

RETHINKING GIVENNESS:  
AN ASSESSMENT OF JEAN-LUC MARION'S  
SATURATED PHENOMENA

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*Rethinking Givenness:*

*An Assessment of Jean-Luc Marion's Saturated Phenomena*

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## *Abstract*

In this thesis I will argue that Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness, far from being a masked theology, arises from and remains consistent with the fundamental principles of phenomenology traditionally conceived. In support of this position, I will assess his principal phenomenological work, *Being Given*. I will show that Marion's conception of the saturated phenomenon, reduced to its own occurrence as an excess of effects over every nexus of causes, takes Husserl's contention that givenness determines phenomenality to its logical conclusion. What is seen is thus sprung from this unseen self-givenness. This is most plainly experienced in the realms of art and gift giving. Bearing this in mind, and with an eye to establishing its historical antecedents, I will show how such saturated phenomena, quite apart from being of theological origin, have their roots in Immanuel Kant's treatment of art, and, more specifically, his conception of the sublime.

*For my Mother*

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## *Pennyworths - An Introduction*

Phenomenology, as "a space of possible truths", wherein possibility is higher than actuality, has experienced no small difficulty in opening itself to those entwined in a string of post-Levinasian thinkers, which, in their own respective ways, emphasize an excess, be it in the form of a phenomenon, an Other, or an auto-affectation, that compels one to participate in a relation that is incommensurable with a power exercised, with a possession, or a knowledge on the part of man as subject (Janicaud 2000, 94-95). Levinas begins this movement in taking it upon himself to point toward the face of the Other, the Other in its radical alterity, which, with its counter-intentionality, calls the egoism of the subject into question and alerts him to a hunger which is not bent on concupiscence (Levinas 1969, 34). Later, Michel Henry will insist that life has no face, that it consists in a radical immediacy that admits no space of light through which it might see itself. Instead, the self undergoes and first experiences itself as an immediate affectation of itself by itself (Henry 2009, 72, 122). Levinas and Henry serve as but two leading examples of this ongoing tradition. The point is that before giving due consideration to these and other emerging possibilities, certain adherents, Dominique Janicaud among them, have rested content in simply siphoning them away, storing them safely under that daunting, some might even say dubious term, 'theology'.

But this view, consisting as it does of theoretical prejudices and groundless fears clothed in the robes of 'common sense', can itself have no place in phenomenology, which, as we will see, stands apart from the 'natural attitude', and so we here will seek to move beyond it. We will argue that Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness, though not without its alterations and advancements upon Edmund Husserl's phenomenological project, is founded within and remains consistent with the fundamental



principles of phenomenology traditionally conceived.

With this having been said, introductions are in order: Marion, first and foremost, was a pupil of Jacques Derrida. The debate over the nature of the gift and its manner of being given which arose out of the two will stand as an important point here, and we will primarily explore it through the latter's work, *Given Time*, and the former's, *Being Given*. Though *Being Given* is indeed a strictly phenomenological work, with a strong basis in Husserl and Heidegger, let us not go without noting that Marion is also a known Catholic, and has several works of a decidedly theological nature to his name, perhaps none more influential than *God Without Being*, wherein he explores God as making a gift of Himself, as a pure gift, in that sense, made outside the horizon of beingness.

In any event, with this background in place, the train of our thought will run as follows: the opening chapter of our project begins with a brief look into the reduction as put forward by Husserl; and will continue through an assessment of Martin Heidegger's variation thereof. Following this, we will introduce Marion's third reduction to givenness, which reveals givenness to be the essential factor in any phenomenon's achieving phenomenality. Before exploring the effects of this reduction, we will address the primary objections to it, as put forward by Dominique Janicaud. These objections properly addressed, we will move into a discussion of the painting as a phenomenon in which the givenness of the given most plainly unfolds.

Our sights then shift toward an explication of Marion's conception of the gift as the model of givenness. In keeping with the logic of the gift, whereby that which is given gives itself from itself, as we will see, the most common-place of phenomena similarly initiate their own apparition, without exterior condition or horizon, and in excess of expectation, thereby privileging the self with the function of reception rather than constitution. Here Marion's position that the self accesses itself through inauthenticity

rather than authenticity reveals itself in origin and significance: as fundamentally gifted, the self can never recuperate itself on the level of knowledge or possession; its activity instead consists in continuing to extend outside itself, to be lost for any definite self-knowledge and thus give itself, without any sense of mineness. Instead of a pure loss, though, in outlining this position of Marion's, we will reveal this giving in abandon as a victory over and above the contentment of simply being and appropriating oneself.

Janicaud again makes his presence felt here, questioning the need for this move outside the horizon of objectness and beingness in order to be receptive to phenomena come from elsewhere. In the eyes of Janicaud, Descartes' conception of the idea of infinity reveals that the subject exists beyond the representation it can have of itself. But does the certainty afforded the subject that is the end result of this schema provide the self with an assurance adequate to its nature? In order to overcome pangs of indifference, an attitude by no means uncommon today, in whose rumblings one hears the question, "why bother?", we will, in a defense of Marion, explore the possibility that, in order to retain the assurance proper to it, the self needs expose itself to the radical alterity of the Other, or what Marion regards as a "love without being" (Marion, 2003: 72). The saturated phenomenon will then come upon us, and we will seek to outline and clarify Marion's assessment of its call, and how it provides us with an inkling for the role of revelation in phenomenology proper.

## *Chapter 1 - First Stirrings*

### *1.1 - Reflection and Care*

We begin with Husserl. The transcendental reduction put forward by Husserl does not annul but shifts focus away from the world as undoubted datum and the vagaries of vocation -- personal interests, desires, prejudices, etc -- through which we relate to it. This natural attitude becomes so many sunken embers against the light of transcendental subjectivity, wherein the actuality of the world is suspended in view of an assessment of the world's primordial modes of givenness. Here, in the eyes of Husserl, objects are alighted upon as essentially given for the ego's cognitive and sense-bestowing activity. The transcendental reduction thus accomplishes a neutralization on account of which the pure dimension of the world, the world considered in its being-meant rather than its actual being, is revealed in its essential meaning-formations, as an abstract, nominal structure which correlates with that of absolute consciousness (Husserl 1960, 37, 75).

In view of apodicticity, outside prejudice and practical attitudes, Husserl calls for an eidetic variation which, as a free imaginative play, enables one to accede to "the general style which this intuitive world, in the flow of total experience, persistently maintains" (Husserl 1970a, 31). With this shift from subjective particularities to the primordial structure of constitution, Husserl moves back toward a fundamental passivity, toward a receptivity, whereby an anonymous, absolute ego is informed by a strata of sense-data (Husserl 1970a, 108). Even so, this passive, anonymous ego remains reflective, engaging in an intentional fulfillment of the object, only at a lower level (Bozga 2009, 138-139).

Heidegger, as we well know, however, thinks little of this privileging of reflective intentionality in man's comportment toward the world, arguing that Husserl's theoretical

conception of man misses man as Dasein, as a being-in-the-world whose being is concealed and revealed through a more basic, dare we say, practical orientation. That orientation is care, care as potential self-illumination. The manner in which man is first given to himself is not found in the basic structures of theoretical intentionality, in a transcendental subjectivity considered apart from every comportment toward the world incarnate, but in his always already being involved in the world, alongside other historically determined things and taken up into their use according to a practical everyday orientation (Heidegger 1996, 195).

Dasein thus has a pre-ontological sense of its being; a grasp which does not imply understanding but a concerned absorption and continuous questioning of its being (Heidegger 1996, 183-185). For in Dasein's daily dwelling alongside things and its manner of taking them up in view of certain ends, the tissue of affective moods which motivate and spur it on attest to its fundamental anxiety for Being, to the fact that its Being is not without lack, that, to the contrary, it is thoroughly shot through with lack. The lack in Dasein is nothing other than death, specifically its death, against which it unfolds as a not-yet, with a field of possibilities (Heidegger 1996, 233-235). As Dasein owes itself and its possibilities to itself as a not-yet measured against death, its most proper and original possibility is precisely its own impossibility, its finitude and having-to-die, such that we may say its having-to-be is a having-to-die (Heidegger 1996, 237-239).

This being-toward-death which arises from its anxious, first-hand experience of its possibilities as residing in its own not-yet being them, in the fact that it is only ever what it can in the future be, is therefore properly disclosed through a mode of questioning (Heidegger 1996, 231). Only in questioning, which already implies uncertainty and interpretation, and not in theoretical comprehension, which implies objectivity,

possession and completion, can one access this living experience, this historically unfolding and incomplete field of possibilities. It is in this questioning, as a natural extension of one's Being, that one attains a degree of 'mineness', that is to say, a personal grasp of one's being-toward-death (Heidegger 1996, 236-239).

