* and sense, *Sinn des Sein* – of the immanent and phenomenal being (*Dasein*). This particular being is present to Being. The *Dasein* as *In-der-Welt-Sein* is the being for which its Being is always at stake ('...es diesem Seienden um sein Sein geht').¹³⁵ Marion's attempt to maintain in close proximity both Husserl and Heidegger despite the tensions paid off when, sometime after *Réduction et donation*, Marion discovered that both were united around a common motivation which their shared endeavour confirms to be the core of the phenomenological project, namely the 'central enigma' of

¹³⁵ Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, §14, p. 186 and §4, p. 136 and *Sein und Zeit*, §41, p. 193. See Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §5, pp. 112-115. The *Seinsfrage* is not yet the question but a question to be construed (*gestellt*), that is why it does not consist in an anthropology, despite Husserl's critic. Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §6, p. 118. The return to the thing themselves of phenomenology consists in 'the permanent possibility of thought [*bleibende Möglichkeit des Denkens*]' – to 'respond to the revindication of what is to be thought [*der Anspruch des zu denkenden zu entsprechen*]' (Heidegger, *Zur Sache des denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 90). Marion speaks of a *relaunching (relance)* of the reduction by Heidegger for whom phenomenology 'disappears' as a 'rubric' before the '*Sache des denkens*'. Marion, *Réduction et donation*, II, §3, p. 89, n. 1, pp. 133sq., n. 2.

givenness.¹³⁶ This was their primary motivation throughout. It represents, even for Heidegger at an early stage of his philosophy, the most patent aporia or the entry problem of all philosophy in the twentieth century – namely because the ‘*Es gibt*’ displays and contains in itself the *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* as such.¹³⁷ After drawing the question of givenness from the central aporia of phenomenology, Marion found confirmation that the phenomenological project could be carried out beyond Husserl and Heidegger in a return to its initial operation. This was not to be by seeking a way beyond phenomenology that would already betray the resurgence of an *Hinterwelt* – i.e. of transcendence (aitiology, teleology, etc.) – but rather by restricting himself to phenomenology’s very first and unique movement, viz. the operation of reduction. This operation is simply a ‘letting be seen’ (*sehen lassen*) on the basis that a phenomenon is understood as ‘the showing-itself’ (*das Sichzeigende*). The reduction consists in the search or the ‘letting be seen’ of the ‘self’ (or ipseity) of phenomena because phenomenology means nothing else than ‘letting to be seen from itself that which shows itself so that it shows itself from itself’.¹³⁸ Whereas objectness (Husserl) and beingness (Heidegger) could at most harbour specific cases of ‘the denomination of givenness’ (*de la dénomination de la donation*), the results of Marion’s investigations summon the following interrogation: ‘Could phenomenology not prolong itself – beyond Husserl and Heidegger – simply in returning to its initial operation (because, so far, it had not yet been accomplished as such), but in attempting [this time] to perform the reduction inasmuch as it aims at determining the degrees of givenness and nothing else?’¹³⁹

The added ‘nothing else’ at the end of his question underlies the phenomenological intention of Marion’s project. But here lies also all the difficulty, firstly, because of the problem of the ‘aim’ or intentionality.¹⁴⁰ How will we know if the reduction has aimed for ‘nothing else’ than the degrees of givenness if the-aimed-at (and nothing else) had not already given its aim to the aiming-one (the operator

¹³⁶ ‘How great was my surprise when I found the question of givenness clearly raised as a central enigma by the early Heidegger from 1919 onward!’, Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, p. 78.

¹³⁷ Heidegger sees very early and clearly the question of givenness: ‘Was heißt »gegeben«, »Gegebenheit« – dieses Zauberwort der Phänomenologie und der »Stein des Anstoßes« bei den anderen. [What means “given”, “givenness” – this magic word of phenomenology and the stumbling block for the others]’, Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (1919/1920)* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1993), Gesamtausgabe 58: §1, p. 5, cited in Marion, ‘Remarques sur les origines de la "Gegebenheit" dans la pensée de Heidegger’, *Heidegger Studies*, 2008, Vol. 24 (Duncker & Humblot GmbH), pp. 167-179, p. 169.

¹³⁸ ‘Phänomenologie sagt dann: ἀποφαινεσθαι τὰ φαινόμενα: Das was sich zeigt, so wie es sich von ihm selbst her zeigt, von ihm selbst her sehen lassen’, Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §7, p. 34. See Marion, *Étant donné*, I, §6, p. 117.

¹³⁹ ‘la phénoménologie ne peut-elle pas se prolonger – au-delà de Husserl et de Heidegger – simplement en revenant à son opération initiale, parce qu’elle n’a pas encore été jusqu’ici accomplie comme telle, mais en tentant de performer la réduction, en tant qu’elle vise à déterminer les degrés de la donation et rien d’autre ?’, Marion, *La rigueur des choses*, p. 130, translation ours. Here Gschwandtner’s translation was ambiguous. Reduction is not an alternative to this ‘initial operation’, it is this ‘initial operation’.

¹⁴⁰ Marion engages this difficulty in *Le visible et le révélé*, ‘Le phénomène saturé’, p. 39-44, where intentionality, and more globally, the problem of the horizon and the constituting *I* are in question. If the principle of principles opens the right to intuition to give originally in its own right, that is unconditionally and without presupposition, this breakthrough is immediately closed by the ‘limit’ (*Grenze*) of a horizon, which in Husserl, closes also the ‘absolutely unconditioned possibility’ that ensured for all phenomena the right to appear.

of reduction)? Any rigorous thought of givenness will therefore avoid the trap of falling into some form of dialectic in disguise.

So suppose that we ever attained to such a perfect reduction, namely to the (reduced and irreducible) given, this would open the question all the more as to whether *es gibt* gives anything at all if that is all that is left. This is confirmed *a contrario* by Heidegger in a reasoning starting from the *es gibt*: ‘Does it give, after all, a single thing, when it only gives things? Hence, after all, it gives no things; it does not even give *nothing*, because it is by this global lordship of the sphere of things that even no “*es gibt*” gives. Does it give the “*es gibt*”?’¹⁴¹ From this questioning can be made this compelling and yet simple observation that the ‘anterior questioning confirms [...] that neither the *Es gibt*, nor the *Gegebenheit* constitute as such a solution or a progress, but that they indeed offer no more than a question.’¹⁴²

According to Heidegger, it is upon this question that the posterity of philosophy is to be decided. But in order to see this, one must come to terms with this question: ‘Did not Metaphysics reached its positive end with Hegel and negative one with Nietzsche [...]?’¹⁴³ Heidegger expresses the situation even more dramatically and radically: ‘We are standing at the methodological cross-road which will decide on the very life or death of philosophy.’¹⁴⁴ To fall into nothingness is equated with pursuing the absolute *Tatsachlichkeit* (objectivism, *Objektivismus*¹⁴⁵) which would result in the same death for philosophy. This is why, the *Kummerlichkeit* (mystery) of this ‘*Gibt es...?*’ is so crucial though so insignificant: ‘Everything depends on understanding and following this insignificance (*Kummerlichkeit*) in its pure meaning, on fastening on to it [...]’¹⁴⁶ The humble immanence of this apparently insignificant ‘*es gibt*’ dissimulates in fact an extraordinary difficulty. The ‘*es gibt*’ summons thinking from within the indetermination of the ‘*es*’ and has led many to consider that which gives and yet is never given as

¹⁴¹ ‘Gibt es überhaupt eine einzige Sache, wenn es nur Sachen gibt? Dann gibt es überhaupt keine Sachen; es gibt nicht einmal *nichts*, weil es bei einer Allherrschaft der Sachspähre auch kein »es gibt« gibt. Gibt es das »es gibt«?’, Heidegger, *Zur der Bestimmung der Philosophie*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt-am-Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1999) Gesamtausgabe 56/57: §12, p. 62.

¹⁴² ‘Ce questionnement antérieur confirme donc bien la thèse subséquente que ni le *Es gibt*, ni la *Gegebenheit* ne constituent, comme tels, une solution ou une avancée, mais n’offrent bel et bien qu’une question.’, Marion, ‘Remarques sur les origines de la "Gegebenheit" dans la pensée de Heidegger’, *art. cit.*, p. 168.

¹⁴³ ‘La métaphysique n’a-t-elle pas atteint, du moins selon son destin historique, sa fin, positive avec Hegel, négative avec Nietzsche?’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 76.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Already in the opening of the question 'Is there . . . ?' there is something (*Schon in dem Frage-ansatz »Gibt es...?« gibt es etwas*). Our entire problematic has arrived at a crucial point, which, however, appears insignificant and even miserly. Everything depends on understanding and following this insignificance in its pure meaning, on fastening on to it and no longer thinking back to teleological method, ideal and material giving, psychical totality, material domain of things, and indeed — even especially so — the idea of primordial science and its method. We are standing at the methodological cross-road which will decide on the very life or death of philosophy. We stand at an abyss: either into nothingness (*Nichts*), that is, absolute reification, pure thingness (*der absoluten Sachlichkeit*), or we somehow leap into *another world*, more precisely, we manage for the first time to make the leap (*Sprung*) into the world as such.’, Heidegger, *Zur der Bestimmung der Philosophie*, §13, p. 63. We used and modified the translation of Ted Sadler in Heidegger, *Towards a Definition of Philosophy*, translated by Ted Sadler, (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), p. 53.

¹⁴⁵ See Marion, ‘Remarques sur les origines de la "Gegebenheit" dans la pensée de Heidegger’, *art. cit.*, p. 167, n. 2, for a useful clarification on the difference between objectivism and objectivity in Heidegger’s thought.

¹⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Zur der Bestimmung der Philosophie*, p. 63.

objects nor beings, *i.e.* to consider instances of givenness that do not fall under any known horizon.¹⁴⁷ ‘[I]n this dramatic context of the post-world war era, the philosophical question is decisively posited under the title of *es gibt*, that is of givenness, *Gegebenheit*.’¹⁴⁸

For Marion, ‘the enigma of the anonymous ‘*es*’ safeguards givenness (*L’énigme du « cela » anonyme sauvegarde seule la donation*)’¹⁴⁹ but in safeguarding it, it also opens it as question: ‘it is suitable to question explicitly the inevitable ambiguity of *givenness*, so as to articulate the concept of givenness.’¹⁵⁰ Marion notes that the ‘ambiguity’ of givenness is already present in Husserl: the ‘fold of the given’ is in other words the ‘ambiguity’ where ‘givenness opens’.¹⁵¹ The ambiguity is visible in the ‘*es gibt*’ as the paradox of Being that ‘moves forth in its own withdrawal – only from givenness can this paradox be enlightened.’¹⁵² The paradox of the metaphysical impossibility of gifts can be briefly stated thus: a gift annuls itself as gift since its appearing as gift overshadows the process of its givenness (a gift really given is given without reserve). In other terms, the process of givenness must itself withdraw from the phenomenal scene in order for the gift to appear (because the process of givenness cannot retain its gift). Here is all the difficulty: whilst being given, the gift appears first as being-there, thrown-there (ob-ject), that is precisely, as what it is not. That is why the appearing of gifts must be uncovered from their own immanence (the fold of givenness) and why givenness must be immanent to their gifts.¹⁵³ Given gifts are articulated by the unfolding of givenness in their ‘process of forthcoming (*processus d’avènement*)’.¹⁵⁴ This means that ‘it suffices that the given – the given phenomenon – gives itself from (*à partir de*) itself alone (not from a foreseeing and constituting subject) so that the fold of givenness attests itself. [...] givenness does not submit the given to a transcendental condition, it frees it from it’.¹⁵⁵ The pure immanence that gifts accomplish is perfected and epitomised in all phenomena of revelation. A phenomenon of revelation is determined by its *fait accompli* insofar as it always appears as *given* gift.

¹⁴⁷ *Ereignis* (Heidegger), Nothingness (Sartre), the face (Levinas), *Différance/khôra* (Derrida), Flesh (Henry), Symbol (Ricœur), etc. These various declination of radical phenomena do not deal so much with beings/objects as they rather contradict and surpass all possible ontic horizons.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Ainsi, la question philosophique, dans ce contexte dramatique d’après-guerre, se pose décidément sous le titre du *es gibt*, c’est-à-dire de la donation, *Gegebenheit*.’, Marion, ‘Remarques sur les origines de la “Gegebenheit” dans la pensée de Heidegger’, *art. cit.*, p. 167.

¹⁴⁹ ‘L’énigme du « cela » anonyme sauvegarde seule la donation.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, §3, p. 63.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Il convient d’interroger explicitement l’inévitable ambiguïté de *donation*, afin d’articuler le concept de donation.’, *Ibid.*, §6, p. 104.

¹⁵¹ ‘Il [Husserl] constate en effet, presque en nos termes, l’ambiguïté, ou mieux le pli du donné, où s’ouvre la donation’, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁵² ‘L’être se retire de l’étant parce qu’il le donne; or toute donation implique que le donner disparaisse (se retire) dans l’exacte mesure où le don apparaît, précisément parce que donner demande de [se dé-]partir. L’être s’avance dans son propre retrait – ce paradoxe ne s’éclaire qu’à partir de la donation.’, *Ibid.*, §3, p. 62.

¹⁵³ For contrast, see *infra*, §9, where we will expose the classic approach to gifts according to economy or transcendence.

¹⁵⁴ ‘La donation s’ouvre comme le pli du donné : le don donné *en tant qu’il* se donne selon son évènement propre. La donation se dépliant articule le don donné ([...]) sur son processus d’avènement ([...]).’, Marion, *Étant donné*, §6, p. 110.

¹⁵⁵ ‘La donnée mérite son nom par son fait accompli, tel qu’il m’advient. [...] et il suffit que le donné – le phénomène donné – se donne à partir de lui seul (et non d’un sujet prévoyant et constituant) pour que s’atteste le pli de la donation’, Marion, *De surcroît*, p. 30.

The gift that comes forth and gives its given to theology underlies a radical givenness that transcends all known phenomenality, so as to reconfigure all definite horizons according to the infinite gift that gives itself. The thought of gifts confronts the *ego* with this radical question: ‘What do you have that you did not receive?’ (1 Cor. 4.7, NRSV). In effect, the *ego* finds itself *a posteriori*, as thought of (*cogité*) even before his first *cogitatio*.¹⁵⁶ Only the Christ was ‘authentic’ (legitimate) precisely because of his ‘inauthenticity’: he did not assert himself from himself (*causa sui*) but he received his *ego* from *another* because he himself was *given* from *elsewhere*. The authentic *ego* is the one preceded by *another* than itself.¹⁵⁷ In the gift and in the very immanence of its given unfolds the one more myself than myself – *interior intimo meo*¹⁵⁸ – the one and only who legitimately says *I (ego eimi)* and gives *me* myself to myself.¹⁵⁹ In some ways, the principle of non-identity (inauthenticity) becomes the principle of authenticity in the thought of givenness. Marion’s definition of the authenticity of the *adonné* changes thoroughly Heidegger’s paradigm of the authenticity of the *Dasein* as found in the *Jemeinigkeit* and the *Ständigkeit des Selbst* (or self-consistency, *Selbst-ständigkeit*).¹⁶⁰ The ‘I think’ turns into an ‘I am affected’ and in the *event* of revelation, it is even radicalised into an ‘I am given (to myself)’ since there is nothing I have that I have not received (1 Cor. 4.7): ‘I receive *myself* from the call that gives me to myself, before giving me anything’ and all other givenness of any particular given are made possible by this first gift.¹⁶¹ The *adonné*, therefore, the one who receives himself from an original givenness ‘is delivered from the outset – from its birth – from solipsism.’¹⁶² The difficulty now is to think of a concept of gifts, since, if I receive myself from a gift that precedes me, if I have nothing that I have not received, then how can this *I* – that is *not* (yet) – come to receive any gift? The intrinsic determinations of gifts must guide us from then on.

§9. Thinking of the Concept of Gifts: Difficulty and Debate

‘...[W]herever [time] conditions experience in general, wherever *time* dominates *as cercle* [...], gifts are impossible’.¹⁶³ Derrida has, no doubt, admirably and admittedly provided a rich and thorough

¹⁵⁶ On the ‘*ego cogité*’ in Descartes, see Marion, *Étant donné*, §27, ‘Descartes – l’*ego cogité*’, pp. 441-448.

¹⁵⁷ See Marion, *Étant donné*, ‘L’inauthenticité’, pp. 473-474: ‘Il faut absolument contester le caractère originaire de l’authenticité comme appropriation de soi...’.

¹⁵⁸ Augustine, ‘Confessiones’ in, *Patrologia Latina*, Tomus 32: Liber III, Capitus VI, §11, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 211, n. 1.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Je est un autre, mais il reste *pour cela même* moi en moi, *interior intimo meo.*’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 216.

¹⁶⁰ Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 423-424. See also Spinoza, *Ethica*, in Spinoza, *Opera quae supersunt omnia* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz jun., 1843), vol. I: II. *Ethica*, Pars III, Propositio VI, p. 278: ‘Unaquæque res quantum in se est, in suo esse perseverare conatur.’

¹⁶¹ ‘Il ne s’agit plus de se comprendre au cas nominatif (visant l’objet – Husserl), ni au génitif (de l’être – Heidegger), ni même selon l’accusatif (accusé par autrui – Levinas), mais selon le datif : je *me* reçois de l’appel qui me donne à moi-même, avant de me donner quoi que ce soit. Il faudrait presque supposer que cet étrange datif ne se distingue plus ici de l’ablatif, puisque le *moi/me* rend possible (comme ouvrier, moyen), en tant que premier don départi de l’appel, l’ouverture de toutes autres donations de donnés particuliers.’, *Ibid.*, p. 439.