With this ongoing questioning, this questioning that does not call for a final answer, but is already itself its own answer, and which thereby provokes only its continuance, or, if you like, the deepening of its question, of its questioning, we already sense the opening of Heidegger's hermeneutical approach to phenomenology. If phenomenology is to continue in its description of lived experience in its most native and unconditional manifestation, then it must acknowledge not only experiences anteriority with respect to theoretical reflection, but also that said experience is fundamentally imperfect and incomplete.

Phenomenology is thus an "infinite task" since it stands as "an open process which no single vision can conclude" (Paul Ricoeur 1995, 109). As an 'open process', interpretation can thus help Dasein avoid "generality in [its] hermeneutical understanding" and enable it to better come to bear upon the factual developments that inhere in its concrete situation (Heidegger 1999, 14). There is no loss of rigor here. To the contrary, only through this interpretation and questioning, that is to say, through this continual reassessment of its own position and inheritance -- i.e. its own program as initiated by Husserl himself -- does one personally affirm rather than dogmatically assume the guiding principles and aspirations of phenomenology. We will say more on this later.

For the time being, let us simply note that, for all his advancements upon Husserl, Heidegger, with his conception of care and its relation to Being, still operates on a reflective level, on one that is not theoretical, to be sure, but rather practical. Inasmuch as

care gives onto an active engagement or, if you like, appropriation of one's ownmost possibility, it plays a similar methodological role as reflective intentionality in Husserl, substituting 'authenticity' for the self-reflexivity of transcendental subjectivity. More specifically, though Heidegger puts forward Dasein as a being-in-the-world oriented toward the future, toward the end of being, in order to make good on the shortcomings of man as subject, as a pre-existing essence that relates to itself in and through all of its representations, Dasein's aptitude or distinct relation toward the end, toward the possibility of its impossibility, becomes again, whether through an anticipatory resoluteness (authenticity) or a flight into things or the crowd (inauthenticity), a relation to itself and its unique potentiality-for-being.

### ***1.2 - A Reduction to Givenness***

Jean-Luc Marion, in agreement with Heidegger concerning Husserl's failure to return to the things themselves in their most native and original manifestation, but noticing also the former's own shortcomings in this regard, postulates his own reduction in view of supporting the principle of all principles. The principle of all principles, formulated by Husserl as the crux of phenomenology, reads as follows:

Every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak, in its "personal" actuality) offered to us in "intuition" is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there (Husserl 1998, 44).

As we've seen, phenomenology, in its return to the things themselves, seeks to describe the manner in which the phenomenon is given in and of itself. Husserl states: "And the task is just this: within the field of pure evidence or self-givenness, to study all

forms of givenness and all correlations, and to conduct an elucidatory analysis of them all" (Husserl 1990, 10). Phenomenology thus falls to the order of givenness. The reduction, in turn, reduces everything, except the given. As Husserl states, the reduction excludes "everything that is not evident givenness in its true sense, that is not absolute givenness to pure 'seeing'" (Husserl 1990, 7). The reduction, we might say, leads back to the given and is itself directed by it. Whenever something can no longer be reduced, as a result, it is accepted as given. Husserl states as much when he notes that "above all, it is not primarily a matter of establishing as given certain phenomena, but of making visible the essence of givenness and the self-constitution of different modes of objectness" (Husserl 1990, 51).

Husserl himself, however, focuses on the phenomenon given as an object to intentional consciousness and never establishes a conceptual definition of givenness as such. But why, we might ask, particularly in a field whose objectives include a bracketing of the natural attitude and its requisite assumptions and dogmatism's, should we accept the assumption, fledging of traditional Western thought and its misplaced adoration of man as hero of history, that all that is and all that gives itself should be bound and gagged under the category of objectness? Why, this having been said, should the phenomenal horizon not open under and as the very givenness that, according to Husserl himself, gives appearing to it? In the end, there is absolutely no reason, apart from an ungrounded bias, peculiar to Western thought, which heralds man as knower, to exclusively consider the phenomenon in terms of objectness.

Husserl thus fails to follow through with his essential insight: that, before all else, givenness determines and establishes phenomenality (Marion 2002a, 32). It is owing to this fact that Marion takes it upon himself to move toward a phenomenology of givenness.

Marion points out that

a phenomenology of givenness can permit the phenomenon to show itself in itself and by itself because it gives itself, but a phenomenality of objectness can only constitute the phenomenon on the basis of the ego of a consciousness that intends it as its noema. Husserl recoils before his own advance when he restricts givenness to one of the lowest levels of its phenomenological possibilities, the object (Marion 2002a, 32-33).

Before we venture a direct explication of this phenomenological move toward givenness as being onto itself its own horizon, let us first disclose how Heidegger's own concentration on Being itself betrays the primacy of givenness. As noted by Husserl, the phenomenon gives itself as a being. Givenness, in this sense, governs the beingness of beings. Heidegger is adamant, however, that it is none other than the question of Being itself that is central to phenomenology. Be that as it may, there is a sense, as Heidegger admits, in which being itself hinges on an enigmatic 'it gives' for its being. Being, in its phenomenality, is thus brought forward through givenness, through an 'it gives'. Being, accomplished in and through a unique mode of manifestation, through an enigmatic, that is to say, anonymous, 'it gives', is thereby essentially separate from that which it gives, namely beings (Marion 2002a, 34). While it belongs, as an extension, for beings to be, Being, as that which both differs and enables beings to be, is not. Being therefore unfolds according to the logic of givenness; in short, it belongs to an enigmatic 'it gives', rather than a plain 'it is' (Marion 2002a, 35).

To continue to perform its action as an 'it gives' sheltered in the fact that it is not, it therefore falls to Being to remain characterized by a lack of characterization. In other words, Being, to stay true to its essence as that which gives, must remain anonymous and indeterminate (Marion 2002a, 35). What enables Being to retain its status as an anonymous 'it gives' is its mode of appearance, which is that of withdrawal. In brief,



being appears in its disappearance, in its withdrawal. Being's activity is here synonymous with that of giving, which itself withdraws to give the gift and enable it to appear (Marion 2002, 35). It is therefore givenness that gives and "uncovers beings in (and without) their Being" (Marion 2002a, 36). But, before long, Heidegger labels this 'it' that gives as Ereignis, as advent, to the extent that this 'it', and the givenness it fosters, is substituted altogether for advent. It therefore comes to pass that being, in its givenness, is eclipsed by being as advent (Marion 2002a, 37). Although Heidegger thus marks an advancement in the description of certain properties specific to givenness, much like Husserl before him, he ultimately fails to stand by it.

### *1.3 - Dominique Janicaud's Critique*

The time is nearly upon us to venture beyond these limited reductions, these instances, both that of objectness and beingness, which rise above and cloud that which, by virtue of the phenomenological tradition laid out by Husserl, necessarily serves as their condition of possibility, namely, givenness itself. To do this, and thus demonstrate how givenness may be legitimately laid out on its own terms, we will first turn to Marion's analysis of the painting, which, as a common, plainly visible item, demonstrates how all phenomena, even those of the garden variety, belong, first and foremost, under the order of givenness.

Before this, however, let us address the objections which have been brought against Marion's account of the aforementioned phenomenological reductions. One Dominique Janicaud heads-up such a charge, intent as he is to exorcise the theological spirit which, so far as he is concerned, has come to bury itself in the phenomenological corpus in view of passing itself off as a legitimate philosophical enterprise.

Janicaud perceives Husserl, first and foremost, as endeavoring to take up "the project of true, universal, and disinterested knowledge, precisely where the sciences lack it, at the level of the foundations of knowledge and the principles of phenomenality" (Janicaud 2000, 94). The phenomenologist, as a result, properly concerns himself with "a descriptive analytic of the elementary structures of existence" (Janicaud 2000, 35). The first offence privy to those of the theological turn, then, consists in the fact that they have "nothing to do with the Husserlian enterprise of constitution, which meant -- try as try can -- to offer a more fundamental, more true, and more complete knowledge [connaissance] of the different facets of being" (Janicaud 2000, 30).

Yet, as we've already begun to touch upon in our discussion of Heidegger and his move toward a hermeneutical approach to phenomenology, the elementary order of experience is refractory to any and all such completion. While Husserl never abandoned the reflective stance of his program, he was also not without his doubts concerning its limitations:

it is rationality which, discovering again and again its unsatisfying relativity, is driven on its toils, in its will to attain the true and full rationality. But finally it discovers that this rationality is an idea residing in the infinite and is de facto necessarily on the way (Husserl 1970b, 339).

The reflective bent of phenomenology, which sets out to describe the basic elements of experience, cannot come full circle in this regard since its own activity consists in silencing the very stratum of experience from which it is itself derived. In a basic sense, such is the nature of all language. Theodor Adorno expresses this in his own way when he states that

every universal principle of a first, even that of facticity in radical empiricism, contains abstraction within it. Even empiricism could not claim an individual entity

here and now, or fact as first, but rather only the principle of the factual in general. The first and immediate is always, as a concept, mediated and thus not the first (Adorno 1982, 7).

Returning to Husserl, we may note again that the object given to the intending and constituting subject is only ever given partially, never fully, and thus only ever achieves unity in its agreement with the mind's nexus of associations, anticipations, and other such syntheses (Bozga 2009, 124). In the end, the unity of the "thing-in-itself is presumptive and derivative when confronted to the endless adumbrations" (Bozga 2009, 125). Husserl can still assert that the object finds a complete givenness in "the pre-phenomenological unity of the time-constituting consciousness", in the anonymous ego of which we spoke before, and which "forms an all-inclusive unity where different series of primal impressions are integrated", however, though it initiates the flow of time, it itself stands outside it, independent of it, and thus falls well short of lending itself to any immediate description or phenomenological justification (Bozga 2009, 147-148). Indeed, the insistence upon a perfectly neutral and reflective ego dwelling wholly outside temporality seems little more than a theoretical bias on Husserl's part.

The ultimate basis for unity in Husserl's scheme of object-constitution goes without much in the way of support, and, correspondingly, the ideal of complete and objective description in phenomenology rests on less than stable grounds, to say the least. Instead, if phenomenology is to remain without presumption and bias, then it must come to terms with its non-adequation with experience, with the subject as something other than a disinterested spectator, and, in an attentive and, yes, rigorous reconsideration of the basic structures of life, seek to draw out the implications of an experience whose modes of givenness exceed the subjects centrifugal intentionality and its desire for the enclosure and safety of complete constitution.

Moving more specifically to Marion, Janicaud's central qualm so far as his

phenomenology of givenness is concerned has to do with his resignation of the bracketing of the natural attitude (i.e. the reduction). Integral to Marion's phenomenology, as we will in good time see, is his conception of a pure form of the call and of givenness as saturated phenomenon. As for the former, Janicaud deems it "a rather dry mystical night" (Janicaud 2000, 63). As he continues, "the superabundance of grace has been put through the Heideggerian ringer. But the qualifying terms, in any case, are neither human nor finite: pure, absolute, unconditioned -- such is the call" (Janicaud 2000, 63). The end result, so far as Janicaud is concerned, is that "the only tie that binds" the pure form of the call "to whatever kind of experience is religious" (Janicaud 2000, 63).

A strange criticism, this is, insofar as Marion, in insisting upon the pure, anonymous call, rather than a particular version established by this or that authority, religious or otherwise, approaches the call on a conceptual level, as a possibility, and not as an actuality, which would necessarily find itself inscribed in a particular tradition and thus feed a biased viewpoint. As Marion suggests, the "voice that reveals reveals precisely because it remains voiceless, more exactly nameless, but in the Name. The Name gives itself only in saying itself without any name, therefore in all" (Marion 2002a, 297). The call here unfolds according to the logic of the gift: to give the gift, the giver cannot announce or even know itself as giver, insofar as this identity would obfuscate the call in the pointed calling for recognition and reciprocity. Similarly, the call, in order to be given as such, must not call with a known or otherwise determinate voice, but in an anonymity whose 'voice' only sounds after it is heard in a recipient who steps forward and responds. This anonymity is therefore not synonymous with a mysterious "unknown" or hidden God-head, but with the essence of the call as such. The lover's call will serve as an example: an individual, a lover, if you like, goes out into the world and, quite unbeknownst to herself, extends a call readily available to all; to most it comes to

nothing: some glimpse it quickly and move on quicker still, while others fail to so much as notice it. But "let one of the listeners take upon himself the call of this face (if their gazes truly cross), and 'it was like an epiphany' -- the responsal will confer its unique name (possibly its surname) on the call because the gifted will have let himself be entirely governed by what he will receive" (Marion 2002a, 298-299). Such plain situations, in which the pure call resounds outside identity and presence, widespread as they are, attest to the fact that this structure does not lead back to a theology, but instead issues from an attempt to draw out the necessary consequences of taking seriously the role originally promised to givenness by phenomenology. Far from contravening the epoche, Marion's pure form of the call supports and reinforces it, revealing a sustained interest on his part to work within the leading principles of Husserlian phenomenology.

It is altogether wrong-headed, in this light, for Janicaud to claim that Marion, instead of respecting phenomenology as "a space of possible truths", unduly privileges a particular (religious) tradition, his own (Janicaud 2000, 94-95). Janicaud, in keeping with phenomenology, contends that it needs continue in tending to "the open field...of the entire human experience" (Janicaud 2000, 94-95). But this is precisely what Marion fights for with his phenomenological work. In constructing a third reduction, and even his conception of a pure form of the call, Marion seeks to go beyond the unnecessarily limited horizons of objectness and beingness so as to be open to givenness in all its forms, sans restrictions, limitations and so on. It is precisely on account of this reduction that phenomenality is freed from the requirement of a ground, and that intuition is no longer constrained to a relation of adequation with respect to the intentionality of the subject. In suspending these theoretical prejudices, phenomenology may open itself to a mode of givenness that consists in a manifestation that frustrates the centrifugal intentionality of the subject but that does not fail to achieve phenomenality for all that. In short, owing to

this third reduction to givenness, phenomenology may finally assess an experience undeniably held by many: that of being called to attention, indeed being called to oneself, not in and through an enclosed and private I, but in a 'me' that is open and moves forever outward into the phenomenon come from elsewhere.

When Janicaud comes to Marion's concept of the saturated phenomenon, he rebukes it for an unwarranted privileging of infinity and for propagating an inverse intentionality that does violence to the traditional conception of the subject. In addressing this criticism, we must first take note that it stands as an instance, and by no means the only one, wherein Janicaud shows himself to be selectively blind in his grasp of the history of phenomenology. Inverse intentionality is not the fledgling of the theological turn but in fact has its origin in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, a staunch atheist. With his analysis of the Look in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre demonstrated how it is in being seen, and not only in seeing, that one comes to an awareness of oneself as a being-for-others, that is to say, as not only a subject but also an object in a world organized around the aims of others (Sartre 1992, 387-390). It is, as an extension, in becoming aware of how one stands in the eyes of others that one comes to wait for oneself in the future, as with others, with certain expectations.

Finally, so far as this matter of inverse intentionality is concerned, we need also note that it does not violate the subject as much as Janicaud might like to suppose. In hastily equating inverse intentionality with a nullification of the subject, Janicaud's conservatism comes to the fore. By privileging the unpredictable, counter-intentional call, Marion does not annul the role of the subject but only alters its manner of activity. The self still serves as the center of phenomenality, as that to which all phenomena must come and burst upon in order to achieve their own apparition. Now, however, since the initiative which marks the onset of this process issues from the phenomena itself, the self

receives both itself and the phenomena by exposing itself and responding to its call. We need not even say that this act of reception rules out constitution altogether. For the reception favored by Marion is not wholly passive, at least not in the traditional sense. Reception still implies a measure of constitution on the part of the recipient. In receiving, the self constitutes and lends a measure of determinacy to an otherwise less than determinate occurrence, but not in the sense of exhausting or possessing as product, but in allowing to come to form something of what was already given. Both activity and passivity are implied in what we will call this more primordial form of passivity.

That this reconfiguration of the self is explored on a phenomenological basis should come as no cause for alarm: if, as we've said, phenomenology is to remain rigorous and not lapse into dogmatism, prejudices and the like, then it must also be attentive to its own past, to its own letter; first, in order to see whether this past isn't itself without its theoretical prejudices, and second, to see that they aren't taken up in a dogmatic fashion. To be faithful to a tradition, in this sense, as Derrida points out, is to remain, at least in part, decidedly unfaithful to it (Derrida 2004, 160). It is perhaps no mistake that, from its very beginning, and not simply with today's theological turn, thinkers in the phenomenological tradition, from Sartre to Merleau-Ponty, while abiding by certain principles fundamental to phenomenology, each assessed, critiqued, and ultimately went their own way with Husserl's corpus, itself wrangled with problems, doubts, and indecision's. Phenomenology, as "a space of possible truths", and with its corresponding need to remain methodically multifaceted and open to these experiences undergone by many, if not all, can therefore have little to do with Janicaud's predilection for a skeletal Husserl who never existed in the first place, and whose specter is simply conjured up to disguise the unfounded fears of a frightened conservatism (Janicaud 2000, 94-95).