¹⁶² ‘Ainsi l’adonné se délivre-t-il d’emblée – dès sa naissance – du solipsisme.’, *Idem.*

¹⁶³ ‘...partout où il y a du temps, partout où le temps domine ou conditionne l’expérience en général, partout où domine le *temps comme cercle* (concept « vulgaire », dirait donc Heidegger), le don est impossible.’, Derrida, *Donner le temps. I. La fausse monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991), p. 21

reflection on gifts, notably by raising the aporia that their concept opposes pure (or transcendental) reason.¹⁶⁴ With Derrida, we realise our difficulty of even starting to think of gifts, because as soon as we attempt to think of gifts as something that could be *thought of* difficulties arise. His approach to gifts has become a necessary passage to anyone who is willing to hear the question in all its depth. After Derrida, no phenomenological concept of gifts can satisfy that does not take seriously into consideration his contribution on this topic.¹⁶⁵

Thinking of gifts cancels gifts – and thus the very matter that a thought was meant to think.¹⁶⁶ As soon as the idea of gifts comes to mind, the possibility of gifts is at once lost, so much so that the presence of an idea of gifts entails the radical absence of gifts. In other words, the *intention* of gifts cancels at once all possibilities of a gift really given in person.¹⁶⁷ In short, gifts are eidetically possible insofar as *impossible*, and so the possibility of the concept of gifts contains *in principia* its own impossibility.¹⁶⁸ This means more than an impossibility to realise it. In this sense, it is immeasurably more (or less) than an eidetic intuition – e.g. mathematical essences, pure intuitions.¹⁶⁹ Gifts are a paradigmatic case: like a singularity in language, they disappear in the instant of their appearing precisely because they cannot be made present.¹⁷⁰ Just as Being and time ‘are *not*’ – ‘they are’ nothing in the sense of *no* thing (no being) – so too the gift ‘is’ *not* insofar as it gives *nothing*. Gifts do not phenomenalise but rather open a phenomenal field as their trace and within their trace – ‘[f]orgottenness and gifts would therefore be in the condition of one another’¹⁷¹ – to be on the way of thinking of gifts, is to be on the way of this ‘*forgottenness*’ that would be (by analogy with Heidegger’s forgottenness of Being) the condition of gifts, the truth of all gifts. To sum it up: gifts are one of these instances of language that point us to the irreducible *différance* between *voix* (*voix*) and phenomena. Per definition and per excellence, gifts can never be known adequately *a priori* by concepts since it is only possible to describe them negatively, as what they are *not*. They are knowable only as unknowable and also as that about which nothing can ever be stated categorically. Gifts *a priori* cancel gifts: ‘the conditions of possibility of gifts [...] designate simultaneously the conditions of impossibility of gifts. [...] the

¹⁶⁴ ‘Pourquoi et comment *puis-je penser que le don est l'impossible?...*’: that is in a nutshell the question that Derrida seeks to address throughout, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁶⁵ See Marion’s acknowledgment of Derrida’s contribution in Marion, ‘Jacques Derrida et l’impossibilité du don’, in *Figures de phénoménologie* (Paris: VRIN, 2012), §1, pp. 117-119.

¹⁶⁶ The perception of gifts (in nature and meaning) according to their intentionality ‘cancels gifts as gifts (*annule le don comme don*)’, Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 26.

¹⁶⁷ ‘La simple intention de donner, en tant qu’elle porte le sens intentionnel du don, suffit à se payer en retour.’, *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Car pour penser le don, une *théorie du don* est impuissante par essence.’, *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁶⁹ Derrida speaks of an ‘essential excess (*excès essentiel*) of gifts’ and even of ‘an excess of gifts (*excès du don*) on essence’, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ ‘...its appearance, the simple phenomenon of gift cancels it as gift, transforming [...] its operation in simulacre. (*Mais son apparence même, le simple phénomène du don l’annule comme don, transformant l’apparition en fantôme et l’opération en simulacre*)’, *Ibid.*, p. 27, see also p. 38.

¹⁷¹ ‘L’oubli et le don seraient ainsi l’un et l’autre dans la condition de l’autre.’, *Ibid.*, p. 32, also: ‘La pensée de cet oubli radical comme pensée du don devrait s’accorder avec une certaine expérience de la trace comme cendre’ (p.30).

conditions of possibility define [...] the destruction of gifts.¹⁷² The thought of gifts is therefore aporetic from the outset and gifts are preserved as long as they remain so.¹⁷³ In a way, the concept of gifts is opaque, not because a mystery in them would hide something from us, but because gifts have *nothing* to hide; a gift has *no* 'in-itself' because the 'self' in *presence* (ontic being, object) is precisely what cancels it. Whether there is infinitely more or nothing more to gifts than their facade (their sign or *insigne*) does not change anything. Gifts are precisely the sign or the mark of an absence, of something that can never be present nor be made present.¹⁷⁴

One can then wonder how the word 'gift' remains in use in societies whose functional reason seems to radically agree with the conditions of *impossibility* of gifts, namely, the economical reason that is itself derived from the principles of metaphysical reason. In *Donner le temps*, Derrida comments on the sociological work of Mauss, who attempted to recover a definition of gifts based on the practises of 'gifts' in archaic society. Although Derrida and Marion agree in many regards as to the status or rather non-status of what Mauss calls 'gifts',¹⁷⁵ the aporia of gifts as posited by Derrida seems to cut too sharply across the question at stake, and thus prematurely to close the matter. We would like to raise one doubt which will lead on to a relocation of the question of gifts by Marion.

Derrida himself raises the first doubt: 'what would be a gift that fulfils the condition of gifts, namely not to appear as gift [...]? Why would we still call this a gift? *This*, that is *what?* (*Cela, c'est-à-dire quoi?*)'¹⁷⁶ That is exactly the question. Derrida's endeavour is purely apophatic. He speaks of what gifts are not, conceding therefore that thinking of what gifts are *not* is not yet a guarantee that 'this' amounts to thinking of gifts. In some ways Derrida himself must overcome his own doubt for a time by trusting that the apophasis of gifts better aims at gifts than a cataphatic approach. To destroy what gifts 'are' in the predicative or apophantic (propositional and categorical, *apophantikos*) discourse would be a direct predicament of the thought of gifts as non-concept or anti-concept. Thus the thought of gifts which never fully grasps its matter approaches it all the more in that it does not directly aim at the matter in question.

¹⁷² 'Car voici l'impossible qui semble ici se donner à penser. C'est que ces conditions de possibilité du don (que quelqu'un « donne quelque chose » à quelqu'un d'autre) désignent simultanément les conditions de l'impossibilité du don. Et nous pourrions d'avance traduire autrement : ces conditions de possibilité définissent ou produisent l'annulation, l'annihilation, la destruction du don.' *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁷³ Derrida speaks of an 'aporetic paralysis (*paralyse aporétique*)' that time shares with the gift, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁴ '...le don n'existe pas et ne se présente pas. S'il se présente, il ne se présente plus.', *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁵ Both Derrida and Marion agree that in the end (or rather from the start) Mauss speaks of everything except the gift. 'Mauss a bien l'air de ne pas savoir ce qu'il nomme...', *Ibid.* p. 55, Derrida notes a growing 'lexical uncertainty' in Mauss' *Essai sur le don*, *Ibid.*, p. 66; Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 125-133, 138, see also n. 1: Lévi-Strauss notes brilliantly that 'Mauss does not see [exchange] in the facts [...], but only [...] "three obligations: to give, to receive, to give back"'. The whole theory thus requires the existence of a structure [...]. If exchange is necessary and is not given, it is needed to construe it'. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'Introduction à l'œuvre de Marcel Mauss', in *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Quadrige ed. (Paris: PUF, 2013), p. xxxvii, citing Marcel Mauss, 'Essai sur le don', in *L'année sociologique* (Paris: Alcan, 1925), p. 100. The word 'exchange' may obviously be replaced with 'economy'.

¹⁷⁶ 'Mais enfin que serait un don remplissant la condition du don, à savoir de ne pas apparaître comme don, de ne pas être, exister, signifier, vouloir-dire comme don? Un don sans vouloir, sans vouloir-dire, un don insignifiant, un don sans intention de donner? Pourquoi appellerions-nous encore cela un don? Cela, c'est-à-dire quoi?', Derrida, *Donner le temps*, pp. 42sq, emphasis ours.

The concept of gifts would not only be the concept of an impossible phenomenon, but the impossibility of its own concept; gifts are not even possible as noumena. But we must here attempt to show the limits of Derrida's concept. If the impossibility of gifts is the condition of its possibility, then the question remains as to what defines possibility. The concept of gifts remains bound to what we understand by 'possibility'. Impossibility cannot simply remain apophatic as possibility's impossibility. As such it would remain conditioned by possibility and a conditioned impossibility is impossible *per definitionem*. Derrida describes gifts in terms of a non-presence¹⁷⁷ or 'radical forgiveness', in contrast to what would be a mere psychological repression of gifts into the unconscious, which would still temporalise gifts within a symbolic of exchange: the 'generous' consciousness (giver) or the 'thankful' consciousness (givee).¹⁷⁸ But this makes it even clearer that Derrida's intention of a 'moving away (*déplacement*)' of the paradox of gifts from the conditions of *presence* starts well indeed from an opposition to *presence* as established by the metaphysical principle of identity and sufficient reason (substance, permanence, cause). So, Derrida's description of the impossibility of gifts would still be conceptually bound (albeit negatively) to effectivity in the horizon of economy that harbours the conditions of *presence*. In doing so, metaphysics is subtly given back a foothold by allowing effectivity to rule or determine possibility. It is exactly from this determination that phenomenology attempted to break free when it said that '[h]igher than actuality stands *possibility*';¹⁷⁹ in other words, impossibility can no longer be opposed to possibility understood as effectivity.¹⁸⁰

Based on these difficulties, the only possible answer to whether we should call a gift 'gift' would be *no* answer at all. But then why would not the question be without 'question' if a gift is 'that which gives itself to thought, on the condition that it is nothing'?¹⁸¹ It may well be that 'nothing' is in question and that the gift was *nothing* in question and certainly nothing in answer either. Marion sums it thus: 'the conditions of impossibility (or of possibility) prove that what was being studied *did not* deserve the title of gift'.¹⁸²

Derrida's apophatic approach to gifts opens nonetheless onto a positive outcome: 'the gift can never again be envisaged within the system of exchange of which reciprocity binds giver and givee and freezes gifts in presence'.¹⁸³ This isolation of gifts in presence seeks to grasp them as *being* (goods) in quality

¹⁷⁷ See *supra*, p. 33, n. 174.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷⁹ See *supra*, p. 7, n. 18.

¹⁸⁰ In metaphysics, it is possible for impossibility to come to thought 'only within the limits of the concept' (Marion). Hence, impossibility is always comprised within the possibility of the concept. Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Marion and Richard Kearney, 'On the Gift: A Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, Moderated by Richard Kearney', in John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 76.

¹⁸¹ '...la structure de cet impossible don est aussi celle de l'être - qui se donne à penser à la condition de n'être rien (aucun étant-présent)...', Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 43.

¹⁸² '...les conditions d'impossibilité (ou de possibilité) prouvent seulement que ce qui fut étudié *ne* méritait *pas* le titre de don et que, si don il doit jamais y avoir, il aura nécessairement d'autres conditions de possibilité que celles de son impossibilité.', Marion, *Étant-Donné*, p. 137.

¹⁸³ '...le don ne saurait jamais plus s'envisager dans le système de l'échange, dont la réciprocité lie donateur et donataire et s'y immobilise dans la présence...', *Ibidem*.

of object and substance. Marion puts it thus: ‘in the so-called pretended economy of gifts, it is literally givenness on which one economises by totally transforming its gift into a subsisting being present in permanence, endowed with value (use and/or exchange) and finality (utility, prestige, etc.), produced or destroyed by efficiency and calculation, caught in the grips of its causes – in short, into a common being.’¹⁸⁴ For Marion, the conclusion is clear, Derrida was *not yet* speaking about the gift. A being cannot appear as gift, not because ‘the concept of gifts would contradict itself, but because this being precisely does not pertain at all (*ne relève en rien*) to the phenomenality of gifts.’¹⁸⁵

Marion expresses reservations towards Derrida’s study in that he may not have reduced the gift to its final possibility – and in phenomenology, wherever the possibility allows a reduction, it also commands it:¹⁸⁶ ‘For the potential possibility of impossibility would imply not to limit possibility to what can ensure sufficient reason, and thus not to limit possibility to the effectivity that causes produce.’¹⁸⁷ Precisely then, the horizon of gifts as possibility and *not* the horizon of economy as effectivity must preside to the operation of reduction.¹⁸⁸ Certainly, Derrida has operated a reduction of gifts, but he did so toward the restricted horizon of visibility and *presence*, which has successfully proven the denial of the possibility of gifts. But here the question of gifts reopens as the expression of a lack: ‘What is missing? To renounce the economic horizon of exchange, in order to interpret the gift *from* the horizon of givenness *itself*.’¹⁸⁹

It is this discussion that animated the debate between Derrida and Marion in Villanova in 1997.¹⁹⁰ The point of disagreement was that, as Derrida said, ‘the event called gift is totally heterogeneous to theoretical identification, to phenomenological identification.’¹⁹¹ This implies that there is no opened phenomenological horizon for gifts since for Derrida phenomenology is associated with theory. But nothing is more uncertain than this association: ‘if gifts prove to be “heterogeneous to theoretical identification”, does it follow that gifts also escape in the same moment to “phenomenological

¹⁸⁴ ‘...dans cette prétendue économie du don, c’est à la lettre la donation dont on fait l’économie, en transformant totalement son don en un étant subsistant, présent en permanence, doté de valeur (d’usage ou/et d’échange) et de finalité (utilité, prestige, etc.), produit ou détruit par efficacité et calcul, enserré dans l’état de ses causes, bre en un étant commun.’, *Ibid*, pp. 137sq. We have used and modified the translation of Jeffrey L. Kosky, Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, translated by Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 81sq.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Un tel étant commun ne peut jamais apparaître comme don, non point parce que le concept du don se contredirait, mais parce que cet étant ne relève justement en rien de la phénoménalité du don.’, *Ibid.*, p. 138. It is precisely what Derrida reproaches to Mauss: ‘he [Mauss] never asks the question as to whether gifts can remain gifts as soon as they are exchanged.’, Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 55.

¹⁸⁶ ‘...en phénoménologie, la moindre possibilité oblige.’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 57.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Car l’éventuelle possibilité de l’impossibilité impliquerait de ne pas limiter la possibilité à ce qu’en assure la raison suffisante, donc de ne pas borner la possibilité à l’effectivité que produit la cause.’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁸ Again, it is a point that Derrida himself raised in regard to Mauss: ‘What is the horizon of semantic anticipation that autorises him to *gather* or to bring together so many *phenomena* of diverse orders [...] under the unique and supposedly identifiable *category* of gift, under the sign “gift”?’, Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 41, our emphasis.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Que manque-t-il ? De renoncer à l’horizon économique de l’échange, pour interpréter le don à partir de l’horizon de la donation elle-même.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 138, emphasis ours.

¹⁹⁰ Caputo and Scanlon (ed.), ‘On the gift’, in *op. cit.*, pp. 54-78.

¹⁹¹ Derrida in ‘On the gift’, in *op. cit.*, p. 59.

identification”?’¹⁹² Here it is nothing other than the status of phenomenology that is at stake, and the interpretation of the principle of principle, §24 of the *Ideen I*. For Marion, *contra* Derrida, it points toward a wider concept of the horizon of phenomenality, precisely because gifts show their phenomenal appearing in excess to *presence*.¹⁹³ In other words, why would not the closure of gifts in *presence* open ‘the question of givenness which does not close when presence contradicts gifts, but opens on the contrary to the present without presence – outside of Being’?¹⁹⁴ In conclusion, ‘it is precisely because the phenomenon of gifts passes beyond (*outrépasse*) presence (intuition, objectness (*objectité*)) that we must think gifts not any more as given gifts, but from givenness as mode of *manifesteté* [litt. *manifestity*, the character of that which is manifested].’¹⁹⁵

In phenomenology, just as Derrida seems to imply, the primacy of *Offenbarkeit* (revealability – ‘what is supposed to be understood and revealed within the revelation’¹⁹⁶) over *Offenbarung* (revelation) can be doubted. In assuming this phenomenological reversal, *Offenbarkeit* would be configured on the mode of radical impossibility (*viz.* *Offenbarung*) that nonetheless ‘arrives’ in the event of a givenness that delivers it as given: ‘in fact, landing (*arrivage*) unfolds givenness in delivering the ineluctability of its arising and inseparably of its unforeseeable and unproducible initiative.’¹⁹⁷ This, properly a counter-experience, suggests that if there are gifts, they will have to be thought of from their own immanence (givenness) which ‘unveils as the instance *par excellence* of immanence.’¹⁹⁸ If phenomenology can support this *Offenbarkeit/Offenbarung* reversal it is certainly because ‘we do not seek to understand givenness from the gift [...], but to *radically* define *the gift from givenness*’.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹² ‘De ce que le don s’avère « hétérogène à une identification théorique », s’ensuit-il aussi qu’il échappe du même coup « à une identification phénoménologique » ?’, Marion, ‘Jacques Derrida...’, in *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁹³ Even here Derrida qualifies the excess of the gift (‘essential excess of the gift’): gifts confirm ‘the excess of gifts even over essence’, Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 22. ‘This leap toward givenness, could not Derrida – in spite of all – have performed it better than anyone else?’ Marion, ‘Jacques Derrida...’, in *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁹⁴ ‘La question de la donation ne se clôt pas quand la présence contredit le don, mais s’ouvre au contraire sur la possibilité du présent sans présence – hors d’être.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 135.

¹⁹⁵ ‘C’est précisément parce que le phénomène le phénomène du don outrepassa la présence (l’intuition, l’objectité) qu’il faut le penser non pas toujours comme don donné, mais à partir de la donation comme mode de la manifesteté. Le don reste un phénomène, bien qu’il ne soit ni un objet, ni un étant, parce que – cette fois-ci correctement – tout phénomène relève de la donation.’, Marion, ‘Jacques Derrida...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 127.

¹⁹⁶ Marion, ‘On the Gift’, in *op. cit.*, p. 74.

¹⁹⁷ ‘L’arrivage déploie en fait la donation, en délivrant l’inéluctabilité du surgissement et, indissolublement, son imprévisible et improducible initiative.’ Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 230. ‘L’arrivage’ in fact and as *factum* describes the radical mode of givenness of events. The phenomenal entry of revelation (*Offenbarung*) by pure givenness is possible only by similar ‘arrivage’ in its event.

¹⁹⁸ ‘La donation se découvre comme l’instance par excellence de l’immanence.’, *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁹⁹ ‘...il ne s’agit pas, pour nous, de comprendre la donation à partir du don, mais de redéfinir radicalement le don (Livre II) à partir de la donation (Livre I).’, *Ibid.*, p. 188, emphasis ours. The reduction of gifts to themselves, that is to the intrinsic givenness in them, shows that a gift subsists, neither as object nor being, but as reduced gift. The reduced gift takes the figure of *abandon* and *pardon* as paradigmatic cases of pure gift. ‘The reconduction of gifts to givenness goes hand in hand with the reduction in them of transcendences, those of objectivity similarly as those of theology (*La reconduction du don à la donation va de pair avec la réduction en lui des transcendences, tant celles de l’objectité que celles de la théologie*).’, *Ibid.*, p. 189.

§10. *The Enlarged Horizon of Givenness (vs. The Horizon of Economy)*

Derrida leads us again on the way of a more in depth reflection. He has indeed the merit of having raised a borderline case for phenomenology, where not only the correlation of the intentional object (noeme) with the objectifying act (noesis) is unrealisable but where even the slightest intention (noesis) is forbidden from the outset. And yet, he nonetheless argues that our task is to *think* of gifts from ‘impossibility in the figure of gift (*depuis l'impossible dans la figure du don*)’, that is to think as if the thought (*la pensée*) was ‘solely attuned to the disproportion of impossibility (*l'impossible*)’.²⁰⁰ This thought would, according to Derrida, be ‘irreducible to intuition, irreducible also to perception, to judgement, to experience, to science, to faith’.²⁰¹ But here we may ask: what is a thought that is ‘irreducible to intuition’? Or how may we think ‘nothing’ if *es gibt* nothing to think? If, *ad minima*, the *es gibt* gives itself without giving anything, would not the *es gibt* alone be a given giving itself to be thought of? Can there be a thought that may not be reducible to anything, *i.e.* a thought without any given? In this instance, Derrida’s translation of the *es gibt* into ‘*il y a*’ seems to overshadow the knot of the question. In the end, the gift is excluded from any phenomenal possibility, *i.e.* from a real corporality (*wirklich Leibhaftigkeit*) and from a *givenness in person (Selbstgegebenheit)*. In maintaining that a thought can somehow think of gifts albeit apart from the immanent source of a phenomenal given, comes at a cost: *Thought* is elevated to the rank of last or ultimate transcendence (absolute) by reserving for itself a right to think that which transcends the self-givenness (or givenness in person) of phenomenal immanence. ‘Thought’ (*La pensée*) would have, for itself, thoughts that resist the possibility of a phenomenological reduction. This idea, in asserting a thought of gifts that remains independent from any phenomenal given, comes dangerously close to the principle of sufficient reason, since it asserts the self-sufficiency of a thought for itself (*causa sui*). This posture is highly problematic for phenomenology especially as it seeks to reduce every transcendence – to its phenomenal givenness in person (immanence).²⁰² In the end, the possibility of the initial question doubles itself and persists all the more: does it give (*gibt es*) the thought (*la pensée*) that thinks of gifts? Do gifts give themselves to thought? If they do not, how could the question of gifts be asked? But if they do, on what basis would this thought be ‘irreducible to intuition’?

By stating a quadruple irreducibility of gifts to intuition, perception, judgment and experience, Derrida rightly points out the impossibility for gifts to be circumscribed in the horizon of exchange

²⁰⁰ ‘Et pourquoi s’agit-il précisément ici de *penser*, comme si la pensée, le mot de *pensée*, ne s’ajustait qu’à cette disproportion de l’impossible, ne s’annonçant même, comme pensée irréductible à l’intuition, irréductible aussi à la perception, au jugement, à l’expérience, à la science, à la foi, que depuis *cette* figure de l’impossible? Depuis l’impossible *dans la figure du don*?’ Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 22.

²⁰¹ *Ibidem*, emphasis ours.

²⁰² Husserl, *Ideas I*, §59: ‘to lay claim to nothing other than what we are essentially able to make transparently evident to ourselves in consciousness itself, in pure immanence.’ The intentionality of phenomenology is that of ‘pure immanence’. But the difficulty imposed by ‘gifts’ (*le don*) and raised by Derrida is nonetheless real and it challenges the fundamental theme of phenomenology. If a gift is what resists intentionality per excellence and if ‘intentionality’ is the ‘capital theme of phenomenology’ (§84) then gifts can well become the major aporia of phenomenology.

(economy). But every horizon comes with its logic and the principles that found it. Marion underlines that the horizon of economy shares the same foundation as that of the metaphysical horizon, namely the principle of sufficient reason and of non-contradiction.²⁰³ Phenomenology would well be dismissed from accessing a thought of gifts if it had not also done a foundational work on the role of logic and of the rapport of phenomenality to truth.²⁰⁴ This work is all the more relevant since here, just as Derrida points out, it is nothing less than ‘the truth of gifts’ that is at stake.²⁰⁵

On one side, Husserl takes over the ‘narrow concept of truth’, *viz.* truth as adequation, which must only be attributed to ‘the side of acts’, that is, truth resulting from (active) categorial judgement (‘apophantic logic’); is true or false what is *said* (predicated) of something. But on the other side, and that is where Husserl was innovative, he does not neglect that the ‘objectifying act’ has an ‘objective correlate’ which he calls ‘self-evidence’ or ‘perfect synthesis of coincidence’: ‘*being in the sense of truth*’.²⁰⁶ So if ‘in predicative statement “Being in the sense of truth of judgement is lived through but not expressed (*erlebt, aber nicht ausgedrückt*)”’, we must infer that Being in the sense of truth [...] is lived through (*vécu, erlebt*) and also expressed as such – thus phenomenalisied.²⁰⁷ Therefore, ‘what is true is not in regard to judgements about objects, but to the object of judgements’:²⁰⁸ truth is a *state of affairs* (Sachverhalt) insofar ‘as [it is] the correlate of an identifying act’.²⁰⁹ The objective correlate is always ‘*the given object (gegebenen Gegenstand) in the mode of the aimed-at: it is the fulfilling itself.*’²¹⁰ On the interpretation of the §24 of the *Ideen I* Marion goes further than Derrida and argues for a

²⁰³ See *e.g.* Leibniz, ‘Principles of Nature and Grace’, in *Discourse on Metaphysics and Other Writings*, translated by Robert Latta and George R. Montgomery, Peter Loftson, ed. (USA: Broadpress, 2012), §7, pp. 108sq. See also Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 37.

²⁰⁴ As early as the *Logical Investigations* does Husserl ask the rapport of truth to logic in Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §39. See Marion, ‘Husserl et « le concept large de logique et de logos », in *Figures de phénoménologie* (Paris: VRIN, 2015), §2, p. 13 (first published in Jocelyn Benoist (ed.), *Husserl* (Paris: CERF, 2008)).

²⁰⁵ ‘Allons à la limite : la vérité du don (son être ou son apparaître tel, son *comme tel* en tant qu’il guide la signification intentionnelle ou le vouloir-dire) suffit à annuler le don. La vérité du don équivaut au non-don ou à la non-vérité du don.’, Derrida, *Donner le temps*, p. 42.

²⁰⁶ ‘Die Evidenz selbst (*Self-evidence*) ist, sagten wir, der Akt jener vollkommensten Deckungssynthese (*perfect synthesis of coincidence*). Wie jede Identifizierung ist sie ein objektivierender Akt (*objectifying act*), ihr objektives Korrelat (*objective correlate*) heißt *Sein im Sinne der Wahrheit* (being in the sense of truth) oder auch *Wahrheit* (truth)...’, Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §38, p. 651, cited in Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 13; ‘Self-evidence itself, we said, is the act of this most perfect synthesis of coincidence. Like every identification, it is an objectifying act, its objective correlate being called *being in the sense of truth*, or simply *truth*...’, Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II: VI, §38, p. 263.

²⁰⁷ ‘or, puisque dans l’énoncé prédicatif « l’être au sens de la vérité du jugement est vécu et non exprimé (*erlebt, aber nicht ausgedrückt*) », on doit en inférer que l’être au sens de la vérité (et non pas au sens de la copule), se trouve au contraire, lui, vécu et exprimé comme tel – donc phénoménalisé.’ Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, pp. 14sq, citing Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §39, p. 653.

²⁰⁸ ‘...le vrai ne porte pas seulement sur le jugement à propos de l’objet, mais sur l’objet du jugement.’ Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁰⁹ ‘...so ist die *Wahrheit* als Korrelat eines identifizierenden Aktes ein *Sachverhalt*’, Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §39, p. 651; Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II: VI, §39, p. 263.

²¹⁰ ‘Wir erleben ferner auf Seite des Fülle gebenden Aktes in der Evidenz den gegebenen Gegenstand in der Weise des gemeinten: er ist die Fülle selbst.’, Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, VI, §39, p. 652, cited in Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, pp. 15sq, translation ours; ‘We also experience in self-evidence, from the side of the act which furnishes ‘fulness’, *the object given in the manner of the object meant: so given, the object is fulness itself.*’, Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II: VI, §39, p. 264.

precedence of givenness over intuition: ‘Intuition is only valid as law (“legitimate source”) insofar as “it gives” [...]. Intuition borrows its (giving) authority to the more radical givenness of that which gives itself by itself and from itself – the phenomenon as such.’²¹¹ With givenness guaranteeing the authority of intuition ‘prior even to the gap between sensibility and intelligibility, between intuition and signification, between possibility and contradiction, and even between Being and non-Being’, Husserl effectively ‘opens a new horizon’.²¹² This horizon is wider than that of metaphysics and extends even to ‘logical givenness’ so that ‘that which cannot be, must, be it only in order to be thought as such, find itself already given.’²¹³

Husserl opens the possibility of overcoming the aporia raised by Derrida on the thought of gifts beyond the horizon of metaphysics. The extended horizon of givenness suggests also a wider concept of judgement so far limited to predication: ‘To judge is thus not primarily about saying something about something but about saying something as such, *i.e.* as it gives itself in advance [...] as from its own initiative – not so much in the manner of a constituted object as that of an event, that decides itself on its forthcoming (*advenir*).’²¹⁴ The direct consequence of a givenness that precedes and presides over all intuitions, experiences, judgements (apophantics), etc – in the figure of a radical pre-givenness – entails the enlarging of the horizon of phenomenality so as to include phenomena of pure givenness (saturated phenomena). According to the principle that the phenomenon ‘shows itself by itself and from itself’, the situation of event is a situation where givenness is absolutely anterior. In this situation, ‘the *I* does not yet act nor does it do so from the outset’.²¹⁵ In a situation of pre-givenness, ‘the very notion of “intentional object” is inverted’. A ‘counter-intentionality’ is exerted on the *I* and affects it. Before the *I* exerts any influence on objects, the *I* is affected by a pre-object to which it gives itself out of its

²¹¹ ‘En effet, poser que « toute intuition originellement donatrice (*gebende*) est une source originelle de droit, que tout ce qui s’offre à nous dans l’“intuition” originelle [...] est à recevoir simplement pour ce qu’il se donne », ne fait pas reposer la vérité du phénomène seulement sur l’intuition, mais l’intuition elle-même sur la donation; car l’intuition n’a force de loi (« source de droit ») que parce qu’elle « donne »; et elle ne donne pas ce qui, en tant que tel, recevrait passivement sa donation; mais elle ne donne que ce qui, d’abord et plus originellement, se fait recevoir de lui-même « pour [en tant que, *als*] ce qu’il se donne ». L’intuition emprunte son autorité (donatrice) à la donation plus radicale de ce qui se donne de lui-même et à partir de lui-même – le phénomène comme tel.’, Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 18, citing Husserl, *Ideen I*, p. 52 (Husserl, *Idea I*, p. 43). See *contra*, Derrida in ‘On the gift’, in *op. cit.*, p. 58: ‘When Husserl says *Gegebenheit*, [...he] refer[s] to the passivity of intuition. Something is there.’ It is clear however that for Marion ‘givenness’ is not another way of saying ‘passive intuition’ because if intuition is passive, it is precisely because it finds itself always already preceded by and caught within a greater activity, namely that of a ‘pre-givenness’ (*Vorgegebenheit*) already pointed to by Husserl, see Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²¹² ‘Husserl ouvre un nouvel horizon [...], puisqu’il précède même l’écart entre le sensible et l’intelligible, l’intuition et la signification, le possible et le contradictoire et même l’être et le non-être.’, *Ibid.*, pp. 18sq.

²¹³ ‘...ce qui ne peut être, doit, pour pouvoir seulement se penser comme tel, se trouver déjà donné.’, *Ibid.*, pp. 17sq. See also Marion in ‘On the gift’, in *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²¹⁴ ‘Juger ne consiste donc plus d’abord à dire quelque chose de quelque chose, mais à dire quelque chose comme tel, à savoir tel qu’il se donne par avance, le premier, comme à sa seule initiative – moins à la manière d’un objet constitué, qu’à celle d’un événement, qui se décide de lui-même à advenir.’, Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 22. See also: ‘Le monde s’ouvre comme ce en quoi se donne l’objet (l’étant) qui rend possible la prédication et donc la précède, elle comme tous les autres actes.’ (p. 21).

²¹⁵ ‘...en régime de donation préalable (*Vorgegebenheit*), en situation de la donation (comme le préalable par excellence, bref dans la position où nous nous découvrons, le *Je* n’agit précisément par encore, ni d’emblée.’, *Ibid.*, p. 23

‘tendency to give in [to something] (*die Tendenz zur Hingabe*)’.²¹⁶ ‘But to what can the *I* give in [or give itself] to? Logically, the *I* can properly give itself only to a *given*.’²¹⁷

The *I*, in a situation of phenomenal saturation by the non-objects that affect it and exert their counter-intentionality on it, overthrows at once the primacy of the *I* in metaphysical situations – and gifts are the privileged phenomena where reversal of intentionality and contradiction of metaphysical reason occur. Whereas in metaphysics, givenness is excluded from the outset because causes remain immanent to their effects so as to ensure the principle of sufficient reason and ultimately achieve transcendence of effectivity by addition (totality), in saturation, givenness remains strictly immanent to gifts *as* their immanent reason. In this mode of phenomenality, truth is the matter itself (the *Sachverhalt*) of the given giving itself. In saturated phenomenality, truth unveils only on the mode of ‘lived experience’ (*vécu*, *Erlebnis*), that corresponds to the mode in which *events* are given (or give themselves) – truth arrives/lands (gives itself) in the event that unveils it. Similarly, the truth of gifts is not to be found in any object or common beings. Gifts give themselves all the more that they give nothing: ‘the gifts that give the most and most decisively give *nothing* – no thing, no object; not because they deceive expectation, but because what they give belongs neither to reality nor to objectness and can thus surpass all expectation, indeed fulfil a desire. In the realm of the reduction, gifts are accomplished all the better when they are not reified in any object.’²¹⁸ (giving of time, of love, of one’s life/death, of a promise...) The reduction of transcendences in gifts deploys their ‘pure immanence’ as reduced gifts. A reduced gift, whether it is reduced to the giver, the givee or even the gift, still appears as gift precisely because its ‘givability’ and ‘receivability’ remain immanent to the reduced gift in all three types of reduction,²¹⁹ the bracketing of ‘the transcendence of exchanged objects and beings’, frees ‘the two (reduced) lived experiences (*vécus*) of receivability and givability’.²²⁰ Hence, the pure immanence of reduced gifts ensures the coincidence of the *showing-itself* and the *giving-itself*: ‘And reciprocally, what gives *itself* without return or exchange arrives in the end at this unreserved abandon, the visibility of the phenomenon that gives *itself*.’²²¹ The lived experience of reduced gifts thus happens in one breaking

²¹⁶ Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil* (Prag: Academia Verlagbuchhandlung, 1939) p. 82, cited in Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, pp. 24sq.

²¹⁷ ‘Mais à quoi peut s’adonner le *Je*? En bonne logique, le *Je* ne peut proprement s’adonner qu’à un *donné*.’, Marion, ‘Husserl...’, in *op. cit.*, p. 25.

²¹⁸ ‘...les dons qui donnent le plus et le plus décidément ne donnent jamais *rien* – aucune chose, aucun objet ; non qu’ils déçoivent l’attente, mais parce que ce qu’ils donnent n’appartient ni à la réalité, ni à l’objectivité et peut ainsi surpasser toute attente, voire combler un désir. En régime de réduction, le don s’accomplit d’autant mieux qu’il ne se réifie en aucun objet.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 176. We used and modified the translation of Jeffrey L. Kosky in Marion, *Being given*, p. 106.

²¹⁹ ‘Il y a plus : le don lui-même ne peut atteindre, dans notre analyse, le statut d’un don donné et se dégager décidément du modèle de l’échange, qu’autant qu’il lève l’hypothèque d’une objectivité ou d’une étantité à transférer. Mais il n’y parvient – selon la donation – que parce que – selon la réduction – il met entre parenthèse la transcendence de l’objet et de l’étant échangés, pour dégager les deux vécus (réduits) de la recevabilité et de la donabilité.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 192.

²²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²²¹ ‘*Se* montrer (immanence, réduction) équivaut, une nouvelle fois, à *se* donner (sans échange). Et réciproquement, ce qui *se* donne sans retour ni échange aboutit à cet abandon sans retenue, la visibilité du

forth (*surgissement*) and upon a single axle where *showing itself* amounts to *giving itself*; ‘We shall call this identification of the phenomenon that gives *itself* and the gift *showing itself anamorphosis*.’²²²

To think of truth from the immanence of givenness frees the possibility of a mode of phenomenality that opposes the metaphysical mode of phenomenality that harbours only common or poor phenomena. In contrast, this mode of phenomenality is characterised by the impossibility to subsume a giving intuition to an intentional object (concept) because of a surplus or excess of intuition over what intentionality can contain and aim at.²²³ In the situation of saturation, the epistemological posture, that rules over objects and beings in the mode of common or poor phenomenality, is also inverted: ‘the anamorphosis imposes a counter-intentionality to the *ego*’.²²⁴ This counter-intentionality finds its correct formulation in phenomenology under the title of *paradoxes*.