## *Chapter 2 - The Painting as Visible Par Excellence:*

### *2.1 - The Non-Ontic Coming Forward of the Painting*

To enable a complete return to the things themselves, Marion, instead of springing ahead of the phenomenon into the arms of his own subjective specifications, endeavors to follow alongside it, allowing its apparition to come forward and accomplish its own appearance as givenness. In turning our attention to the painting, as one of the most plainly visible phenomena, as we will do now, we will, in showing how givenness rationally articulates its rise to its own apparition, by extension demonstrate how all lesser, that is to say, ordinary, phenomena can similarly be said to fall under the guidance of givenness. On the one hand, the painting stands as a basic object, caught in an objective presence, subject to the viewer's touch. On the other, and in quite another way, the paintings persistence in presence, its status as an object, falls well short of accounting for its visibility or even its effect upon the viewer. Were a painting's visibility engulfed in its subsistence, in its being-there, in its being what it is, for that matter, such that, as its audience, we might arrive truly at it, then a single viewing would, for all intents and purposes, satisfy us (Marion 2002a, 41). And yet, as experience shows, nothing of the sort obtains. One is urged to return to the painting time and again, precisely because it is not in seeing it as an object that one truly sees it (Marion 2002a, 41-42).

Already in the activity that goes into the painting's preparation, by "moving it so it can be visible, by situating it at the right distance, keeping it under the gaze, by exposing it carefully to the emotions", it is implicitly acknowledged that "in this or that subsistence already visible of itself (canvas, backing, materials, etc), there is also something else to see besides the subsistent" (Marion 2002a, 42). What remains unaccounted for in the



subsistence of the painting is therefore the painting itself, the painting not as an object but as an act, as a non-ontic coming forward, whose invisible gesture, whose raw upsurge, opens up visibility. The painting's appearing, the advance of its givenness, in this sense, appears quite apart from, and indeed in inverse proportion to, what supports it (i.e. the canvas, backing - in short, all that makes up its objective subsistence) (Marion 2002a, 39-41). In order to see the painting, and not simply its supporting materials, in turn, the viewer needs not simply notice it, letting his gaze slide along its lines and forms, but must allow himself to undergo it, to feel its upsurge, to give it his gaze, his attention, and, in so doing, see himself arise from what he receives (Marion 2002b, 111).

Michel Henry, in taking up Wassily Kandinsky's copious essays on the matter, similarly notes that art, as an exteriority, is a modality of the radical interiority of life, of life as a self-givenness, as an immediate and non-objectifiable pathos and passion (Henry 2009, 122). It is only for fear of this pathos that one prefers to keep it at bay, to hang it on that unfortunate Greek telos, representation, and only paint our individual specifications, the contents our own garden, everyday bric-a-brac, rather than life itself, which "we experience...within ourselves as something we have neither posited nor willed, as something that passes through us without ourselves as its cause" (Henry 2009, 127). In its essence, therefore, the painting comes forward as an immediate and invisible pathos, experienced through the invisible dimension of the visible colors and forms, through the dynamic and affective qualities intrinsic to them and their specific arrangement in the work in question.

There is no question, then, of acceding to the painting by external reality, whose token it would be, or the stirrings of history, whose inception, truth, and remnant it might have been, or even the penchants and plagues of the artist, whose regality it supposedly rediscovers. "The theme is its real, invisible content, its abstract content", which perfectly

coincides with its upsurge (Henry 2009, 121). This is not to say that the artwork is "absorbed into form", only that "form is absorbed into life. This is because no sensation of form or colour is possible without an auto-affect or auto-impression -- without life" (Henry 2009, 121). Inasmuch as the self receives itself from this self-givenness, from this affectation that 'takes' it, its exposure and subjection to its inexhaustible excess means growth not diminishment, the growth of an egoism that furthers the pathos and passion of life, rather than turning it into mere narcissism and solipsism (Descartes). The life of the self is this growth, this unpredictable stirring, which comes to us in art:

[As we] watch forces that slumbered within us, waiting stubbornly and patiently for millennia, even from the beginning of time. These forces explode into the violence and gleam of colours; they open spaces and engender the forms of worlds. The forces of the cosmos are awakened within us. They lead us outside of time to join in their celebration dance and they do not let go of us (Henry 2009, 142).

Indeed, this position is not without historical antecedent. Kant himself, in construing the beautiful as "the form of the finality of an object, insofar as it is perceived in it without representation of an end", emphasizes that, in matters of taste, the finality applicable to this domain stands quite apart from an "objective finality, i.e., the relation of the object to a determinate end" (Kant 1978, 120). The finality of the work of art is therefore not found, by way of a concept, term, object, or end outside itself. Bearing this in mind, Kant defines subjective finality, in contradistinction, as that which goes "without any material and concept of that with which it is to agree" (Kant 1978, 112). Continuing in this vein, then, Marion may rightfully insist that the painting, anterior and refractory to any concept which might accomplish its objective representation, far from ending in an object other than itself, remains and accomplishes its finality in and by itself.

## *2.2 - The Question of Beauty*

The finality of beauty, of the work of art, resting in itself, as we've seen, is adverse to the horizon of the object, but equally so to that of being. Heidegger states that "beauty is a mode according to which the truth deploys itself as unconcealedness", where the unconcealedness is that of Being accomplished through particular beings situated in a particular time and place in the world (Heidegger 2001, 43). Hence the finitude of Being, and the artwork, caught in its thrall, as a channel through which the history of a particular people is constituted and brought to the fore. In so construing beauty, however, Heidegger denies that it might be given on its own, and allows it to function only in the name of something other than itself, such that its self is a not-self, its realization a negation, its accomplishment a defeat, in proportion to which the embers of being are illuminated all the more.

Yet this conception of the artwork begins to crumble upon due consideration of the fact that, more often than not, the 'truth' of a painting, its being what it is, namely the disclosure of a particular historical people, whose proper contemplation, at least by those circumscribed in that very spatial-temporal position, spurs on a state of authenticity, has little, if any, bearing on the painting's beauty. This is what Husserl himself noticed when considering the book as a "phenomena invested with spirit" (Husserl 1989, 248). When viewing the book in itself, that is, as a book, as something to be read, its thing-like status, which cannot be denied, cannot itself lead one to this impression. And this, if for no other reason, precisely because beauty does not reside in showing something in the world, but in a non-ontic flaring up which makes an addition to phenomenality and, in so doing, beckons the previously inattentive gaze forward.

As Husserl continues "I see what is thingly about [the book] insofar as it appears to

me, but 'I live in the sense comprehending it'. And while I do so the spiritual unity of the sentence" is maintained (Husserl 1989, 248). In the case of the painting, then, Marion remains consistent with Husserl in asserting that, though he

must of course apprehend it as a thing...it is precisely not this that opens it to me as beautiful; it is that I 'live' its meaning, namely its beautiful appearing, which has nothing thinglike to it, since it cannot be described as the property of a thing, demonstrated by reasons, or hardly even be said. What is essential - the beautiful appearing - remains unreal, an 'I know not what', that I must seek, await, touch, but which is not comprehensible (Marion 2002a, 46).

Outside the purview of being, indeed, running retrograde to its concealed/unconcealed bi-polarity, the artwork does not properly serve as an answer to its question(ing), but reveals a more fundamental question behind it, that of the upsurge, sufficient unto itself, which wrangles unexpected surprise -- admiration, if you like -- from the individual before whom it has been strategically placed (Marion 2002a, 47).

Indeed, we might add, as final testament to the painting's providence, its life, if you will, which exists quite apart from its being, the simple fact that, Heidegger's protestations notwithstanding, examples abound of artworks whose appeal has little, if anything, to do with their historical ties. Works of an exceptional sort, though undoubtedly revealing different layers depending on the paradigms of the generation within which it is received, harbor, as experience will attest, a more primordial dimension, one specific to itself, which thereby cuts across spatial, temporal, and cultural demarcations, inciting intrigue, wonder, and contemplation through nothing other than its own self-sufficient upsurge.

To see the painting in itself as it gives itself from itself, then, one must, if there is to be any question of phenomenological rigor, not rest content, as easy as it would be, with the painting as mere object or being, but with what Henry refers to as its pure impression

or effect (Henry 2009, 72). The effect which we here mean to touch upon, the one which concerns artists so, whose first rustling's we've already divulged, is that which, far from "affecting the mind by means of physical causes (though it does that also)", is an elementary one wherein the soul vibrates with the pathos of the paintings continual coming, its emergence into visibility (Marion 2002a, 51). Henry observes this effect unfolding, not in the visible aspect of colors, but in and through their invisible aspect, through the dynamic power that ensnares the viewer's attention and renders it visible (Henry 2009, 72). As Marion notes, in reference to a painting bathed in blushing light:

[That] this luminosity itself does not strike me as a fact of color; rather, this fact of color strikes me only in that it makes me undergo a passion: that, in Kandinsky's terms, of ochre tinged with gold - the passion undergone by the soul affected by the profound serenity of the world saved and protected by the last blood of the setting sun (Marion 2002a, 51).

To see the painting, accordingly, is to see it where it can't be seen; to see in the sense of open and exposed feeling, an undergoing of its uprising in the stirred passion and enriched sense of life that ensues. Such is the painting's effect, its very self, which, entrusted to itself, gives itself from itself, in its most primal phenomenality, as a pure givenness. In bracketing all that is not pure phenomenality - objectness and beingness - Marion's third reduction thus accomplishes the taking out of play of bracketing (i.e. of the reduction) as laid out by Husserl, enabling the painting to appear in proportion to the extent that it is considered apart from every supposition or sentiment of the world (Marion 2002a, 52).

We have thus established, in the case of the painting as a visible par excellence, and by extension phenomena of a more ordinary sort, that appearance fully comes forward through this reduction to the pure given. A givenness that gives itself implies, however,

as a giving, a recipient, a givee. With this in mind, we find ourselves amongst a series of questions whose proper assessment will further our explication of givenness and its central role in the appearing of phenomena. More specifically, if 'giving itself' implies a givee, then, as Janicaud has asked, might we not say that the gift, far from being donated through givenness itself, is in fact the effect of an efficient cause? And, furthermore, even were this not to be the case, and the gift given were permitted to stand outside a priori conditions of knowledge, as well as causal and economic orders, would it not, as Jacques Derrida has argued, disappear at once? (Derrida 1992, 35) To tend to these questions, let us begin our exploration of Marion's conception of the gift as a model of givenness.

### *Chapter 3 - That Model of Givenness, the Gift:*

#### *3.1 - Suspending the Giver and the Giver*

It is first noted that givenness, as a concept, organizes "its act (to give), as well as what is at stake (gift), indeed the actor (giver) and the mode of the accomplished given (given as characteristic)" (Marion 2002a, 61-62). The given is thus at once the event and the mode of access to it. The given, in turn, cannot be divorced from givenness. Indeed, it is identical with it, shot through with its trace, such that we may say that the given manifests and "bears the fold of givenness" (Marion 2002a, 65). It is this formulation, particularly when seen against the backdrop of Marcel Mauss' work on the role of the gift in potlatch ceremonies, wherein reciprocity is the lubricant and the attainment of identity the aim of all gifts exchanged, that serves as temptation to fall back on such a tradition when approaching Marion's conception of givenness (Marcel Mauss 1990, 33).

According to this tradition, "the giver gives the gift in the role of efficient cause, mobilizing a formal and material cause (in order to define, reify the gift), and pursuing a final cause (the good of the givee and/or the glory of the giver)" (Marion 2002a, 75). Givenness, employing these four causes, holds to the principle of sufficient reason, which stipulates "that nothing happens without its being possible for one who has enough knowledge of things to give a reason sufficient to determine why it is thus and not otherwise" (Leibniz 1973, 199). Givenness, then, far from undoing man's power of knowledge, itself attests to it as its condition of possibility. Once again, as a result, givenness is rendered secondary and subordinate to something else -- the power of knowledge -- more significant to it than it itself. In necessitating the response of the other, who, under the law of reciprocity, is obliged to return the gift, lest he be lost to

himself, deemed less than equal to the challenge proffered by the other, and, in so doing, re-establishes harmony, equality, and identity. Inasmuch as this remains the case, givenness can indeed be seen as conforming to the order of exchange, marked by causality and the law of identity.

But, as outlined by Marion, givenness, as a final rather than first principle, which withdraws so that the given might come forward on its own, to remain consistent with itself, requires a loss of oneself, a renunciation of equality with oneself, and thus a law of non-return. Givenness, in contrast to mere exchange, can therefore have nothing to do with presence (as subsistence), possession, knowledge, utility, or identity.

With this Derrida concurs (Derrida 1992, 35). Indeed, he goes further still and asserts that the gift's aforementioned conditions of possibility are simultaneously the marks of its impossibility. Derrida insists that the gift exists as such on

the condition of not being or appearing to be the gift of anything, of anything that is or that is present, come from someone and given to someone? On the condition of 'being' a gift without given and without giving, without presentable thing and act? A gift that would neither give itself, nor give itself as such, and that could not take place except on the condition of not taking place -- and of remaining impossible, without dialectical sublation of the contradiction? (Derrida 1992, 35).

Marion and Derrida thus agree that the gift must take place outside of all commerce and exchange, indeed, outside of presence, self-reflexivity and identity. Their principle disagreement lies in their respective interpretations of these circumstances: for Derrida, the gift, as refractory to presence and identification, means that it can never truly appear and achieve phenomenality: it remains always a yet-to-be-given, an im-possibility, like forgiveness, which is not an end but a beginning, indeed an opening, open insofar as closed, as a tantalizing (im)possibility which holds us rapt with attention and urges us to hope, prepare, and await. The gift, as im-possible, opens hope, leaves us waiting, and



thus leads to "the animation of a neutral and homogeneous time by the desire of the gift and the restitution" (Derrida 1992, 40). The im-possibility of the gift thus gives time (Derrida 1992, 41). Marion on the other hand, upholds that the gift, though impossible in the sense of exceeding the mind's power of knowledge and of thus contravening the principle of sufficient reason, can and does achieve phenomenality through its own givenness, outside the horizon of objectness and beingness.

Let us first note, though, that Derrida's hesitancy about assigning the gift any manner of phenomenality issues from the following insight: "How does one desire forgetting or the non-keeping of the gift if, implicitly, the gift is evaluated as good, indeed as the origin of what is good, of the good, and of value?" (Derrida 1992, 36) As Derrida himself acknowledges that gifts are "decisive and...therefore tear the fabric, interrupt the continuum of a narrative that nevertheless they call for", it is curious to see him so quickly align the gift with value and the good (Derrida 1992, 123). Traditionally, in the case of gifts from on high, from the Gods, even when they are made most plain beforehand, we can but interpret their intimations according to our own capacities and thus their actual donation invariably contradicts our foreknowledge and strikes with surprise. Hence the expression, "be careful what you wish for" -- getting one wants or expects is at least as troubling as not getting it. The gift is thus not only decisive but, as a matter of principle, comes from an elsewhere so far removed that its use is, more often than not, altogether non-existent.

In fact, given that one cannot accurately anticipate the nature of the gift, even when there is some fore-taste or parting of the sky, it is something of a question as to whether the givee will ever be able to recognize and thus call to mind the specific nature of the gift. The forgetting of the gift, as a result, does not have to be done, willed, desired, because it is always already done. The forgetting of the gift, at least at first, is not a

choice. But this does not stop the gift from being received, nor does it stand as evidence to the impossibility of its being given. There are no small number of gifts which are received without the recipient having the slightest inkling for their having been given. A man does not grasp or understand the love others feel for him, which they give him continually, much as he doesn't grasp or remember his birth. And yet both of these gifts continue to influence, guide, and affect him throughout his life. We venture these statements as a sketch, as something of an aside. A proper discussion will follow shortly.

The central issue is simply this: as proper as Derrida's concerns surrounding the gift are, in supporting Marion's position, it falls to us to show that, although refractory to the domain of presence, and the knowledge and identity that dwell therein, the gift is not condemned to a renunciation of phenomenality. There is a loss of phenomenality, of the phenomenality of the gift, only in presence, in knowledge, identity, utility. The problem, therefore, is not in their loss, but in the presumption that they (presence, knowledge, identity) hold a monopoly on manifestation and phenomenality, when in fact they represent but a modality of it, and not even the most important or primordial one. To remedy this, we need show how the gift might accomplish its own phenomenality outside that of being, marked as it is by subsistence (presence), exchange, and identity (Marion 2002a, 79). Put differently, we need show how the gift can acknowledge that it is not, that it does not appear in presence, but that this does not mean that it does not appear, that it does not give itself from itself.

The gift, as an exception to being, can maintain its phenomenality insofar as it, and its act (to give), stakes (gift), and actor (given), can be given as bracketed, suspended from their transcendencies (exchange, objectness, beingness), in a word, absent. This will require a triple epoche (that of the givee, the giver, and, finally, the gift itself).