Paradoxes can be described by reverting the Kantian and metaphysical categories of reason.²²⁵ If the truth of paradoxes is lived through as a given phenomenon, paradoxes do not consist in a logical difficulty (impossible signification) but rather in the logical description of a counter-experience: ‘[p]aradoxes thus, far from excluding experience or excluding themselves from it, enlarge experience.’²²⁶ Paradoxes ‘designate first and foremost the things themselves, not the manner of saying them.’²²⁷ The counter-intentionality displayed in the paradox defies the epistemological homogeneity of truth defined as *adequatio rei et intellectus (alêtheia)*: ‘I cognise because I recognise, and I recognise because I can identify (through concept) that which I see (through intuition)’.²²⁸ Paradoxes contradict this homogeneity precisely in virtue of their appearing as such, that is, not an appearing to an ‘*I*’ but to a ‘*witness*’ according to the principle that paradoxes that persist as paradoxes (even after reduction) are given in lived experience (*Erlebnis*): the witness ‘marks his epistemological heterogeneity in front of the saturated phenomenon.’²²⁹

In phenomenology, the classical epistemology of the *I* gives way to the non-epistemological posture of the witness in which the witness’ relationship to truth is equally inverted. Whereas in metaphysics,

phénomène qui *se donne*’, *Ibid.*, p. 193. We used the translation of Jeffrey L. Kosky in Marion, *Being given*, p. 116.

²²² ‘Cette identification entre le phénomène qui *se donne* et le don qui *se montre*, nous la nommerons désormais l’*anamorphose*.’, *Ibid.*, p. 191-194.

²²³ The concept of visibility needs also to be enlarged beyond the limit of sensitive intuition. That which shows itself may well remain invisible to the eye and to other senses. For the description of the saturated phenomenon, see Marion, ‘Le phénomène saturé’, in *Le Visible et le révélé*, especially §§5-6, pp. 57-67.

²²⁴ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 215sq. On common and poor phenomenality, see *e.g.*, Marion, *Réduction et donation*, §3 and Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 236-238.

²²⁵ Cf. *Supra*, p. 29, n. 223.

²²⁶ ‘Le paradoxe étend donc l’expérience, loin de l’exclure ou de s’en exclure ; il l’étend en permettant de décrire une expérience non objectivable et d’autant *plus* manifeste qu’elle provient de phénomènes qui se manifestent en eux-mêmes, parce qu’ils se donnent à partir d’eux-mêmes. Cette expérience peut se nommer contre-expérience.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 163

²²⁷ Henri de Lubac, *Nouveaux Paradoxes* (Paris: Seuil, 1959), p. 72, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 262.

²²⁸ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 237.

²²⁹ ‘ce dernier [the one who receives], [...] sous la figure du *témoin*, marque son hétérogénéité épistémologique devant le *phénomène saturé*’, *Ibid.*, p. 238.

truth corresponds to an unsealing of *alêtheia* in ‘putting in evidence’ and ‘taking possession of a proposition’ (epistemological interpretation of the Revelation), in phenomenology, truth is to be thought of in terms of *apokalupsis*, i.e. as uncovering (*découvrement*), according to ‘the character proper of revelation as *apokalupsis*’, that is, according to the counter-experience and anamorphosis that a revelation imposes on the witness.²³⁰

In this radical phenomenality, truth unveils itself as always in excess – on the high ground – in the exact measure, itself excessive, of the unfolding of givenness to the witness. Thus, truth is always in advance: truth calls first and, in its calling, constitutes the witness from within the unfolding of its givenness. The uncovering of truth in the situation of *apokalupsis* opens the *I* to its most radical possibility so as to overthrow at once the quiet stream of its *Erlebnis* (lived experience). A revelation triggers a *crisis* and is precisely recognised in *it*. Here, the passivity of the *I* – who is not yet constituted – matches the moment of the witness, whose activity is to respond. The witness must take a decision in regard to truth, or rather in regard to the *one* truth has revealed, viz. *myself* such as I am being given and being seen. In the situation of uncovering, ‘[t]he incompleteness of manifestation does not result any longer from a withdrawal of that which would not give itself fully, but from the withdrawing of the *one* that does not want to concede his ground [...]. For here, in the face of a saturated phenomenon – that shows itself insofar as it gives itself, and as it can make itself received – that which gives itself cannot show itself unless it is received by the only *one* who can see it.’²³¹ The revelation of truth inverts the normal understanding of knowledge according to Descartes, and instead confirms the ‘sentence of the saints’ formulated by Pascal: ‘whereas, when speaking of human matters, we say that we must know them before loving them – which has become proverbial; the saints instead, when speaking of divine matters, say that we must love them in order to know them and that we enter in truth only through charity – this has become one of their most useful sentences.’²³² The revelation of truth opens the possibility of *withdrawal*: truth tries the *adonné*, it puts it to the test. ‘Withdrawal (confusion, deliberate or spontaneous blinding, rejection, etc.) belongs to the phenomenological transcendence of

²³⁰ ‘...la Révélation [...], dans la « raison » de la métaphysique [...], aboutit à la mise en évidence et la prise de possession d’un énoncé dévoilé sans reste par concept.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 193-194.

²³¹ ‘L’incomplétude de la manifestation ne résulte plus de retrait de ce qui ne se donnerait pas à fond, mais de la retraite de celui qui ne veut pas céder son fonds, même pour parvenir à recevoir ce qui se donne à fond. Car, ici, devant un phénomène saturé, qui ne se montre qu’à proportion qu’il se donne, donc qu’il peut se faire recevoir, ce qui se donne ne peut se montrer sans que ne le reçoive celui qui seul peut le voir.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 240sq.

²³² ‘Et de là vient qu’au lieu qu’en parlant des choses humaines, on dit qu’il faut les connaître avant que de les aimer, ce qui a passé en proverbe, les saints au contraire disent en parlant des choses divines qu’il faut les aimer pour les connaître et qu’on entre dans la vérité que par la charité, dont ils ont fait une de leur plus utiles sentences.’, Pascal, ‘De l’esprit géométrique’, in *Œuvres complètes de Blaise Pascal* (Paris: Hachette, 1871), vol. 3: p. 175. Pascal refers implicitly first to Descartes, *Meditatio IV*, p. 59: ‘From a great light in reason followed a great inclination in the will. (*Ex magna luce in intellectu magna consequuta est propensio in voluntate.*)’, and secondly to Augustin, ‘*Contra Faustum Manichaeum*’ in Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1841), Tomus 42: XXXII, p. 507: ‘*quia non intratur in veritatem, nisi per charitatem*’, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, respectively pp. 194, 196.

uncoverings.²³³ Truth comes with an ambivalence that directly involves the *adonné* precisely because truth does not give any object.²³⁴ Truth, because of its excess, measures or accuses the capacity of reception of the witness.²³⁵ Paradoxically, on the mode of *apokalupsis*, truth does not say so much something *to* me as it says something *about* me.

From ‘*veritas lucens*’, truth now unfolds on the mode of ‘*veritas redarguens*’.²³⁶ To a direct phenomenality, ‘where the more evidence unveils a thing, the more unveils its truth’ (*veritas lucens*), is now added a ‘thwarted [or upset] phenomenality, where the more evidence unveils a thing, the more obscure its accessibility becomes, the more it becomes an object of rejection, an object of scandal’ (*veritas redarguens*).²³⁷ ‘Love (or hatred) becomes the style of truth’;²³⁸ it is not so much that one must love truth in order to see, but one must love it in order to forbear it or to undergo the light that accuses and brings into light the one it enlightens: myself in a new light.²³⁹ It becomes a ‘counter-truth’ in the sense that ‘*the truth upsets (contrarie) the one it affects, [viz.] me*’.²⁴⁰ Truth affects the one living it through because of the excess of givenness that it unfolds. Truth is never known theoretically, *i.e.* it is not *a priori* visioned, nor envisioned, as if one could get to truth without being involved in the unfolding of its givenness. On the contrary, truth is non-theoretical in that it is never foreseen but always

²³³ ‘Le retrait (confusion, aveuglement délibéré ou spontané, refus, etc.) appartient à la transcendance phénoménologique du découvrément’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 240.

²³⁴ The dialogical link between the *given (donné)* and the *adonné* is accounted for in the name itself (*a-donné*) as opposed to the *I* who must account for itself through its own *cogitatio* (solipsism *in fine*), through hyperbolic doubt or an epistemic reduction. See Marion, *Le phénomène érotique* (Paris: Grasset, 2003), §1.

²³⁵ Adequation in giving-receiving (economy, exchange) maintains the transcendental postures of *giver* and *givee* toward the ‘gift’ (exchanged object in fact): ‘Nous voulons avoir de quoi surpayer la dette. *Beneficia eo usque laeta sunt dum videntur exsolvi posse. Ubi multum antevenere pro gratia odium redditur.*’, Pascal, *Pensées*, *op. cit.*, #72 (Lafuma #199). In adequation, *giver* and *givee* are not yet affected in their *ipseity* (they remain in the ‘*on*’, the mundane, the general, the totality, the impersonal). On the contrary, the first mark of a really given gift is its *inadequation*. From there can the gift reduce all transcendences to itself in the process of its givenness.

²³⁶ This concept of truth is developed by Augustin in *Confessions* X, 22, 34. Referred to by Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 248 and Marion, ‘The banality of saturation’ in *op. cit.*, p. 176.

²³⁷ ‘Pour faire droit à cette ambivalence, saint Augustin n’a pas reculé devant une redéfinition radicale de l’essence de la vérité : à sa phénoménalité directe (au sens grec), où plus l’évidence découvre la chose, plus s’en découvre la vérité, s’ajoute et peut-être s’oppose une phénoménalité contrariée, où plus l’évidence découvre la chose, plus s’en obscurcit l’accès, plus elle devient l’objet du refus, l’objet du scandale.’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 176.

²³⁸ ‘L’amour (ou la haine) devient le style de la vérité’, *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²³⁹ ‘...il s’agit de la nécessité d’aimer pour la [vérité] supporter, pour supporter, sans défaillir ni se condamner soi-même, la crue clarté que sa splendeur pose sur celui qui se risque à la regarder, elle, et la charge qu’elle lui impose, « ...parce que la gloire, quand elle ne le glorifie pas, accable celui qui regarde ».’, *Ibid.*, p. 177. Marion cites St. John of the Cross from the latin, available in English in Saint John of the Cross, *The living flame of Love*, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. (Washington: ICS Publications, 2023), IV, 11, p. 203: ‘When glory does not glorify, it weighs heavily on the one who beholds it’.

²⁴⁰ ‘Une telle *veritas redarguens* retourne en effet son évidence intransigeante contre celui qui la voit ou plutôt ne peut plus la voir; elle peut parfaitement se définir comme une lumière contre ma vision, une lumière qui va à l’encontre de ma [pré-]vision, la rend confuse, et moi-même avec elle. Je deviens confus devant cette lumière, en tous les sens du terme : ma vue perd sa clarté et se brouille, mais moi aussi j’y perds mon bon droit, mon innocence et ma sécurité. Au point que cette vérité, qui m’accuse de non-vérité, peut bien se dire contre-vérité. Mais ici la contre-vérité ne signifie certes pas le contraire de la vérité, ni le simple mensonge que je pourrais lui opposer, mais *la vérité qui contrarie celui qu’elle affecte*, moi. Elle contrarie, car elle exige de moi, pour la voir sans danger, que je l’aime et me prête à sa splendeur en me conformant sa pureté.’, *Ibid.*, p. 178.

recognised from the immanence of its uncovering, in which I am revealed to *myself* (as *me, moi* – dative; as *witness*).

The advance of truth and the delay of the witness confirm the paradox that responses (*la réponse*) precede calls (*l'appel*) in a rigorously phenomenological sense.²⁴¹ A call remains invisible and inaudible because of its anonymity for as long as no response has been decided: 'Calls are shown in answers' or '[a] response, whilst being given after a call, is nevertheless the first to show it'.²⁴² A simple observation can perhaps make this paradox more tangible. In the situation where I hear a sound that *could* become a call, I always already act – from my freedom to do so – *as if* this sound could address *me*. If I take what *could* become a call as a call *for me* I act *as if* it called *me*, and thus my response would first render it visible as 'call'. The invisibility of a call still imperceptible from among noise, is gradually singled out as a call to the extent that the responder decides to respond and so implicitly *decides* the call *as* call. And even if I heard my name in what *could* become a call, I must still answer by *this* name, that is, respond to this name *as if* it were *mine* despite and against the fact that nobody's name has ever been theirs alone.²⁴³ In deciding the response, it is no less than *myself* that I decide because the response *decides* the so-far anonymous and abandoned call. It names the call and eventually houses it so as to offer it a stage for its phenomenalisation: 'Here I am; you called me' (1 Samuel 3.8),²⁴⁴ and this is why *polloi gar eisin klêtoi oligoi de eklektoi* (Matt. 22.14).²⁴⁵

In fact, in the situation of *apokalupsis*, it is not so much the response that the witness decides as the response that decides the call: am I being called? me?²⁴⁶ The response shows the truth of the call and thus shows the call itself. The uncovering from *elsewhere* (truth) is also coincidentally the uncovering of myself to myself (revelation) from *elsewhere*; and this is why, when truth sheds its light from *elsewhere* (*veritas lucens*), the excess of its light blinds and accuses the measure of my reception (*veritas*

²⁴¹ See Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 460-468. In French, *l'appel* in the singular and with a definite article refers to the concept of *l'appel*. This cannot be translated literally into 'the call' or 'the concept of the call' in English since one would expect 'the call' to refer to a specific and definite 'call'. Instead we will then translate *l'appel* into 'call(s)' and 'the concept of calls'. A similar decision was already taken in regard to 'revelation' and (*la révélation*) 'gifts' (*le don*). And similarly, we extend our decision to *la réponse* which is translated 'response(s)' or 'answer(s)' and 'concept of response'.

²⁴² 'L'appel se montre dans la réponse', and 'La réponse, qui se donne après l'appel, le montre pourtant la première.', Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 460, 465; 'The response that gives itself after the call nevertheless is the first one to show it.', Marion, *Being Given*, p. 285, translation modified.

²⁴³ On '*Le nom impropre*', see Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 474-477.

²⁴⁴ This example is all the more striking that YHWH's voice does not suggest the response as if his voice among others was distinguishable. The call does not give its name and is in this sense anonymous. Twice Samuel names the call as coming from Eli. The third time, YHWH was 'calling as the other times'. Nothing in the call changed *as such*, it was the same anonymous call, but the response changed everything, and thus the call was unveiled, it was named appropriately for the first time; and for Samuel, this last call was a wholly different one!

²⁴⁵ We think also of Mary at the tomb (John 20.11-16): paradoxically, Christ does not appear to her at the sight of his physical presence but he properly appears to her from and within the phenomenalisation of *the* call (not *his* call because the call remains at this point *anonymous*) – Christ is *seen* in the moment of response ('Rabbouni!'), in the *hearing* of the call (in a hearing-seeing such as the French has it: '*Écoute voir!*'), that hosts its phenomenon and fixes it on the screen of its appearing.

²⁴⁶ Caravaggio, *The Calling of Saint Matthew* (painting) (Rome, 1600). See full information about the painting and Marion's phenomenological description of it in Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 462-465.

redarguens) so as to set the measure of all measures: ‘...for the measure you measure with will be measured against you’ (*ô gar metrô metreite antimetrêthêsetai umin*, Luke 6.38). This is why, whether I hate or love the truth, I do not love or hate so much the light as I love or hate the one that the light has enlightened.²⁴⁷ When I hate the truth, I hate to see myself in the light of truth. If truth is always known (unveiled) *a posteriori* in the immanence of the response, we also understand the manner (or mode) in which Jesus spoke the truth, as the perfect witness of the Father and as the only one who responded adequately to Him. His response to the Father is the truth he proclaims. Contrary to the one who ‘speaks of his own’ (*ek tôn idiôn lalei*) and thus is ‘the liar and father of lies (*hoti pseustês estin kai ho patêr autou*)’ (John 8.44), Jesus spoke the truth precisely in that he spoke from what was not his own. He is the only one who responded adequately to the Father in that he did not seek to possess the share of what could (rightly) have been his (Luke 15.12) but instead ‘did not consider equality with God something to be grasped’ (Philippians 2.6, NASB); this, at least, should be acknowledged as an underlying principle of the *kenosis* of Christ.²⁴⁸ The paradox of ‘inauthenticity’ is confirmed in the irreducible delay (*retard*) or belatedness of the *adonné* to the call; for whereas a response is phenomenally anterior to a call, an *adonné*, or a responder (*le répons*), remains structurally characterised from the outset, prior even to *showing* responses, by the inequality between *itself* and the *giving-itself* (the call) which most originally starts by giving the *adonné* to *itself* and thus starts by giving it *its self*.²⁴⁹ Thus unfolds the principle of inauthenticity that confirms once again that the true *I am* (*ego eimi*), similarly to the logic of *kenosis*, seeks not to affirm itself (self-affirmation) as does one speaking from itself (authenticity) but seeks to affirm *another* in speaking from his *being given* from *elsewhere* (inauthenticity).

Unless one receives the gift and thus decides to respond to what was so far an abandoned call, one cannot know the gift. Phenomenologically, gifts and responses are inseparably linked and thus confirm that the phenomenality of gifts does not simply nor immediately ‘appear’ in the unidirectional phenomenality of the transcendental *I*. To receive *the* gift means at the same time to receive *myself* from it, that is *a posteriori* from the immanence of the gift and from an *elsewhere* that precedes me and

²⁴⁷ Equally powerful is Augustine’s conversion, where it appears that the unproduced truth that breaks forth out of nowhere (*elsewhere*) can only be attested on its effect. The truth is not so much confessed as it is the truth that leads to confession. In truth, I see the one that truth has revealed before my eyes, myself in regard to truth, and this, I can only either love it or hate it. See, Augustine, ‘Confessions’, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Series I*, Vol. I: Book VIII, 7, 16.

²⁴⁸ Barth brilliantly summed up the role of *elsewhere* (in the form of ‘*Andere Selbst*’) in the uncovering of truth to and through the witness: ‘Why and how does the biblical witness has authority? In that he does not revendicate any authority for himself... (*Warum und worin hat der biblische Zeuge Autorität ? Eben darum und darin, daß er gar keine Autorität für sich selbst in Anspruch nimmt, daß sein Bezeugen darin aufgeht, jenes Andere selbst und durch sich selbst Autorität sein zu lassen.*), Karl Barth, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I/1, p. 115, also cited in French in Marion, *D’ailleurs la révélation*, p. 256.

²⁴⁹ ‘...or, cette égalité de soi à soi, à supposer qu’elle soit possible et qu’elle parvienne à s’accomplir, permettrait seule au *Je* de s’approprier lui-même, de devenir sa propriété (*Eigentum*) et donc de s’authentifier sans reste (*Eigentlichkeit*) ; car l’authenticité suppose l’appropriation de soi, sans reste, ni écart [...]. Mais l’adonné sait, lui, que cette appropriation ne peut par principe pas s’accomplir : [...] l’écart surgit dans le *Je* lui-même, avec lui et même avant lui puisqu’il se creuse dès que se donne l’appel, avant même que le répons ne le montre ; le retard du répons sur l’appel structure d’emblée l’adonné par cette inégalité, qui le donne à lui-même en tant qu’impropre à soi, en tant qu’inauthentique.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 473.

remains for this reason *interior intimo meo*, since I live from the gift and within the gift that has *given me* to myself.²⁵⁰ The excess of givenness at work in *the* gift does not just define the local region of a specific phenomenality but it rather opens a world (a horizon) of phenomenality within which all subsequent gifts find their intrinsic reason and are thus made possible: ‘Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself [...] neither can you unless you abide in me...’ (John 15.4-11, NRSV).

The horizon of givenness not only frees gifts from the circle of economy; it also enables an enlarged concept of truth within the horizon of givenness. Gifts, as intrinsically manifesting their coming from *elsewhere*, decentre the *I* from its *ego* and require it to *decide itself* in regard to *another* than itself.²⁵¹ In fact, a gift necessarily comes as the *event* that takes me out of my solipsism; and in the breaking forth of a gift I must at once *decide myself* in the face of it; I am summoned, prior even to the actual content of my response, to give in to the gift (*Je dois m’adonner au don*). That is why the appearing of (a pure) gift cannot be fragmented in a succession of actors and objects, cannot be objectified nor grasped in any way, since in its appearing as gift *showing-itself-giving-itself* it immediately involves *me* from the outset, and does not appear without constituting *me* as witness.

If the measure of a call is inseparable from the measure of its response, then we can infer that love sets the measure of the reception of all gifts. ‘Who thinks and does not love? (*Quis cogitat et non amat?*)’²⁵² Paul clearly expresses the limits of classical epistemology when put in contrast with the mode of knowledge enabled by love: ‘*ê gnôsis phusioi, ê de agapê oikodomei. Ei tis dokei egnôkenai ti, oupô egnô kathôs dei gnônai: ei de tis agapa ton theon, outos egnôstai up autou*’ (1 Cor. 8.1-3). One does not know any longer in thinking that they know (*cogitatio*) – because from the standpoint of charity, it becomes obvious that this is not yet knowing as one should (*oupô egnô kathôs dei gnônai*) –, but in being known from God whom they love and thus receiving their knowledge from Him who knows them first (*outos egnôstai up autou*). In the new phenomenal situation opened by gifts, the principle enunciated by Pascal²⁵³ becomes the rule so as to cohere with the principle of faith (Isaiah 7.9, LXX²⁵⁴) that displaces understanding from an act of pure reason (acknowledgment of truth by *adequatio rei et intellectus*) to an act of the will (love or hatred) precisely because gifts introduce a radical *inadequation* (the *elsewhere*) from which and in regard to which I must decide myself (*me décider au don*). Therefore, Isaiah 7.9 must now be understood radically according to the irreducible heterogeneity of the witness in

²⁵⁰ See Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 216, for more details on the link between the phenomenon of revelation and the ‘interior intimo meo’ of Augustine.

²⁵¹ The French reflexive verb ‘*se décider*’ has the particularity not only to affect the subject using it (passive voice) but also to alter it radically since the subject itself is to be decided by the act of *deciding itself* (*se décider*). When the matter to decide is the self itself, then I ‘decide for myself of my self’ (in short, I decide myself my self or I decide my self). The reflexive infinitive ‘*se décider*’ implies all these possible phrasings. *Je me décide* implies *je décide moi-même* (*de moi-même*).

²⁵² William of St Thierry, *Speculum fidei*, M. M. Davy, ed. (Paris: VRIN, 1959), §74, p. 84, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 204.

²⁵³ See *supra*, p. 42, n. 232.

²⁵⁴ Isaiah 7.9 (LXX): ‘*kai ean mê pisteusête, oude mê sunête.*’

the face of the *gift giving itself*: unless one loves and chooses love out of love, they will not understand,²⁵⁵ ‘in situation of revelation (*apokalupsis*, *uncovering*), to see is equivalent to love, contrary to the situation of truth (*alêtheia*, *unsealing*), where to know means to immediately see and to know directly.’²⁵⁶ So it is to be expected that the privileged *locus* of givenness, that which accomplishes the maximum of saturation, also entails the greatest judgement (*crisis*) that one will ever face: namely whether one decides to love or hate the gift *now* appearing as *given*, that is, the abandoned gift *giving itself* in the silent face of Christ on the cross: ‘God [...] exposes himself in such innocence and abandon, that every person must decide of its relation to him – [*i.e.* must] decide *their self* (*se décider*).’²⁵⁷

§11. Two Folds (Givenness—Love) – One Convergence (Revelation)

Karl Barth stated early on that ‘all human achievements are no more than prolegomena; and this is especially the case in the field of theology’.²⁵⁸ In theology, ‘one progresses directly in high sea, [...] – *duc in altum* (Luke 5.4)’.²⁵⁹ It is with the difficulty of the task ahead of him in mind that Marion writes the opening lines of his book *D’ailleurs, la révélation*. ‘Writing a line of genuine theology exposes one to an awesome interrogation, to a radical doubt; not of that which is spoken about, but of the one who speaks about it. [...] Theologians know that they cannot yet say well what they see, nor see well what they aim at, but they know that they must aim at it as much as they can.’²⁶⁰ All theology is an attempt to enter a discourse that we know in advance to be already by far saturated with the piercing light of truth

²⁵⁵ See full development of the ‘*sensus mentis*’ in *Ibid.* pp. 216-221; ‘Pour continuer plus avant, il faut passer d’une rationalité purement théorique à une rationalité qui soit aussi pragmatique : la Révélation découvre et se découvre parce qu’elle doit se faire et ne se connaît qu’en se pratiquant. [...] elle découvre l’amour, donc la pratique de l’amour, qui ne se fait voir et concevoir que si je le fais moi-même ; car l’amour ne se laisser connaître qu’à celui qui le pratique, le met en oeuvre, bref qui fait l’amour. Ainsi en est-il par excellence de la Révélation, si du moins on l’aborde enfin comme dé-couvrement de l’amour. L’amour, il faut le croire pour le voir.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 205.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 219. Similarly, and according to 1 John 4.20 and Mark 12.30, to the question ‘what does love look like?’, the only possible answer seems to stand out as such: ‘if you want to know love, love your neighbour’. To know God is to love him, and to love God who I have not seen is to love my neighbour whom I have seen. See *Ibid.*, pp. 245-248: ‘L’acte invisible de la charité envers des frères manifeste la foi, invisible, envers Dieu, donc découvre indirectement le don de Dieu’. See also, William of St Thierry, *Supra Cantica Cantorum*, J.-M. Déchanet, ed. (Paris: CERF, 1962), §64, p. 162: ‘...*amando intellegere et intelligendo amare*’, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 202. See again Paul’s response to the one who thinks that they know: ‘... but the one who loves God is known by him. ...*ei de tis agapa ton theon, outos egnōstai up autou.*’ (1 Cor. 8.2).

²⁵⁷ ‘La crise s’achève donc enfin en une crise vraiment cruciale, non parce que Dieu endosserait la fonction de juge – à la manière dont les hommes comprennent la justice –, mais parce qu’il s’expose devant nous en une telle innocence et un tel abandon, que chacun doit décider de son rapport à lui – *se décider*. Devant le Christ en Croix, je ne peux passer outre, puisque même cela, passer outre, constitue une décision ; je dois donc me décider : nul ne me décide que moi, et pourtant je décide de moi parce que je suis confronté au fait du Christ en croix.’, Marion, *Prolegomènes à la charité*, pp. 198-199.

²⁵⁸ Karl Barth, *The epistle to the Romans*, E. C. Hoskyns, 6th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 2sq. cited from the German edition in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 9.

²⁵⁹ ‘...rien non plus d’aussi difficile, voire douloureux que la théologie, où il faut s’avancer direct en haute mer, sans fond et sans fin – *duc in altum* (Luc 5,4).’, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁶⁰ ‘Écrire une ligne de théologie authentique expose à une formidable interrogation, à un doute radical. Non pas sur ce don’t on parle, mais sur celui qui en parle. [...] Le théologien sait ce qu’il ne peut pas encore dire bien ce qu’il voit, ni voir bien ce qu’il vise, mais qu’il doit au moins le viser autant qu’il le peut.’, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

‘that gives light to every one’ (John 1.9) and came so that ‘the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed’ (Luke 2.35). It is this light – not our own but the one coming from *elsewhere* – that reveals. That is why theology is the attempt of a discourse that will always remain insufficient and submitted to ‘eschatological rectification’: ‘there is no theology without development, because no theology can accomplish totally the hermeneutics of infinite.’²⁶¹

As we mentioned in our introduction, *D’ailleurs, la révélation* is the fruit of a ‘long odyssey’. Ever since *Le visible et le révélé*, which gathered papers that were published more than three decades before *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, the theme of revelation has been on Marion’s mind. Along with his conceptual elaboration of a phenomenology of givenness the question of revelation progressively gained more significance. It is not so much that phenomenology gave it its relevance, as if its relevance had to be made up for, but rather it became more and more obvious that the question of revelation was in fact unavoidable to anyone who aimed at remaining rigorously phenomenological. In *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, it is not only the phenomenal concept of revelation as phenomenological possibility that is at stake, but also the Revelation of Christ as the accomplished effectivity of the paradigmatic instance of revelation, *i.e.* the accomplished phenomenon of a maximum of givenness.

But if the question of revelation has been there all this time, and perhaps all through the course of Marion’s phenomenological developments, one may rightly infer that this question was in fact the driving force that pushed Marion to go as far as he has in phenomenology. And so those who hastily jump to conclusions so as to indulge their stubbornness would at first sight be right in saying that Marion simply wanted to push forward his ‘catholic’ agenda. This would certainly have been the case if phenomenologically speaking the phenomenon of revelation had no stage of manifestation at all in the mostly pragmatic lives that we all live in the flesh, and that are made up of phenomena that we say pertain to common phenomenality. In fact, the phenomenon of revelation already affects and saturates the common phenomenality of all flesh in the privileged phenomenon of love (charity, the erotic phenomenon). The foothold that the phenomenon of revelation maintains above all in the lived experience of all flesh is precisely the reason why it is intrinsically relevant and unavoidable. Before becoming a field of investigation for us, which in fact phenomenology never allows it to become, the phenomenon of revelation remains through and through phenomenological in that its phenomenality *affects* us in person; the field of investigation is therefore not so much the phenomenality of revelation as much as it is the investigation of ourselves in the face of the phenomenality which by its saturated degree affects us most *in the flesh*. This is why the investigation of the phenomenality of revelation unfolds in the mode of *apokalupsis*, that is, as a phenomenon unveiling itself from itself just as it gives itself from itself. In fact, the logic of *apokalupsis* follows the unfolding of givenness just as does the phenomenon of love that seems to be the only and privileged phenomenon opening to the phenomenality of an *other* in common phenomenality. ‘The difficulty no longer consists therefore in deciding if the

²⁶¹ ‘Pas de théologie sans développement, parce que aucune théologie ne peut accomplir totalement l’herméneutique de l’infini.’, *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Other can appear (traditional solipsism, the supposedly definitive “non communicability of consciousnesses”), but in grasping how the Other shows himself by giving himself to the gifted (*adonné*) that I remain. [...] This individuation [of an *other*] has a name: love. But we have for a long time now been without the concept that would do it justice, and this remains the most prostituted of words. Nonetheless, phenomenology claims to make it its privileged theme—“Love, as basic *motive* for phenomenological understanding” (Heidegger). Could the phenomenology of givenness finally restore to it the dignity of a concept?”²⁶²

The phenomenality of love is therefore inseparable from a rigorous undertaking of givenness in phenomenology. Love or charity is the paradigmatic instance of a phenomenon *giving itself* and it accomplishes the phenomenality of revelation in an unequalled manner precisely because it gives *itself* radically from *elsewhere*. The ground was first laid out by Marion in *Prolégomènes à la charité* (1986) before reaching conceptual maturity in *Le phénomène érotique* (2003). This latter ensured a perennial place on the phenomenological stage of erotic phenomenality and consequently gave a rational (conceptual) ground for the phenomenon of love/charity within philosophy. The breakthrough of the phenomenon of love within philosophy’s discourse has had a strong impact on the intellectual community: the vigour of some critics saying that Marion blurs the line between theology and philosophy, whatever this opposition might mean for them, confirms *a contrario* the vitality of his thought. Books like *Au lieu de soi. L’approche de Saint-Augustin* (2008) or *Certitudes négatives* (2010) have been the opportunity to think philosophically again (that is rigorously by concepts) about some *topics* that have long been within the scope of Theology.

In regard to the erotic phenomenon, Marion deplors the persistent closure of the question of love in modernity and classical philosophy.²⁶³ The confusion that took place over the whole period of the enlightenment (from empiricism through to the *Aufklärung*’s idealism) in regard to love and passion or *agape* and *eros* was symptomatic of the failure of reason to think of a rationale of love: love, per definition, was not reasonable in the sense that reason was precisely needed in order to overcome passions. The search for causes at all costs in metaphysics would eventually rule out love from rationality as love persisted as *that* for which *no* causes could ever give it a sufficient reason. Love was thus deemed irrational. This is certainly true from a narrow understanding of reason. Metaphysical epistemology repels anything strange to its own reason and anything that may not be clearly identified by its causes (principle of sufficient reason and non-contradiction). Hence why metaphysical or transcendental reason is unable to think of alterity, just as it cannot think of an *elsewhere* in regard to itself. This is so precisely because love responds to *another* reason than its own, and in this sense it overthrows at once the *causa sui* of the *I* by singling it out in the face of a counter-intentionality imposing

²⁶² Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 523-524. We used the translation of Jeffrey L. Kosky, Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, p. 324. See Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe 58: p. 185.

²⁶³ See the opening lines of Marion, *Le phénomène érotique*, *op. cit.*

itself from *elsewhere*. In metaphysics, love ‘offers no precise meaning’²⁶⁴ and ‘philosophy had to impose its own division’.²⁶⁵ ‘Love’, based on what ‘reason’ makes of it, always ends up flushed out from its field of investigation because it cannot respond to its conditions of possibility – conditions that radically differ from the conditions of possibility of the *I*.²⁶⁶ But phenomenology, as we have seen above, can certainly offer a paradigmatic shift precisely because it aims at ‘giving back to the things their concrete physiognomy’.²⁶⁷ Whereas in metaphysics, love is phenomenally impossible and thus always diluted by attributing it extrinsic causes and divisions, perhaps that the only way to consider it as such, that is beyond what intentionality can attain, would be to consider it as gift – that is to consider it phenomenally as a phenomenon *giving itself* from *elsewhere*. The radicality of the phenomenon of love that *affects* us all in person, would be such that its consideration would appeal to new concepts such as that of saturation. The saturation that the phenomenon of love operates can be called the revelation of charity. The new concepts required to describe the phenomenality of love would be nothing other than those that seek rigorously to describe the new field of phenomena that the revelation of charity makes visible.²⁶⁸

If philosophy is understood more broadly to mean the rigour of concepts stemming from the rigour of things, then it is not excluded, and in fact should never be excluded, that theology – as *theology* – provides phenomena that form the primary ‘given’ (the *revelata*) within which would then follow all (phenomenological) thoughts.²⁶⁹ If, during the enlightenment, theology (*theologia*) turned gradually into a *theologia naturalis* under the influence of *ontologia*, then widely assumed to be the *scientia prima*, the question of revelation and of its *revelata* is now reopened in the age that follows the ‘death of God’. In this age, *i.e.* the ‘end of metaphysics’, one must go back, as Heidegger suggested, towards other names than that of Being when it comes to a theological discourse proper. Before the name of *Esse*

²⁶⁴ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 136. Descartes expounds on the equivocality of love in Descartes, ‘Passions de l’âme’, in *op. cit.*, §82.

²⁶⁵ Marion, *Prolégomènes à la charité*, 4th ed. (Paris: Grasset, 2018), p. 257. For examples of such division, see *e.g.* Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott (New-York: Dover Publications, 2004), p. 37 (‘So sharply and clearly marked are the boundaries of morality and self-love...’) and p. 86.

²⁶⁶ ‘In regard to love, we live as if we knew what it was about. But, as soon as we attempt to define it, or at least to approach it with concepts, it flies away from us at once... (*De l’amour, nous vivons comme si nous savions ce qu’il en est. Mais dès que nous tentons de le définir, ou du moins de l’approcher par des concepts, il s’éloigne de nous aussitôt...*)’, Marion, *Prolégomènes à la charité*, p. 125.

²⁶⁷ ‘Le premier acte de la philosophie serait de [...] rendre à la chose sa physionomie concrète’, Merleau-Ponty, *phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 69.

²⁶⁸ ‘La charité, ordre suprême, reste donc comme telle invisible à la chair et à l’esprit, aux pouvoirs et aux savoirs. Il en résulte que la charité ouvre un champ de nouveaux phénomènes à la connaissance, mais que ce champ reste invisible à la raison naturelle seule. C’est pourquoi la philosophie a certes besoin pour y accéder d’un « auxiliaire indispensable », la révélation : mais il s’agit désormais de la révélation, comme révélation *de la charité*, qui offre à la philosophie des phénomènes parfaitement rationnels, quoique propres à la charité et aussi nouveaux qu’elles [*sic*].’, Marion, *Le visible et le Révélé*, pp. 107sq.; ‘En privilégiant, au-delà de l’être, la charité comme la dernière scène où se manifestent les phénomènes les plus décisifs, la « philosophie chrétienne » pourrait non seulement s’inscrire dans les développements les plus novateurs de la philosophie contemporaine, mais contribuer sur un mode déterminant au dépassement de la fin de la métaphysique et au déploiement de la phénoménologie en tant que telle.’, Marion, *Le visible et le Révélé*, p. 116; See also Marion, *Prolégomènes à la charité*, VII.V.