We begin with the givee. Were the givee to stand as anterior to the gift, already

present, anticipating the latter's arrival, then, far from easing the gift along to its completion, it would hinder it, indeed annul it, by assuming the role of "efficient cause, by possibly having prompted it through supplication; and as the "final cause, too, by having justly deserved it through its misery or its deeds" (Marion 2002a, 86). Indeed, the smallest trace of the givee's presence would all but necessitate some manner of repayment, of reciprocity, which, soon enough, would nurse one back into the calm, comfortable circuit of calculation, commerce and its exchange of stable unities. To avoid this, the gift must be divested of a specific givee. Giving must take place in its absentia, in a "giving with abandon", without any discernible token or trace of the act remaining afterwards (Marion 2002a, 86). The gift needs be lost, as Marion notes, "for me, but not for everyone. It's necessary that an Other receive it and definitively deprive me of it. It's also necessary that this other not pay me back, not only that he not want to (psychologically) but that he cannot (on principle) thus reinscribe the gift, me, and himself in economic exchange" (Marion 2002a, 86-87).

In this case, so long as the economy of exchange stands as that which is to be avoided for the sake of the gift, ingratitude pays a certain gratitude to the givenness of the gift, helping to ensure that it is not recognized or received as such and thus incorporated into such a system (Marion 2002a, 88-89). More importantly, though, the bracketing of the givee, which takes place in lieu of a known givee, whose presence would condition the gift and annul it as such, only lends further support to the givee by universalizing him (Marion 2002a, 92). The gift can only be given when it is given to anyone, irrespective of their character, moral or otherwise. In brief, the gift is given "in complete indifference to the worthiness or unworthiness of the givee" (Marion 2002a, 94). A particularly Husserlian point, this is, inasmuch as it treats the givee in its essence, in its manner of givenness, rather than this or that particular formulation derived from experience on the

sublunary plane.

This formulation also sheds light on the nature of the gift itself: there is only a question of the gift, as that which stands outside all economy and causality, as a giving in abandon, when the givee is unknown, distant, far off in the future (Marion 2002a, 93). In keeping with this, it is important to note that, though the ingratitude of the givee does the gift a certain favor, it is not the only proper response to the gift. The gift can also be accepted. But acceptance here does not assume the form of repayment, of returning the gift to the giver, but in "sending it downstream (toward a givee yet to come)" (Marion 2002a, 93). If there is a question of the gift, then it is a giving that gives nothing more nor less than one's very self, for which there is no equivalent, and thus, from the start, no question of return. Parenting, teaching, love, and life serve as fitting examples. If one admires a teacher, or loves a parent, one does not accept and embrace that admiration or love by returning it to the giver, as though one were "participating in a contract" (Marion 2002a, 93).

No, rather than erecting monuments of the father, or returning the teacher's knowledge to him, telling him what one expects he will want to hear, what will flatter him so, one acknowledges and honors the unrepayable gift by continuing the tradition in one's own way, "by [oneself] becoming the giver of a new knowledge" (Marion 2002a, 93). The gift thus comes to settle upon the unknown (i.e. not present) givee after a certain period of time has elapsed. In and through this double lack - in the form of unforeseeability and delay - the impossibility of givee as origin and condition of the gift finds a final attestation (Marion 2002a, 93-94). It is only here, with the suspension of the givee, that we find the gift truly given.

### *3.2 - Present in Absence: The Gift and its Consequences*

The giver's bracketing is equally essential to the proper operation of the gift. Were the giver aware of himself as giver, his very self-consciousness of himself would produce a sense of self-contentment, of status, identity, necessitating due recognition and return from others, thus returning one to the realm of exchange. The gift, to the contrary, is given only when the giver disappears as such. Besides, as Marion notes, when one gives in the truest sense, when one "gives without reserve, or 'gives it [one's] all'", one is "ignorant of the effect that [one] produces on a possible givee" (Marion 2002a, 97). Insofar as this holds, that is, insofar as "the effect remains inaccessible to its giver, it must be inferred that the latter does not know the effect, therefore that the effect has no need of the giver in order to be given" (Marion 2002a, 97).

In the case of lovers, for example - though we might also refer to friends, artists, craftsmen - the lover, upon giving, though even afterwards, never truly knows the nature, effect, significance, or depth of the gift imparted on the givee (Marion 2002a, 97-98). In the giver's distance from and ignorance of his own gift, he testifies to the fact that the latter can, indeed must, be accomplished in his absence, and thus only from its own givenness. A gift is given in view of neither knowledge (of oneself as giver), recognition (paid out in reciprocity on the part of the givee), nor retribution (Marion 2002a, 98). The gift is given for its own sake, and for nothing else besides.

Though there will be more to say about this later, let us note here that this suspension of the giver, of his own non-knowledge of himself as giver, his self-forgetting, whose fruit is a giving in abandon, entails a moving outside identity, a renunciation of one's ability (and, by extension, one's authenticity) to forge a response that corresponds and is adequate to the call of the original impression and thus of gathering oneself into an

equality, an identity, where there is a sense, indeed a security, of self-consciousness, of 'being oneself'. The giver, in giving, breaks with identity, pushing beyond its self-consciousness by losing himself in the process of giving, in being caught up in the activity, a higher one, to be sure, of giving himself rather than being himself. The giver, in other words, gives himself in further exposing himself to the unmasterable excess of the phenomenon and acknowledging that there is ultimately no correspondence and adequation between call and response: the gifted subject is always already caught up and behind the call which births and bears him forward; it is this delay, this inappropriateness, this inauthenticity, that is appropriate to the structure of temporal givenness.

With the bracketing of the givee and the giver, there remains but the gift itself. For the gift not to see itself inscribed in the order of exchange, by being reduced to a mere object or being, it too must be bracketed. Besides, are these conceptions of the gift not simply the products of the natural attitude? Considered under a proper reduction, the gift is not tantamount to a solidified point that is transferred from one party to another (Marion 2002a, 103). When dealing strictly with matters of the gift, as under friendship or love, the gift is not synonymous with an object and its exchange. In these cases, the "object either disappears from the game or is reduced to merely an extra, interchangeable, and optional support (souvenir, keepsake, or wage, etc.), in short, to a mere index of what's really at stake in the gift, much more precious and serious than the object that conventionally represents it" (Marion 2002a, 103-104).

The giving of oneself to the beloved, and more specifically, of one's body in the sexual encounter, "is annulled as a gift of self as soon as this transfer becomes either an appropriation by the Other or the price for exchange" (Marion 2002a, 104). To be regarded as gift, in other words, one's body cannot be conceived simply as an object whose action provokes a mutual and competing reaction, in short, an exchange between

equals, thereby affirming each other's identities. The body as object is here sheltered as object exchanged, rather than exposed as giving itself. What is given in this giving of oneself to the beloved, is his non-objectifiable life, his abandon. Since one's abandon is here indeed non-objectifiable, a wedding band or some other such object serves merely as support, offering a "symbolic index of this gift, without common measure with what is nevertheless shown in it" (Marion 2002a, 105).

Finally, let us consider the gift through a giving of one's word. In order to give our word, "we do not give an object; we do not even promise a being." (Marion 2002a, 105). What is given, for all that, is something that has undeniably real effects: a slaking of doubts, a giving of assurance (Marion 2002a, 105). Marion continues:

[T]he gift of the word, precisely because it does not coincide with any particular object, succeeds in radically modifying the status of each of the objects I deal with - things...will be set forth in conformity with my word. To give my word does not amount to making my statements adequate to the things (theoretical truth), but rather the things adequate to what I promise to a certain Other (Marion 2002a, 105).

The word, outside the order of objects, in a state of unreality, in and of itself, as a giving of itself, achieves a very real appearance, which rouses and resonates with those individuals and things around it. Indeed, the manner of temporality within which a giving of one's word arises, the fact that it always involves the future, a keeping of one's word over the stated period of time - which may be a life-time, as in the case of love - itself illustrates that "not one of its accidental objects at any moment coincides with its objective -- to remain faithful to what was said" (Marion 2002a, 105). One's word is thus kept, its effects effectively given, not by crystallizing in the present, but in enduring outside it, beyond it. A giving of one's word therefore exemplifies the gift as that which is accomplished outside all objectness and beingness. And so with this, it comes fully

into view that givenness not only abides but requires, for the accomplishment of its appearance, the bracketing of the givee, the giver, and the gift. It is this model of the gift that provides us with a greater determination of givenness and how it successfully gives itself from itself.