²⁶⁹ See Marion, ‘Chapitre IV. – La « philosophie chrétienne » - herméneutique ou heuristique?’, in *Le visible et le révélé*. First published in English under the title ‘Christian Philosophy: Hermeneutic or Heuristic?’ in F. J. Ambrosio, ed., *The Question of Christian Philosophy Today* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

which imposed itself under the influence of ontology, God was known under other and greater names, such as *goodness* and *love*.²⁷⁰ If we take this seriously, it would be necessary to reconsider the phenomenality of charity, no longer in a derivative way from the question of Being, but properly as first question, that is independently from ‘Being’ and according to the givenness of love itself. In *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, Marion articulates the phenomenality of love and gifts according to the unique phenomenon of Christ. And from this unique visibility that unfolds in the gift of God, Marion progresses to a phenomenal model of the Trinity as icon, and as the phenomenality of gifts.²⁷¹

§12. Event and Saturation – Paradox and Revelation

Whereas metaphysics investigates that which does not appear (the *ousia*; the essence as substance) in order to found phenomenality from which it then derives its definition of phenomena as ‘seeming’ *der Schein* (i.e. object), phenomenology starts from phenomena understood in their definition proper: the phenomenon as ‘*das Sich-an-ihm-selbst-zeigende*’, that is, as *the-showing-itself-in-itself*. From this definition elevated to the rank of principle, a phenomenon has a fully inherent phenomenal right, in that its ‘appearing’ appears independently from extrinsic (transcendental) conditions that would want to attribute to it a sufficient reason. Instead, the appearing of a phenomenon remains immanent to itself because it shows *itself*. But paradoxically, this *showing-itself* does not show itself immediately, that is without mediation.²⁷² Often, the ‘appearing’ and even ‘evidence’ can act like a screen covering the *showing-itself* and the *Selbstgebung* (self-givenness) of a phenomenon.²⁷³ It is precisely why phenomenology aims via reduction to trace appearances (*Erscheinungen*) understood as kinds of *non-showing-itself* (*Sich-nicht-zeigen*) back to their phenomenality as such, so as to attain the ‘self’ of a phenomenon giving itself. In this sense, a *non-showing-itself* (*Sich-nicht-zeigen*) signifies or announces a *showing-itself*: ‘Phenomena are therefore *never* appearances, whereas every appearance is indeed assigned to phenomena (*Phänomene sind demnach nie Erscheinungen, wohl aber ist jede Erscheinung angewiesen auf Phänomene*)’.²⁷⁴

Phenomenology is therefore characterised at the core by a radical *a posteriori*: phenomena giving themselves and showing themselves as always intrinsically given. In phenomenology, the question will

²⁷⁰ Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, pp. 109, 147-148. Even if Heidegger reduces all phenomenological possibility to the ontological difference of Being, he remains very lucid on the distinction between philosophy (*Seinsfrage*) and theology. See Heidegger, *Seminare*, pp. 236 sq., cited in Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, p. 93: ‘la foi n’a pas besoin de la pensée de l’être.’ See also, ‘Nothing less than a folly separates theology from Being.’ Marion *Dieu sans l’être*, p. 95, based on Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953), p. 6: ‘Philosophie ist dem ursprünglich christlichen Glauben eine Torheit (*folly*)’.

²⁷¹ Find the respective development in ‘Christ as phenomenon’ and ‘the icone of the invisible’, in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, IV, pp. 269-402 and V, 17, pp. 467-494. ‘There is only one visibility in the manifestation of the Trinity, that shows itself as one insofar as it shows itself by the triple work of its *nescio quid*. (*Il ne se trouve qu’une seule visibilité dans la manifestation de la Trinité, qui se montre une en tant qu’elle se montre par le triple travail de ses nescio quid.*)’ (p. 490).

²⁷² Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, pp. 28-31.

²⁷³ See Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 34.

²⁷⁴ ‘Phänomene sind demnach nie Erscheinungen, wohl aber ist jede Erscheinung angewiesen auf Phänomene.’, Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 30.

be to know what specific modes and degrees of givenness are deployed in the occurrence of a maximum of givenness, *i.e.* the phenomenon of revelation. As with any phenomenon, it is by its *fait accompli* that a revelation enters the phenomenal field, or accesses visibility in a phenomenal sense. The irreducible *facticity* of a phenomenon always determined as *given* entails the inevitable delay of the subject that is thereafter considered as ‘addressee’ (*interloqué*), as though the latter was (taken by) surprised (sur-prised) by the anteriority of the *showing-itself* of which the addressee had not foreseen nor could foresee the forthcoming by *a priori* concepts.²⁷⁵ The precedence of givenness over what the *I* can conceive from its finite horizon of visibility means that when phenomena that do not pertain to the visible horizon burst forth nonetheless in the form of gifts (pure givenness), they also enlarge at the same time all previously known horizons of phenomenality, according to the unprecedented measure that their givenness unfolds.²⁷⁶ They manifest in effect the unseen, *not* primarily because they would make themselves visible to an extrinsic and autonomous *I*, but because they give themselves first and foremost, so as to impose their counter-intentionality to the *I* who henceforth loses the status of transcendental subject: the decentred *I* becomes an *adonné*. This mode of phenomenality is precisely what Marion has formalised as ‘saturation’, namely, the mode of phenomenality that extends the horizon of the *I* just as it constitutes it as *adonné* (given in) to the phenomena that givenness unfolds. A phenomenon that properly *gives itself*, saturates by excess of givenness the intuition that served so far to correlate, by way of fulfilling intuition, the objectifying act (noesis) with the intentional object (noema) in one’s stream of consciousness.²⁷⁷ The saturated phenomenon is therefore the possibility of impossibility insofar as it accomplishes the unconditioned possibility of surpassing all conditions of possibility.²⁷⁸ A phenomenon thus understood as *giving itself* can therefore be described as non-object (unobjectifiable) and even non-being (unessential) because it does not subsist in presence (beingness) or the horizon of pre-visibility secured by the *I*: it does *not* consist in *what* it gives because it is primarily and already constituted in the radical *a posteriori* it imposes on all things by the simple fact that it *gives itself* in *showing itself*.²⁷⁹

Here opens the radical distinction between objects and events. A given occurs as event, not as object, because, properly speaking, only events occur (*arrive*). ‘As a given phenomenon, *the event does not*

²⁷⁵ See Marion, *Étant donné*, §15 (‘Le fait accompli’).

²⁷⁶ On the horizon, see Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 307 and more broadly, pp. 304-308 (‘L’horizon’): ‘Devrait-on envisager de libérer la donation de la limite préalable d’un horizon de phénoménalité ?’

²⁷⁷ On the notion of fulfilment, see Husserl, *Ideas I*, §136.

²⁷⁸ ‘Le phénomène saturé, parce qu’il se donne sans condition ni retenue, offrirait alors le paradigme du phénomène enfin sans réserve. Ainsi, au fil conducteur du phénomène saturé, la phénoménologie trouve-t-elle sa dernière possibilité : non seulement la possibilité qui dépasse l’effectivité, mais la possibilité qui dépasse les conditions mêmes de la possibilité, la possibilité de la possibilité inconditionnée – autrement dit la possibilité de l’impossible, le phénomène saturé.’, Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 358. See also ‘L’excès’, p. 324-329.

²⁷⁹ See Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 76-81 (‘ce qui n’est pas’). Example of a painting: ‘L’advenue non-ontique du tableau se confirme par cette propriété (en partage avec la musique) qu’il ne s’agit pas tant de le voir (ou d’entendre) que de venir, sans cesse, le re-voir (ou le ré-entendre) : cette liturgie de la re-vision, qui nous fait voyager pour revoir telle ou telle toile (re-visitation), indique que le tableau ne consiste pas en son étant (il suffirait alors de l’avoir vu), mais dans son mode d’apparaître (qui peut se répéter à chaque fois sur un mode nouveau).’

have an adequate cause and cannot have any.²⁸⁰ Paradoxically, in the situation of event, the effect is prior to the cause.²⁸¹ In other words, ‘efficiency (*l’efficience*)’ – causality – ‘cannot equal the reality of the effect’,²⁸² and ‘the factor of indetermination (*ulè*)’ pertaining to an effect gives it a ‘temporal privilege’ over causes. This is why we can speak of a ‘negentropy (*néguentropie*) of events’ – *i.e.* a surplus of reality (effects) over causes (or all possible causes more accurately).²⁸³ An event (*viz.* a phenomenon where effects precede causes) contradicts objects at least in these two ways: (1) ‘An effect contains always as much and often more reality than its cause’.²⁸⁴ (2) It is the only one to happen, to impose its phenomenality in the inauguration of a new anamorphosis (it becomes visible according to its own visibility or way of being seen). Only an effect ‘gives *itself*’ ‘to and in the present’ – and thus pertains to phenomenality – whereas the cause which persists in presence pertains to ontology (metaphysics). The implications are very clear. The phenomenological description of events entails that we consider the paradox that ‘an event rightfully *makes itself* as it gives itself and shows itself’ and that ‘all knowledge begins with the event of effects’.²⁸⁵ Thus, an effect, in effect, merely asserts and imposes the self (*soi*) of a phenomenon: ‘The *self* of the phenomenon is marked in its determination of event.’²⁸⁶ In the situation of event, the intentionality of the *I* gives way to the counter-intentionality that comes under the sole initiative of phenomena themselves. The *I* is reversed into a *witness* because the event marks the *I*’s ‘epistemological heterogeneity in front of the *saturated phenomenon*’.²⁸⁷ By definition, a witness knows that they see, and see what they see all the more because they cannot understand it. Hence why paradigms of saturations such as the transfiguration (manifestation of the Son as Son, that is as seen by the Father) and the crucifixion—resurrection (manifestation of the Gift of the Father abandoned to the world, thus confirming the accomplishment of the immanent and trinitarian givenness in economy as gift *given*) entail the greatest incomprehension on the side of the witness, who can never achieve properly the anamorphosis unless it is given to them from *elsewhere*: the *signification* must come itself from *elsewhere*, and hence be given (Mark 9.7), just as the hermeneutic of the gift must be made from and by the *elsewhere* that has effectively accomplished its givenness (Luke 24.27, 24.45). ‘The given gift (economy) remains exactly the giving gift (immanence).’²⁸⁸

²⁸⁰ ‘En tant que phénomène donné, *l’évènement n’a pas de cause adéquate* et ne peut pas en avoir.’ Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 276

²⁸¹ This paradox reminds us of truth as *apokalupsis*, where the response precedes the call. See *supra*, p. 38.

²⁸² ‘L’efficience ne peut égarder la réalité de l’effet.’ Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 270.

²⁸³ ‘...le facteur d’indétermination (*ύλη*)...’, *Ibidem*; ‘...néguentropie de l’évènement’, ‘Le privilège temporel de l’effet...’, *Ibid.*, p. 273.

²⁸⁴ ‘l’effet contient toujours autant, souvent plus de réalité [...] que la cause.’ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

²⁸⁵ ‘...l’évènement *se fait* justement lui-même, comme il se donne et se montre. [...] Le privilège temporel de l’effet – lui seul surgit au et en présent, *se donne* – implique que toute connaissance commence par l’évènement de l’effet’, *Ibid.*, p. 273, see also p. 272.

²⁸⁶ ‘Le *soi* du phénomène se marque dans sa détermination d’évènement : il vient, survient et part de lui-même et, *se montrant*, il montre aussi le *soi* qui prend (ou retire) l’initiative de *se donner*.’ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 363; ‘hétérogénéité épistémologique devant le phénomène saturé.’ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 238.

²⁸⁸ ‘La Trinité, le *mustèrion theou*, ne se découvre pas seulement par l’anamorphose de l’Esprit en nous, mais avec l’acte de cette anamorphose’, and, ‘L’acte d’anamorphose ne permet la visée de l’unique icône que parce que

Far from falling into ‘irrationalism’, the question of revelation could well ask the question of the *I*’s first and therefore ultimate phenomenological possibility, namely that of the possibility of impossibility: ‘Far from the fact that the *I* restricts phenomenologically the possibility of a revelation, should we not risk saying perhaps that the *I* could [only] access its own phenomenological possibility from an unconstituable (*inconstituable*), unobjectivable (*inobjectivable*) and anterior givenness – perhaps even from a revelation?’²⁸⁹ If the *I* receives itself from a phenomenon *giving itself* (a call giving itself from *elsewhere*), its status changes to that of *witness* – a decentred *I* which is now determined by a givenness coming from *elsewhere*. What was formerly called *I* (mine), according to the self-possession (*ousia*) that laid underneath the *I*, is now *second* in essence, that is already derived from *elsewhere* and *not produced* by representation (*cogitatio*). Paradoxically, the *I* is no longer one’s own (*ousia*) according to the metaphysical definition of essence (substance), but is now exposed as essentially *anousios* (unessential) so to speak, and unless it receives itself from *elsewhere* it is nothing because it has nothing of its own (1 Cor. 4.7; *ei gar dokei tis einai ti mêden ôn phrenapata eauton*, Gal. 6.3). This is why the principle of *kenosis* is never to be seen as a parting of someone with ‘goods’ or ‘properties’ that they would nonetheless deserve were they to claim them as their own, but rather it is the clear manifestation that what one ‘has’ would *be nothing* were they to be things to be grasped, hence why the *kenosis* profoundly characterises and in fact manifests the essential givenness which unveils all commonly understood ‘essences’ as intrinsically unessential.

The ipseity of the witness, therefore, in contrast to the *jemeinigkeit*, unveils itself in and from an intrinsic *elsewhere*. The imprint on the *I* is such that the event of revelation, as a breaking forth of the most radical *elsewhere*, is unerasable and unforgettable. It constitutes this ‘me’ that is received from *elsewhere*: ‘I do not forget what is revealed, precisely because I do not understand, from the outset of its manifestation up to this moment included, neither wherefrom, nor how, nor why nor how far it happens (*surgit*). And my real life (*vie réelle*), that which defines myself most intimately [...] is summed up, ultimately, in the collection [...] of successive revelations that I have not comprehended, but in return comprehend myself (*me*). All the rest passes and has already disappeared, but they have not.’²⁹⁰ In this perspective, the phenomenon of revelation is the ultimate and impossible possibility that nonetheless happens from the immanence of the event that delivers it: *a revelation reveals itself*. From the

l’Esprit Saint le *donne*. Car le don donné (économie) reste exactement le don même donateur (immanence), justement quand il *se donne* à un autre que soi.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 494, p. 496.

²⁸⁹ ‘Loin que le *je* restreigne phénoménologiquement la possibilité d’une révélation, ne devrait-on pas risquer que peut-être le *je* ne peut accéder à sa propre possibilité phénoménologique qu’à partir d’une inconstituable, inobjectivable, et antérieur donation – peut-être même d’une révélation.’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 31.

²⁹⁰ ‘Je n’oublie pas ce qui se révèle, justement parce que je ne comprends pas, du début de sa manifestation jusqu’à maintenant inclus, ni d’où, ni comment, ni pourquoi ni jusqu’où il surgit. Et ma vie réelle, celle qui me définit au plus intime [...] se résume, en dernière instance, à la collection [...] des révélations successives que je n’ai pas comprises, mais qui, elles, me comprennent. Tout le reste passe et a déjà disparu, elles, non.’ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 29 ; see also the four characteristics of a phenomenon of revelation: ‘revealing itself from elsewhere, [...], revealing myself to myself in a new world, revealing myself to other.’, *Ibid.*, p. 35, translation ours; see also *Ibid.*, p. 23ff (‘La geste érotique’).

immanence of givenness of which the excess is never exhausted, I am not only given to myself (e.g. in the phenomenon of *my* birth), but I am also given a world, the condition of possibility of all possibilities (e.g. *my* life), opening on the task of an infinite hermeneutics (*mémoire*, remembrance) to others (e.g. *my* individuality in *my* flesh but also in the expression or breaking forth of *my* face in this world) which openness and irreducibility offers the possibility of communion, i.e. love (the erotic phenomenon). The three-fold outcomes of a revelation are inseparable from the phenomenality of revelation as *revealing itself*: '[t]he most humble of revelations ([the acquisition of] a sporting skill) just as the most accomplished (the erotic phenomenon) both entail the same necessarily conjoined moments: the revelation of the phenomenon from itself, the revelation of myself to myself (of my world and of my space also), and finally the revelation to others of the one I have become from *elsewhere* (just as if *to be itself revealed* (*se révéler soi-même*) and *to be revealed to others* (*se révéler à autrui*) constituted two ricochets of one throw and of a first rebound: *to reveal itself*)'²⁹¹The phenomenon of revelation does not so much accomplish a privileged case of phenomenality as it accomplishes the very essence of phenomenality.²⁹² When it comes to the revelation of all revelations, a similar logic unfolds that can well mean that the revelation par excellence opens the case for all 'phenomena of revelation' in common phenomenality (e.g. the saturated phenomena above mentioned: birth, life, sport, erotic phenomenon, etc.).²⁹³

§13. Revelation and Charity – Love as the Unique Rationale of Gifts

'The maximum of saturated phenomenality must remain an ultimate possibility of phenomena.'²⁹⁴ The question remains open as to what would be a 'maximum' or an 'ultimate possibility' for phenomenology; and even more compelling seem to be 'the question of the possibility to admit a concept of revelation'.²⁹⁵ Our previous glance at the enlarged horizon of givenness has already enabled us to measure the impact of a reversed phenomenality when the *I* is decentred from its transcendental status in the face of a phenomenon *giving itself* that imposes, from its *showing itself*, a new centre of intentionality as counter intentionality (*veritas redarguens*, see §10). The decentred *I* becomes *adonné* ('given in' to) to the phenomenon *giving itself* and is at once summoned to *decide itself* in regard to what *gives itself* from *itself* (*se décider au don*). But we must now push the paradox of revelation further so

²⁹¹ 'La plus humble des révélations (le geste sportif) comme aussi la plus accomplie (le geste érotique) impliquent l'une et l'autre les mêmes moments, nécessairement conjoints : la révélation du phénomène par lui-même, la révélation de moi-même à moi-même (de mon monde, de mon espace aussi), et enfin la révélation à d'autres de celui que je suis devenu d'ailleurs. Cette triple dimension de la révélation (comme si *se révéler soi-même* et *se révéler à autrui* constituaient les deux ricochets d'un premier envoi et d'un premier rebond, *se révéler*', Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 27.

²⁹² Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 61.

²⁹³ '...à moins que ce ne soit l'inverse : la Révélation comme telle ouvrant le cas du phénomène de révélation dans la phénoménalité commune.', *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁹⁴ 'Le maximum de la phénoménalité saturée doit rester une possibilité ultime du phénomène', Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 384sq.

²⁹⁵ '...une unique difficulté : la possibilité d'admettre un concept de révélation.', Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 14.

as really to attain the phenomenal core of its gift, that is to attain to the gift *par excellence* as a maximum of givenness, or the highest degree of a phenomenon *showing-itself-giving-itself*.

A paradox is all the more difficult to grasp when its phenomenal privilege is great: ‘[d]oes not the notion of revelation itself presuppose this very thing that it gives to think of that which, without revelation, could neither be thought of nor even be conceived as being able to be thought of?’²⁹⁶ Does not the impossibility *for us* to think of a revelation constitute the very entry onto the conceptual field of revelation? The phenomenal privilege of revelation is intrinsic to its manifestation, and as such it decides and measures all phenomenality against itself, precisely because the most radical givenness determines in and of itself the measure of all givenness: ‘The *Revelation (La Révélation)*, whether effective or not, whether authentic or not, opens, by its sheer possibility, all possibilities.’²⁹⁷ This phenomenal privilege is the revendication that what has been termed ‘revealed religions’ have in common, namely the paradoxical phenomenon that ‘an instance, transcendental to experience, [...] manifests itself experimentally’.²⁹⁸ As a result, religions inherit their ‘provocative force’ from the fact that they ‘speak universally’ whilst not being ‘grounded in reason within the limits of this world.’²⁹⁹ Here we see in sketches the three concepts that derive from the ‘essential gap’ that a revelation opens: ‘*witness, resistance, paradox*’.³⁰⁰ Phenomenology finds itself at a crossroads here, that is, between common logic without *elsewhere* (metaphysics – [onto-]theo-logy) and its ‘*invisible*’ (and thus invisible) counterpart, *events of revelation (anti-logos – theo-logy)*.³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ ‘Il faudrait se demander si cet impossible *pour nous*, ne constitue précisément pas le champ même et la définition formelle de toute Révélation pensable et *possible*, loin d’en disqualifier le concept. La notion même de Révélation ne suppose-t-elle pas cela même – à savoir que se donne à penser ce que, sans Révélation, nous ne pourrions ni penser, ni même imaginer pouvoir jamais penser ?’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 134.

²⁹⁷ ‘La Révélation, effective ou non, authentique ou non, ouvre, par sa seule possibilité, tout le possible.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 38, our emphasis.

²⁹⁸ ‘La religion n’atteint sa figure la plus achevée qu’en s’établissant par et comme une révélation, où une instance, transcendante à l’expérience, se manifeste pourtant expérimentalement ; [...] la révélation tient sa force de provocation de ce qu’elle parle universellement, sans que pourtant cette parole puisse se fonder en raison dans les limites du monde’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 14. Marion does not use the word ‘religion’ without caution, he is aware of the problematic and deficient meanings it has. And this is why it is used by ‘convention’ more than by conviction, see Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 37-38. For more on the problematic use of the word see the thorough study of Jean-Georges Gantenbein, *Mission en Europe (Can the West be converted?)*, pp. 144-145. And finally, see also Marion, ‘Doublé la métaphysique’, *Alter*, 28, 2020, p. 1.

²⁹⁹ *Idem*.

³⁰⁰ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 38. The thought of an ‘essential gap’ is not new. Husserl spoke of an ‘unbridgeable essential difference (*ein unüberbrückbarer Wesensunterschied*)’ (*Ideen I*, §43, p. 90) between perception and representation. Husserl seeks to fill the gap so to speak with ‘immediate intuition’ and yet asserts that the *adequatio* is only an exceptional case of phenomenality. See Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 306, 311-319. Whereas many sought the ‘essential gap’ in the difference between what does and does not phenomenally – faces (Levinas), gifts (Derrida), Being (Heidegger), saturation is for Marion the pure instance of phenomenality that confirms the essential gap from within the immanence of a phenomenal given in virtue of the fold of givenness. Givenness is the phenomenal essence of distance and thus of difference.

³⁰¹ Marion builds his argument throughout *D’ailleurs, la révélation* by distinguishing the *theologic* (§§3-6) from the *theologic* (§§7-10). Whereas we read that the Son is the *logos* of God (John 1.1), the prophecy of Simon also says that the *logos* will be ‘*eis sêmeion antilegomenon*’ that will reveal (*apokalupsthôsin*) the thoughts (*dialogismoi*) of many hearts (Luke 2.34-35).

Theology is, from the outset, in a particularly adapted posture in order to attain to a phenomenal concept of witness. This is because all good theology knows that it does not start from the one who speaks of it (*mê to thelêma mou alla to son ginesthô*, Luke 22.42; contrary to what would be a self-affirmation of the self or the will) but instead knows that it speaks only insofar as it is a *witness*. That is, a witness to the anteriority of the *elsewhere* that is confirmed most radically in the banal phenomenon that no one has ever lived in the flesh that has not been preceded by love and the possibility of being loved. The sheer possibility of the question ‘does one love me?’ (and of an answer) exposes one to the radical *a posteriori* that makes all *ego* originally non-originary; similarly then, ‘*In eis vero quae sunt ad Deum, sensus mentis est amor* (In regard to the things that are from God, love is the state of the mind [accessing them])’.³⁰² The saturated phenomenality that revelation imposes to a witness is such that it reverses the normal stream of phenomenality according to the equally reverted logic that ‘those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.’ (John 9.39).

If the posture of witness can rather easily be accepted when it comes to undertaking a rigorously *theological* thought, the concept of *resistance*, however, may be more unsettling. Far from provoking a general and immediate consensus, strangely, resistance to a revelation grows with the credibility and reliability of its witnesses.³⁰³ A simple example confirms this when we consider that the resistance of the pharisees was all the greater for the fact that the account of the miracle they were hearing was given by the most indubitable witness (the previously blind man in person).³⁰⁴ The phenomenon of resistance that grows in regard to a revelation that nothing can resist – and conversely that resists all things – is in fact the very sign of a givenness in person, that is, of the breaking forth from *elsewhere* of a phenomenon *giving itself* that thus imposes its counter-intentionality against all predictable and thus visible intentionality. Ultimately, the phenomenon of revelation that achieves the saturation of saturations, would also entail the highest resistance.

Both concepts of resistance and witnesses confirm that the reduction of revelation cannot follow the early line of Husserlian phenomenology ‘to reduce all given to givenness *in presence*’.³⁰⁵ Both in Husserl and Heidegger, ‘the givenness of phenomena presupposes the point of reference that receives their givenness’, namely the *I* as ‘point of reference’ of *its* lived experience (*Erlebnis, vécu*). The reduction of the Revelation to the givenness *in presence*, that is to the *Erlebnis* of the *Dasein*, ends in emptying the Revelation of its content. This moment where phenomenology gives its status to theology is exemplified by Bultmann and his demythologisation. Faith, as mode of Being most authentic to

³⁰² William of St Thierry, *Speculum fidei*, §64, p. 76, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 216sq. See full development of the ‘*sensus mentis*’ in *Ibid.* pp. 216-221. See also *Ibid.*, §73, p. 84: ‘*De ipso enim multi cogitant, qui non amant. Ipsum autem nemo cogitat et non amat.*’

³⁰³ ‘...Christ crucified, scandal to the jews, foolishness to the nations (*christon estaurômenon, Ioudaïois men skandalon ethnesin de môrian*)’, 1 Cor. 1.23; ‘la vision de ce que manifeste la *veritas lucens* (la lumière qui éclaire et décèle) dépend de ce que l’amour peut recevoir de la *veritas redarguens* (la lumière qui accuse le relief de mon paysage intérieur et donc m’accuse), see Marion, *Au lieu de soi. L’approche de Saint Augustin* (Paris: PUF, 2008), §§17-20, p. 157sq, and Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 248.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 42sq.

³⁰⁵ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 22.

Dasein, unveils nothing more than a ‘sheer call’ because ‘the revealed *Erlebnis* reveals the empty fact of the revelation, and so [...] sends back the *Erlebnis* to itself.’³⁰⁶ In a more balanced approach we find Rahner proposing that the ‘ontological mediation’ operated by Christ is mirrored by the ‘self-mediation’ of beings in the common horizon of Being: to Love God implies a condition of possibility, that is ‘self-mediation’. Hence the following ambiguity: ‘does Christology reveal the free charity of God or does it manifest the transcendental conditions (*a priori*, ontological) of finite beings?’³⁰⁷ And similar parallels can be made with the *analogia entis* or method of correlation in Paul Tillich, where the Revelation reveals ‘the manifestation of the depth of reason and the grounds of *Being*.’³⁰⁸

The conditions of possibility of *presence* (permanence) confirm the impossibility *for us* of a revelation.³⁰⁹ The paradox is radical when it comes to a revelation as such: ‘that which reveals itself [...] trespasses the dimensions of the *Erlebnis*’.³¹⁰ What is clear is that ‘givenness in presence [...] does not enable us to access the givenness of a revelation.’³¹¹ What else does this shortcoming suggest than a radical need to reconsider presence? Marion attempts to think of this reversal such as to envisage presence not as something to be possessed in the horizon of Being, but as something to envisage as gift in the horizon of givenness: *the gift as present*.³¹² The present, therefore, would be reconfigured from the *elsewhere* revealing itself: ‘in situation of erotic reduction, the erotic present is defined as it happens (*advient*) – not from the stream and the presence of my consciousness, but from the presence of *another* consciousness, that of the beloved consciousness, and from this one alone.’³¹³ The *elsewhere* that is present only insofar as it gives itself is confirmed *a contrario* in the primordial request of the *ego*, namely the erotic possibility, that manifests originally the *elsewhere* still in the mode of absence: ‘does one love me from elsewhere?’³¹⁴ Love gives itself, and love only accomplishes the perfect gift, so much so that

³⁰⁶ ‘Le vécu révélé révèle le fait vide de la révélation, qui donc, loin d’ouvrir sur la possibilité absolue, renvoie le vécu à lui-même, *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁰⁷ ‘la christologie relève-t-elle la libre charité de Dieu ou manifeste-t-elle les conditions transcendantales (*a priori*, ontologiques) de l’étant ?’, *Ibid.*, pp. 27sq. See Karl Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens. Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums* (Fribourg-im-Brigau: Verlag Herder, 1976).

³⁰⁸ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 171, who cites Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: The press of the University of Chicago, 1951) vol. 1: p. 110: ‘There is no revelation if there is no one who receives it as his ultimate concern.’

³⁰⁹ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 134.

³¹⁰ ‘Ce qui se révèle ne s’éprouve pas obligatoirement, parce qu’il transgresse les dimensions de l’*Erlebnis*; [...] The revealed becomes instant precisely because it does not let himself be lived through (*éprouver*)’, Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 24, *i.e.* ‘instant’ as opposed to present. Besides, who can say, ‘I have seen a revelation?’ – or who is *I* and who’s *I* is it that has seen a revelation? Rather, the biblical witnesses found the exact formulation in response to a revelation: ‘today we have seen paradoxes (*paradoxa*)’ (Luke 5.26). See Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 353sq.

³¹¹ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 22.

³¹² Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 243: ‘car ici [dans la Révélation comme découverture (*apokalupsis*)] la donation donne jusqu’à l’abandon, en sorte que le don ne s’accomplit plus en se fixant sur une possession (passant simplement d’un propriétaire à un autre), mais dans la survenue de la donation « jusqu’au terme, *eis telos* » (*Jean* 13,1). [...] [Don et donation] ne se trouve plus définis par la possession, pas même celle de la présence, mais par une communion où chaque terme ne cesse de se donner à l’autre et de se recevoir de lui : le Père glorifie le Fils et « aussitôt, *euthus* » (*Jean* 13,33) le Fils glorifie le Père.’

³¹³ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 24.

³¹⁴ Marion, *The erotic phenomenon*, p. 53 and also pp. 40-41. The erotic reduction comes back to the egotistic demand of assurance of the *ego*: ‘does one love me? (*m’aime-t-on ?*)’ Paradoxically, the first question alone of the

the present must no longer be thought of according to givenness in presence but according to givenness alone, the accomplishment of presence (communion) in the perfect present (gift) that comes from *elsewhere*, i.e. from above (James 1.17): ‘charity does not wait for anything, it begins straight away and accomplishes itself without delay. Charity manages (*gère*) the present. And precisely, from the standpoint of charity, the present signifies the gift also and foremost. Charity renders (*rend*) the gift present, presents the present as a gift. It makes gift at present (*Elle fait don dès à présent*) and gift of the present in the present.’³¹⁵ At this point, presence is radically reconfigured according to the manifestation of *agapê*, because in the phenomenon of Christ, the Holy Spirit accomplishes the *elsewhere* in communion, that is in manifesting *the (first) gift*: ‘the Father gives the one who shows himself (as the *ratio donandi* of the Son), the Son shows the one who gives himself (as the *ratio manifestandi* of the Father)’.³¹⁶ It is no longer possible to think of presence as ‘possession’ (*ousia*) or as the circulation of gift-objects that an exchange absorbs and consumes, but to think of presence as *koinonia*, as presence that is never possessed but always given and renewed in and through an inextinguishable excess of givenness (according to the *ratio donationis*).³¹⁷

Love gives most radically and in an incomparable mode because only love always gives. It does not love unless it gives and does not give unless it loves. It does not count, not even itself, ‘it is not self-keeping’ (*ou zêtei ta eautês*, 1 Cor 13.5). Only love can give totally and thus achieve abandon, that is achieve the gift *as* (abandoned) gift or given gift. The gift in the form of the ‘abandoned one’ opens the phenomenality of the ‘doubling of gifts’ (*redondance du don*), in which *pardon* (for-giveness, *pardon*) confirms the anterior givenness at work in the gift, so that all gifts really given appear in light of the first gift that delivered them as truly given. Both *sacrifice* and *pardon* manifest the fold of givenness, not because they would initiate gifts from themselves as though they originated their givenness, but because in giving, they manifest gifts as already received gifts, as given gifts. In short, the ‘doubling of gifts’ proper to intrinsic givenness manifests gifts *as* gifts.³¹⁸

ego, immediately and from the outset demands confirmation from *elsewhere* (p. 49), namely, to be assured as ‘lover (*amant*)’ in the triple sense of ‘the role of which that can love, that one can love and that believes that one must love him.’ (p. 52).

³¹⁵ ‘[...] la charité, elle, n’attend rien, commence tout de suite et s’accomplit sans délai. La charité gère le présent. Et justement, le présent, du point de vue de la charité, signifie aussi et d’abord le don. La charité rend présent le don, présente le présent comme un don. Elle fait don dès à présent et don du présent dans le présent.’, Marion, *Prolégomènes à la charité*, p. 255.

³¹⁶ ‘Ainsi le Père et le Fils « travaillent » ([John] 5,17) : le Père donne celui qui se montre [...], le Fils montre celui qui se donne [...]’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 387. See also Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 500-506: ‘In it [the Holy Spirit], that which it gives (*donum* as *datum*) coincides exactly with the very process of the gift (*donum donabile*): it not only accomplishes the gift, but manifests the principle of givenness. And this identity in it of the given gift with the givenness itself attests therefore, in a single “communion”, the two other dimensions of the immanent Trinity, the “giver of the gift”, the Father, and the “gift of the giver”, the Son.’ (pp. 505sq.) Marion refers to Augustine, ‘On the Holy Trinity’, translated by Arthur West Haddan, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Series I*, volume III: V, 15, 16.

³¹⁷ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 514-519. See also Marion’s brilliant exegesis of Luke 15.12-32 in Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, pp. 140-148: the *ousia* taken out from givenness is wasted away in possession (*ousia* that serves exchange).

³¹⁸ On the *redondance du don* and the phenomenological concept of sacrifice, see Marion, ‘Esquisse d’un concept phénoménologique du sacrifice’, *art. cit.*, (*passim*). The paradox that even gifts are reducible to the

Only Christ achieved the manifestation of a givenness without measure. When ‘...he loved them to the end’ (*eis telos êgapêsen autous*, John 13.1), he set the measure without measure of love (John 3.16, 3.34; ...*îsous eipen: tetelestai*, John 19.30) according to his gift, namely ‘the measure of the givenness of Christ (*to metron tês dôreas tou Christou*)’ (Ephesians 3.7). The *mysterion tou theou* (Ephesians 3.4) is the measure without measure of the love of Christ. For us the paradox is that we are called to grasp (*katalabesthai*) nothing less than that which has *no* measure: ‘the hyperbole of knowledge (*tên uperballousan tês gnôseôs*)’ that is the hyperbolic ‘charity of Christ (*agapên tou khristou*)’ (Ephesians 3.19).³¹⁹ What is to be grasped is well indeed what is most impossible *for us* in that it saturates thoroughly all finite understandings; and yet Paul continues in saying that ‘this way you may be filled (saturated) from the whole fulness (saturation) of God (*ina plêrôthête eis to pan to plêroma tou theou*)’.

Here the paradox of the revelation of Christ could not be stated more clearly.