The gift, as the model of givenness, pictured here, after the reduction, through everyday human relationships -- friendship, parenting, love, etc -- demonstrates how this givenness needn't be regarded as principally issuing from theology. As near and dear as givenness would thus far seem to be to the dictates of phenomenology and everyday experience, those cries which seek to huddle it all too quickly under theology, frequent and vivid as they are, themselves begin to seem less concerned with phenomenology proper as with the survival of one of its types, of its narrowly prescribed tradition rather than its life, which has rested in it always, and which may yet come forward, in ever-new, unpredictable, and perhaps even upsetting forms. With the next chapter we will pursue this further, beginning with a discussion of the phenomenon in its unpredictable landing and the anamorphosis compelled on the part of the subject as gifted rather than giver.



## *Chapter 4 - Givenness and its Determinations*

### *4.1 - Contingent Phenomena*

We have endeavored to show how Marion's third reduction alone enables the gift to withdraw from the natural attitude, where it is hidden under the transcendent guises of objectness or beingness, and is ordered by exchange, calculation, and the self-reflexivity of identity, toward a properly phenomenological attitude, where its essence as givenness allows it to come forward from itself and achieve its own appearance. Givenness, quite apart from being a petty predilection or doctrinal bias, is thus betrayed as what is most basic and essential to phenomena achieving their own appearance, to the extent that no phenomena can appear without first giving itself. We will now move to explicate how this logic thereby needs find itself redoubled in phenomena broadly construed.

If a given is to be shot through with givenness through in through, such that it not only enters under its rule but is characterized by it in its entire mode of phenomenality, then we need once again bracket the givee, that is, the I as constitutor. Were the I admitted as constituting agent, as always already accomplished, in advance of the phenomenon's arrival, then the latter would never in fact arrive as such, but only ever as the effect of the former as efficient cause. The phenomenon, rather than having its own autonomy, its own status and legitimacy, would therefore only ever appear conditionally, that is to say, partially, to the extent to which it agrees with and falls under its exterior condition(s). We thus contravene the principle of all principles, which, as we've seen, states that "every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition" (Husserl 1998, 44). A phenomenon must instead come from elsewhere, outside such horizons and conditions.

On the one hand, this elsewhere determines the phenomenon as issuing from outside the circuit of commerce and calculation, indeed from outside the consent and foresight of the constituting I (Marion 2002a, 122). On the other hand, lest this elsewhere itself come to serve as cause and condition, as a limit on phenomena, we need note that by right it is not exterior but immediate to phenomena (Marion 2002a, 123). The phenomenon coincides with this elsewhere, this elsewhere that opens up a spacing within it, that forges a distance internal to it, whose traversal subsequently characterizes its manner of appearing: the phenomenon appears from an elsewhere that is internal to it, that is to say, from within its innermost depths. From this depth, or, if you like, from this first-order form, amorphous and indistinct, the phenomenon thus rises to its second-order form inasmuch as it comes upon, initiates, and touches the gifted subject, its recipient, who, correspondingly, filters, receives and re-constitutes the phenomenon, effectively introducing the called for separation and distinction which lifts it from the faceless background and ex-poses it to visibility in the phenomenal realm (Marion 2002a, 124). Pictured in this ascent from elsewhere are both the initiating accomplishment of the phenomenon and the nature of the subject as gifted. The phenomenon still stands in relation to the subject, it still engages in a crossing with him or her, but it is now one of disproportion rather than strict correspondence. The phenomenon comes as a difference without common measure, as an initiating and irrevocable excess which founds time and again, and thus leaves or, better, gives the subject his stake as gifted, exposed and open to the world by feeling, by touch rather than sight, and by the tremors and generous abandonment of receptivity rather than the ecstasies of knowledge.

With the subject consisting essentially in receptivity, in being ex-posed to an elsewhere rather than posing himself to himself as being his own activity, or of recuperating himself in a superior, one might say, authentic moment, the subject stands as

an exposition, and not as an appropriation or gathering. Prior to the relation of identity, the subject is exposed to exposure, to a dis-appropriation that renounces centrality and begins to wonder at the edges of presence, to turn its head and to wait, to look here and there for the position from which he will be open and exposed to the phenomenon from elsewhere as it bears itself forth.

This process of arising from the depths, from an elsewhere more inward to the phenomenon than the phenomenon itself, according to which the phenomenon moves "from that which goes its own way (for a vague, unfocused gaze) to that which comes in its own way (of what shows itself)", we call ana-morphosis (Marion 2002a, 124). As this elsewhere does not act as an exterior condition, which would only serve to conserve it in being, but as an internal property, thus sufficient unto itself in the accomplishment of its appearance, the phenomenon arrives of its own accord, at a stroke, without the aid of a cause, past, history, or condition of any kind, and thus without continuity or warning.

Bereft of external guarantee, and owing its appearance to itself alone, Marion defines this happening of the phenomenon, this upsurge into appearance, as a contingency. Here he follows Husserl, who notes that every "individual being of every sort is, quite universally speaking, contingent" (Husserl 1998, 7). Let us first acknowledge, however, that contingency is not here defined in contradistinction to necessity. Anterior to the binary between contingency and necessity, whereby the former, lacking sufficient reason, might just as well have been otherwise, and the latter, as the corresponding result of such reason(s), could only have been as it was, is a more primordial contingency, one that pushes beyond the binary of knowledge or non-knowledge, necessity or non-necessity, and is unsurpassable and, ultimately, individuating.

Contingency is the rule for all phenomena, and not only those which in some way

constitute an exception, owing to the nature of the spatial-temporal order: the continuum here in question is marked as an endless circulation, devoid of fixed points or duration. Inscribed in such an order, a phenomenon is ceaselessly displaced, arriving constantly but never wholly, in a succession of sketches, partial and, as a matter of course, unique (Marion 2002a, 126). A phenomenon, spread across space and time, is thus always divided from itself, never wholly present or complete, and, as a result, unable to be encompassed, comprehended, or otherwise gauged in its necessity by any finite hermeneutic. Contingency is therefore not a second-order but first-order property of phenomena.

When, to choose but one example, Aristotle points out that a "sea-fight must either take place to-morrow or not" (Aristotle 2001, 48), we may therefore note that this necessity is itself necessarily based on the coming day, tomorrow, which is ruled by the temporal flux, and, by extension, the unique, unpredictable uprising, in short, the phenomenon as event, steeped in primordial contingency. All events, whether necessary or contingent, are thus based on their arrival, on their unpredictable landing. The divide between necessity and contingency, in turn, is not one of kind, but of degree: as Marion notes, "the reputedly necessary phenomena are distinguished from the contingent ones by the fact that they arrive more often, regularly, and by design than do the contingent ones" (Marion 2002a, 132).

Since contingency is ultimately a matter of arrival, of the frequency of what, owing to its coming from elsewhere, we refer to as the phenomenon's unpredictable landing, moreover, it cannot be explained away as the simple, and only temporary, absence of sufficient reason, which, accordingly, with its inevitable arrival, would allow the contingent phenomenon to be "summed up by an extrinsic relation of the known to the knower" (Marion 2002a, 134). For the phenomenon, regardless of its frequency, in order

to truly arrive, must, in coming from itself by itself, without external conditions, and individuated in the spatial-temporal order, never to come again, always be first on the scene, as a pure and simple fact, which itself inaugurates what may come -- recognition, causes, identity, knowledge, and so on.

#### ***4.2 - Facticity and Factuality in Heidegger and Beyond***

The contingent phenomenon comes as the first fact, under the mode of facticity, not effectivity, which would presuppose an antecedent, a cause or condition (Marion 2002, 140). Yet let us note that the facticity of contingent phenomena is not wholly equivalent to a brute fact. Heidegger, for one, argues that facticity cannot be extended to phenomenon in the least; that it is a trait specific to Dasein, to its manner of being: "Facticity is not the factuality of the *factum brutum* [of something present-at-hand], but a characteristic of Dasein's Being -- one that has been taken up into existence, even if it has been thrust aside. The 'that-it-is' of facticity never becomes something that we can come across by beholding it" (Heidegger 1996, 174). An inanimate object, for instance, does not, as in the case of Dasein, find itself thrown into question; it is not an issue for itself, and does not, consequently, project and await itself in the future. To the contrary, it simply is, there in the world, as a brute fact. It would thus seem as though facticity cannot encompass all phenomena; that, instead, it is the stuff of Dasein, and of Dasein alone.

Heidegger continues to state, however, that "the concept of 'facticity' implies that an entity 'within-the-world' has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its 'destiny' with the Being of those entities that it encounters within its own world" (Heidegger 1996, 82). Identified with Dasein, more specifically, with its

being-in-the-world, which consists as a mode of opening, as Marion notes, facticity "is first exposed as such in the encounter with phenomena that are not of its mode of Being" (Marion 2002a, 145). Facticity, although not without a form specific to Dasein, neither begins nor ends with Dasein; it opens with, and is structured according to, the encounter, wherein, on the one hand, Dasein comes into its own inasmuch as it is exposed to and receives the given phenomenon, and on the other, the phenomenon impresses itself on the former and, through it, achieves its visibility (Marion 2002a, 146). Both Dasein and, inasmuch as it impacts on the former, the given phenomenon, as distinct and yet mutually informing elements in this encounter, this opening of a world, are thus ordered by facticity.