There is no love that shows itself that does not also give itself. The paradox of love is that in carrying the fundamental principle of phenomenality (that everything that shows itself gives itself) to the end – love also accomplishes the essence of phenomenality according to the principle that one understands in loving and loves in understanding (‘*amando intelligere et intelligendo amare*’).³²⁰ The revelation of the love of Christ therefore confirms also the phenomenality of Christ in that ‘in giving he reveals himself and in revealing he gives himself (*Dando se revelat, revelando se dat*)’.³²¹ This is further confirmed in the ‘double visibility (*visible double*)’ of Christ as ‘the *eikon* of the invisible God’ (Colossians 1.15).³²² Givenness and gifts coincide perfectly in the single phenomenality of ‘the *eikon* of the invisible God’. The visible *eikon* is seen only insofar that it is not seen alone, because its visibility does not consist in its own.³²³ The *eikon* of the invisible God is seen insofar as it manifests the (invisible) *elsewhere* of the Father, *viz.* the Son, who’s visibility refers back (*renvoie*) to the invisible one who sends him: ‘For *the Father, insofar as he gives, un-veils (dé-couvre) the Son; and the Son, insofar as he gives himself, un-veils (dé-couvre) the Father.*’³²⁴ The phenomenon of Christ confirms and even radicalises the question asked in 1 Corinthians 4.7: I can ‘have’ all things and even all ‘gifts’, but unless I have love, I am nothing

givenness in them prevents any gift from being absolutised as *causa sui*: a gift does not cause itself. Every gift points to or even gives itself from an anterior givenness, *i.e.* a previous gift: every gift giving itself shows itself as having already always been a gift.

³¹⁹ On the hyperbole of charity, see Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 316-318.

³²⁰ William of St Thierry, *Supra Cantica Cantorum*, §64, p. 162, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 202. See also §76, p. 188, cited in Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 203: God is ‘understood insofar as he is loved and loved insofar as understood (*et utique tantum intelligitur, quantum amatur, tantum amatur quantum intelligitur*)’. See *supra*, §10, p. 47.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179. See *supra*, §7, p. 26.

³²² ‘Sorte de visible double, de visible à double effet, l’icône a en propre de ne pas s’approprier seule sa propre visibilité, de ne pas s’y montrer soi-même exclusivement, de ne pas faire voir ce que tout autre visible se borne à montrer : soit, un visible qui ne montre que lui-même et fait nombre avec tous les autres.’, Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, p. 480.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

³²⁴ ‘Car le Père, en tant qu’il donne, dé-couvre le Fils ; et le Fils, en tant qu’il se donne, dé-couvre le Père. Et donc recevoir Jésus comme tel, c’est-à-dire le recevoir comme Christ, signifie le recevoir comme d’ailleurs, comme l’ailleurs même du Père.’, *Ibid.*, p. 379.

(1 Cor. 13.2); unless I receive myself from *elsewhere*, that is out of love and from love, I am *nothing* (*outhen eimi*).³²⁵

The gift of God resists the wisdom of the world (*sophian tou kosmou*, 1 Cor 1.20) precisely because no other *logos* than his own can see the Father, and that is why the gift of the Father unveils (*se découvre*) from *elsewhere*, that is through an *anamorphosis*, when the visibility of a phenomenon is only possible from the *elsewhere* from which it *gives itself*. Thus opens the ‘trinitarian outworking (*jeu trinitaire*)’ in the world and only thus, in ‘receiving ourselves from the one who gives himself and gives everything’:³²⁶ ‘I have made manifest your name to the men you have given (*edôkas*) me’ (John 17.6) and ‘No one can (*oudeis dunatai*) come to me if it has not been given (*dedomenon*) from the Father’ (John 6.65). The Father gives to receive Christ, because Jesus is received as Christ only as coming from the Father, as ‘making the gift of the given’.³²⁷

In conclusion, if all that God has he gives (‘...and all that is mine is yours’, *teknon su pantote met emou ei kai panta ta ema sa estin*, Luke 15.31), and if all that we are, being nothing (*mêden ôn*, Gal. 6.3) except from *being given* (‘what have you that you have not received?’, 1 Corinthians 4.7) so far as that even that which we give had *already* been given (1 Chronicles 29.14), then to know God means nothing else than to know the gift of God – to know God as *given* (and *abandoned*) as he manifests the *gift of the given*. And this knowledge is *no* longer an affirmation which would still underlie a self-affirmation, but rather a *first re-cognition* (as paradoxical as it seems), the knowledge of what is neither ourselves nor from ourselves because it comes *to us* from *elsewhere* – all the unbearable weight of the paradox is expressed in this: ‘you must be born again, *umas gennêthênai anôthen*’ (John 3.7).³²⁸ Hence why it is always the gift that unveils the gift – just as in phenomenology the given comes with its own condition of visibility – and every cognition of a gift is in fact already a recognition of a (first) gift because of the double figure it takes: every given gift (sacrifice, pardon) is primarily received in the first gift (the gift of the Father; 1 Chronicle 29.14).³²⁹ The gift persists *as* gift from *itself* and in its own immanence – just as in phenomenology, the given shows itself in itself and from itself. To know God is to know Christ as given from the Father, and this gift is seen only in the Christ *given* to us: ‘who having *given himself* for our sins...according to the will of our God and Father’ (*tou dontos eauton uper tôn amartiôn... kata to thelêma tou theou kai patros êmôn*, Gal. 1.4). The gift of the Father is therefore

³²⁵ See also our mention of 1 Cor. 8.1-3 (*supra*, §10, p. 46) and Gal. 6.3 (*supra*, §12, p. 54) above: the act of thinking (*cogitatio*), as well as positing things, is a position, *cogito me cogitare*. The *ego cogitans* deceives itself (*phrenapata eauton*) in thinking (*dokei*) knowing something (*egnôkenai ti*) or even being something (*tis enai*). Thinking does not inaugurate knowledge, love inaugurates understanding from *elsewhere*: being known from *elsewhere* (*outos egnôstai up autou*).

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 399.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

³²⁸ ‘La Révélation se phénoménalise, mais sa phénoménalité n’a d’autre loi que la logique (érotique) du don, de l’*agapê*. Cette transcendantalité venue se donner d’elle seule nous arrive, à nous, radicalement d’*ailleurs* et pourtant s’accomplit « parmi nous » (*Jean* 1,14) – dans la figure du Christ, norme et condition unique de la Révélation qui ne surgit pas *de nous* justement parce qu’elle vient *à nous*.’, *Ibid.*, p. 179.

³²⁹ On the recognition of the gift in sacrifice and forgiveness and a brilliant commentary on 1 Chronicles 29.14, see, Marion, ‘Esquisse d’un concept phénoménologique du sacrifice’, *art. cit.*, p. 18.

recognised in the gift of Christ (...*labôn ton arton eulogêsen kai klasas* epedidou autois (gave it to them). *autôn de diēnoikhthēsan oi ophthalmoi kai epegnōsan auton* (and they recognised him), Luke 24.30-31); the phenomenality of Christ is unprecedented in that he appears both as the one *giving* the gifts of God and as the very *given Gift* of God.³³⁰

Love sets the measure of phenomenality as that for which and through which are all things, so much so that to love amounts to seeing, perhaps for the first time: ‘See what love (*agapên*) the Father has given (*dedôken*) onto us!’ (1 John 3.1) because unless we love, we are still in darkness (*skotia*) and our eyes have not seen anything (1 John 2.11). It is therefore in love that we will strive towards what is given because it is from and out of love that all gifts come. ‘Then he [the faithful bondsman] strives with all the *affectus* of piety toward that which is *given*, first to that which flesh and blood reveal, then to that which no one but the Father in heaven reveals.’³³¹

³³⁰ Christ accomplishes the essence of phenomenality in that from a single unfolding of givenness in the *eikon*, unfolds both the *giving* (immanence) and the *given* (economy) of the gift.

³³¹ William of St Thierry, *The mirror of faith*, translated by Thomas X. Davis (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1979), p. 23, emphasis ours.

CONCLUSION

§14. An Opening on the Concept of Responses and the Role of Hermeneutics

In chapter I, we saw how the question of revelation is progressively elaborated along the guiding thread of givenness. Phenomenology is primarily intended as an alternative to metaphysics, which Nietzsche had rightfully disclaimed to be grounded in the self-affirmation of the will. If it had not been for Marion's serious consideration of what can be called the 'end of metaphysics', he would not have been able to pursue and confirm the radical and distinct alternative that phenomenology opposes metaphysics. The question is the following: are the modes and degrees of phenomenality intrinsic or extrinsic to phenomena? Whereas 'in the metaphysical framework, the possibility of appearing never belongs to that which appears, nor its phenomenality to the phenomenon',³³² phenomenology asserts however that a phenomenon's phenomenality is intrinsic, just as givenness is purely immanent to a phenomenon *giving itself*. What phenomenology has mostly done after Heidegger has in fact been to look at specific phenomena that seemed to give all the more when they do not give beings or objects subsisting in *presence*. Phenomena that are not inscribable in any ontic horizon can still be described along the line of saturated phenomenality as *paradoxes*; a pure phenomenon confirms its givenness just as it *shows itself*, precisely because it is not conditioned to any horizon (*invisible*, unbearable, absolute) nor is it reducible to the *I* (*irregardable*). A saturated phenomenon is impossible to reproduce nor to represent, and it thereby asserts its undeniable *facticity* as a *given* phenomenon. In effect, a phenomenology of givenness seeks to extend without compromise the strict definition of phenomena enunciated by Heidegger to phenomenality, itself so that the reduction aims at 'letting be seen' the unfolding of givenness in phenomenality, which essence would be accomplished and manifested in a pure phenomenon *showing-itself-giving-itself*.

The second chapter was the occasion for us to follow Marion in tracing the phenomenality that givenness unfolds, and eventually to go to the most radical instance of givenness: the phenomenon of revelation. The thought of revelation, as paradox of paradoxes, follows from an uncompromised conception of givenness. To givenness (radical in essence) – that nothing determines and determines all things – corresponds a radical phenomenality, that of the *factum kat' exochên*.³³³ The saturation always happens or arrives in what is conceptualised as the *event*³³⁴ – *i.e.* the concept describing the most radical *a posteriori*, that is, the happening of an unforeseeable and unthinkable event that one could never constitute *a priori* but could at most attempt to *reconstitute* endlessly and always imperfectly by way of (*a posteriori*) hermeneutics. The task of hermeneutics opens up in the trace of events that thereafter may

³³² Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 300.

³³³ See Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 231ff, and more generally, §15 ('Le Fait accompli').

³³⁴ See Marion, *Étant donné*, §17 ('L'évènement').

be described in as many sketches as are made possible by the anamorphosis that *shows* the phenomenon *giving itself from itself*.³³⁵ ‘The limit of our knowledge pertains primarily to its unerasable delay over the event of that which shows *itself*.’³³⁶ According to the strict definition of the phenomenon of revelation as ‘the possibility of impossibility’, understood as ‘the possibility assimilating impossibility (incident, *fait accompli*)’,³³⁷ not only is the *a posteriori* absolutely radicalised, but the anamorphosis of the phenomenon *showing itself* accomplishes in it the very essence of givenness, *i.e.* the perfect gift *gives itself*, and in *giving itself* accomplishes the essence of givenness. So if the revelation of Christ preserves a reserve of unseeness that no finite hermeneutic can exhaust, it is precisely because of the impossibility for *me* of comprehending the infinite excess that nonetheless *gives itself* to me. The saturation of revelation, its ‘excessive whiteness’, is such that nothing in the world could reproduce it (Mark 9.3; it is without *analogy*) nor withstand it (Matt. 17.7). All significations, however sensible (Mark 9.5), are made pale and flat (Mark 9.6), so much so that the only adequate one can only come from the phenomenon *giving itself*, that is, from the *elsewhere* delivering it (‘This is my Son...’, Mark 9.7; see also the confession of Peter, Matt. 16.13-17).³³⁸ The gift *par excellence*, Christ, is known as *gift given from elsewhere* – that is as *Son* of the Father. Christ is received from his *gift*, that is in *signifying* the *elsewhere* of the Father precisely because his *signification* comes from *elsewhere*. The double visibility of the *eikon* is confirmed in that Christ as *Son*, *shows himself* as the gift *given* by the Father *and* as the one *giving* the gift of the Father.

The revelation of Christ reveals thus in return that unless *I* too receive myself from *elsewhere*, I cannot live.³³⁹ The immanent and irrecoverable delay pertaining to the phenomenality of givenness is such that it is the original character of the *adonné* (the witness to the gift). All finite hermeneutics are marked by this delay because they always follow in the trace of the anterior heuristic of charity that Christ brings about. His hermeneutic (Luke 24.27) is such that ‘He brought all [possible] novelty, by bringing Himself’.³⁴⁰ He revealed the hidden mystery of God as he constituted it, *viz.* as he revealed himself: ‘See I am making all things new’ (Rev. 21.5). ‘His revelation introduces realities and phenomena in the world that before him were never seen nor known.’³⁴¹ Our hermeneutic must not be isolated from this anterior heuristic because if it were, our hermeneutic would assimilate the natural experience (*Erlebnis*) to the given when it only deals with traces of given or derivate phenomena

³³⁵ ‘...la contingence de ce qui *s’impose à moi...*’, Marion, *Étant donné*, pp. 212ff.

³³⁶ Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 262-263.

³³⁷ Marion, *Étant donné*, p. 386, see also §16 (“L’incident”).

³³⁸ Marion, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 250-251, 362-363. On the transfiguration, see also Marion, *Remarques sur l’utilité en théologie de la phénoménologie*, p. 19.

³³⁹ ‘I no longer live (*zô de ouketi egô*), Christ lives in me (*zê de en emoi christos*)’, Gal. 2.20. See Marion’s brilliant expository of this verse along with others in, *D’ailleurs, la révélation*, pp. 324, 511. ‘Vivre signifie, pour moi, que je ne suis pas par moi, puisque je nais. [...] Ceci au moins semble acquis : aucun vivant ne se possède ni ne possède sa vie.’, Marion, *La vie – ou ce que l’on ne possède jamais*, p. 2.

³⁴⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, translated by Philip Schaff, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885), vol. I: IV, 34, 1, cited in French by Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 106.

³⁴¹ Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 106.

(historicity, objects). Without a heuristic of charity, hermeneutics would invert the *theo*-logical rationality of givenness for a *theo*-logy that consists in a hermeneutic of reason culminating in historical determinism. ‘Christian philosophy’ would then be tempted to present Christian *theology* as the culmination of reason, as the best possible hermeneutics of what reason finds already in and for itself (e.g. Hegel).

In regard to hermeneutics, the issue of the activity of the subject (the *I*) has often been raised by critical readers of Marion.³⁴² Their questions address notably the status of transcendence, and whether or not givenness would become the new transcendental condition for phenomenality, and consequently for revelation.³⁴³ Marion has addressed some of these critics in order to clarify and preserve the essential paradoxes pertaining to the figure of the *adonné*.³⁴⁴ It would nonetheless certainly be beneficial to expound more on these critics, and the responses already available in Marion’s work in order to push the reflection further on the status of responses and hermeneutics in a phenomenology of givenness. In regard to the activity and passivity of the *adonné*, we recommend a brilliant and concise overview of some critical readers by Stephanie Rumpza, who looks especially at the reception of Marion’s concept of icon.³⁴⁵ Directly in regard to the phenomenon of Revelation, it will perhaps be useful to consider and respond to the recent work of Adam J. Graves. It would certainly be useful to take the measure of his argument and see if the ‘counter-contamination’ that he claims has affected Jean-Luc Marion’s work might truly come in support of the hermeneutic phenomenology of Paul Ricœur.³⁴⁶

³⁴² Holzer, ‘“Philosopher à l’intérieur de la théologie”. La transcendance de la question ontologique comme voie d’accès à une Philosophie de la Religion dans l’oeuvre de Karl Rahner’, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 2010/1, Tome 98 (Paris: Centre Sèvres), p. 51. Mackinlay introduces the concept of a ‘fundamental hermeneutic’ in order to attribute the Revelation a mode proper to itself and different than that of saturation. He denies that the phenomenological description of a phenomenon of revelation is linked to the Revelation as its paradigm, Shane Mackinlay, *Interpreting Excess* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), pp. 178sq., 193sq. This reticence comes perhaps from the same one that Ricœur had in regard to conceptually linking givenness (*Gegebenheit*) to the gift (*don*) as mentioned by Marion in ‘On the gift’, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

³⁴³ Holzer, ‘Phénoménologie radicale et phénomène de révélation : Jean-Luc Marion, *Étant donné*. Essai d’une phénoménologie de la donation’, *Transversalités*, 1999, n°70 (Institut Catholique de Paris), p. 67; Theobald, ‘Penser Dieu. Tendances récentes de la théologie française’ in A.R. Batlogg sj, M. Delgado und R.A. Siebenrock (eds.), *Was den Glauben in Bewegung bringt. Fundamentaltheologie in der Spur Jesu Christi. Festschrift für Karl H. Neufeld sj*, (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), pp. 102-120; Tanner, ‘Theology and the limits of phenomenology’ in Kevin Hart (ed.), *Counter Experience*, *op. cit.*; Gagey, ‘La théologie entre urgence phénoménologique et endurance herméneutique’, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 2010/1, Tome 98, *op. cit.*, p. 42. Marion cites these authors in ‘Remarques sur quelques remarques’, *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 2011/4, Tome 99 (Paris: Centre Sèvres), p. 491.

³⁴⁴ Marion, ‘Remarques sur quelques remarques’, *art. cit.*; See also Marion, *The Reason of the Gift*, translated by Stephen E. Lewis, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), where the Introduction by Lewis (‘The Phenomenological Concept of Givenness and the “Myth of the Given”’) adds important elements to the discussion of agency and transcendence; Marion, *Givenness and Hermeneutics*, translated by Jean-Pierre Lafouge (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2013).

³⁴⁵ Stephanie Rumpza, ‘Crossing the Visible or Crossing it Out? Jean-Luc Marion’s Icon as Window into Heaven’, in *Horizons*, 49, pp. 25-26.

³⁴⁶ Graves acknowledges ‘considerable interpretative effort’ on his part, Adam J. Graves, *The Phenomenology of Revelation in Heidegger, Marion, and Ricœur* (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2021), p. 180. To our knowledge, Ricœur limits his work to ‘les événements fondateurs, comme empreinte, marque, trace de Dieu’, Ricœur, ‘Chapitre I. Herméneutique de l’idée de Révélation’ in Emmanuel Levinas, et al., *La révélation* (Bruxelles: Presses de l’Université Saint-Louis, 1977). But between ‘the Revelation’ and the ‘trace of God’ or ‘idea of the Revelation’ there is a gap that is not so easily crossed...

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