It is from within, and on account of this being-in-the-world of Dasein, and not some ideological contention, that the relation between facticity and factuality assumes this new structure. It is not the case, moreover, that this alteration nullifies the individual outright: Dasein retains its particularity as the 'unto whom' of phenomena, as that to which phenomena must happen if they are to appear, however, since the latter's arrival -- their being truly given, in the sense previously discussed with respect to the gift -- is admitted as the onset of facticity, of Dasein's being-in-the-world, their factuality takes on a new character and significance: they are no longer brute facts, simply there for the aims and intentions of others, but instead themselves take the initiative that is their own appearing, which opens a field of possibilities, which forges specific demands on its respective recipients, and makes of man not a fact but a fact for yet another fact, for that original impression or elsewhere whose giving of-it-self gives man his own self and initiates him into temporality, as late and already caught up in the events unpredictable landing.

The necessary shift wrought by this move, in turn, is that Dasein does not ever take over the roles and possibilities of that in which it is always already in; it does not

appropriate them in view of a self-constancy, a mineness, an authenticity; rather, it allows itself to be caught up, to be receptive, not in a servile passivity, but in an acknowledgment of one's ownness as beyond appropriation, as a drawing out of and thus into oneself, into a self that is not mine -- I made myself! -- but that is given, gifted 'to me', where one's inauthenticity, rather than one's authenticity, enables one to re-constitute and, perhaps, offer gifts of oneself (Marion 2002a, 132). It is the inauthentic subject that, in abandoning the appropriation and distinct identity which Heidegger, in his approach to Being, ultimately favors, is able to fully partake in a sense of self through abandonment and exposure, through an exposure that is not a complete loss, but a reception of self through self-dispossession, and, correspondingly, through a radical sharing of the world, a being-with that is not haunted by the solitary, even oppositional, accents implied in Heidegger's emphasis on appropriation and the distinct raising of identity.

As a part of this structure Dasein opens and receives itself in receiving the phenomenon as it gives itself from itself, and thus in shifting perspectives, growing "curious, available, enacted", such that it may find "the unique point of view from which the second level form will appear" (Marion 2002a, 124). The self owes itself, in other words, not to its autoarchy, to the security of its enclosure, nor to its status as transcendental origin, but to a devastation that is not so much a destruction as a destining, to a cogitation that is not so much an understanding as an exposure and affectation.

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The conditions for the possibility of phenomenality are thus inverted: appearance no longer arises from the centrifugal intentionality of the constituting I, from a freedom one possesses, from capacities one contains, owns, and deploys at will, but from the counter-intentionality of the given phenomenon, whose unforeseeable excess, whose 'anarchistic inspiration', to use Levinas' term, puts one in place, more specifically, in a freedom that, rather than being possessed, is shared, not on account of a banal fusion, a lukewarm altruism, but through a thought, and a thinking, that is susceptible to surprise and which, determining as much as it is itself determined, allows the given to inscribe itself. If, as Heidegger states, love serves as the "basic motive for phenomenological understanding", then, in light of these developments, it is a love that is not simply offered in the repetition of our pre-understanding of Being on a higher, more primordial, and ontologically authentic level, but in an opening outside the authority of this actuality, this field of objects and beings, toward an indefinite and never-present possibility that unnerves and holds me forever (Heidegger 1982, 185).



### *4.3 - Why Take Leave of the Horizon of Objectness and Beingness?*

Yet Janicaud again questions the need, and even the viability, of going to such lengths, of abandoning, or at least seriously displacing, subjectivity so as to be open to the excess of the given phenomenon. When canvassing Levinas, the forbearer of this move outside the horizon of objectness and beingness, he notes how Husserl and Descartes "discover also that my subjectivity exceeds the representation I have of it. There is no need, then, to introduce the Other [Autre] face to the Same, nor to claim, as Levinas does, that the idea of the infinite is "the non-adequation par excellence" (Janicaud 2000, 38-39). Put differently, if the subject simultaneously maintains and surpasses itself, to the extent that it is present to and participates in the beyond-measure, the excess of intuition in experience; in short, if the subject becomes what it is by traversing the infinite, by forming a dialectic with it, and thus relaying back to itself all of the sense, significance, and assurance it requires, then this radical exteriority is at best superfluous, and at worst a personal obsession.

Let us first note, however, that it is somewhat strange of Janicaud to put forward a refutation of Levinas' Other, of the idea of infinity, by referencing Descartes' views on the matter: Levinas himself employs these very views as a starting point, distancing himself from them only in the following respect: whereas the idea of infinity in Descartes eventually serves in the attainment of certainty for all that thought holds clear and distinct -- the world, the self, and others -- Levinas regards it as throwing the certainty of the self into question (Levinas 1969, 192-193, 197-200). The idea of infinity, which comes upon us in the face of the Other, does not ground or otherwise ensure the enclosure of the self but, to the contrary, wrenches it out of its self-satisfying melody and urges it to recognize in the Other a claim that has a right over its egoism. The idea of infinity does not lead to

certainty but substitution, not knowledge but, if we may say so, love (Levinas 1969, 215-216).

This difference does indeed make all the difference: in seizing upon the Other as diachronic, as interruption rather than reinforcement of one's egoism, Levinas purports to provide the individual with the assurance proper to its self and its continued existence. For the alterity of the Other is not simply a trauma, but a source of freedom and joy, inasmuch as it wrestles one from the autism of the self, not to mention the incessant drone of being, and awakens in it a desire for the heights, a desire, importantly, that is not bent on coveting, and is not thereby burdened by the humdrum of lack and repletion, but instead thrives on its own hunger, growing more fervent the closer one approaches the inapproachable, the more one partakes in "a relation without relation", that is to say, the more one welcomes the Other in its radical alterity (Levinas 1969, 34, 80). In this way, the Other, conceived in its radical alterity, gives the individual its inspiration, its reason for continuing with life.

Can the same be said of the certainty that issues from Descartes' conception of the idea of infinity? (Descartes 1985, 35-39, 45-48) Our answer here must be in the negative. For, frankly, what do I care if my existence is certain and indubitable? The gift of certainty is no gift at all; its light does not surprise or embolden, but fails to touch me in the least. Still, let us conjure up this argument once more. As we well know, even if the ego is deceived or otherwise mistaken, each moment's thought implies an act and thus attests to one's subsistence, to the fact that I am. Much as the object's certainty is maintained insofar as I continue to think of it, the certainty of the I remains intact only so long as it calls itself to mind. As Marion thus notes:

Everything thus depends on what I cogitate -- on my thinking will. I am because I can doubt objects and because I am still thinking while willing to doubt; in short, I am certain because I am quite willing. But can't I also not will it? And am I certain

always to will it again? Seeing as it comes down to a pure decision of the cogitation, could I not always retort, 'What's the use?' in front of the possibility of producing my own certainty of being? (Marion 2003, 18)

Given that, as Marion continues, I exist before and outside of the world of objects, inaugurating their world only to leave it and live elsewhere, the certainty peculiar to them leaves me cold indeed (Marion 2003, 17). What is most essential to me exists elsewhere, outside of certainty, which is why that, "once I am certain to exist....I can [then] truly doubt myself" (Marion 2003, 15). That is to say, with the certainty of my existence well and truly established, I can then doubt my abilities, the quality of my life, my future possibilities, all of which strike me more deeply than the certainty of my actuality ever could (Marion 2003, 15-16). To go yet further, does not Being suffer the same difficulty?

Being, for Heidegger, generates meaning of its own generosity, and calls for Dasein only as its mouthpiece, as that through which its most essential possibility, that of its finitude, is fully brought to light. But why should the individual, whose being is at issue for it, wish to persevere in being? In posing this question, as so many do in everyday life, and with no small vehemence, we continue on from Levinas in his insistence that, contra Heidegger and Sartre, it is not the nothingness of reality that spurs on nausea, but the oppressive, indeed boring, self-reflexivity of Being itself (Levinas 2003, 34, 68). At the heart of affectivity, then, is not anxiety for one's nothingness, but the Other which brings hope, which short-circuits this self-reflexivity, and leads one outside mere service and perseverance, towards an open future.

Although this assertion is often regarded by detractors as a mere intuition on Levinas' part, it is in fact situated well within the history of philosophy: as we know, Kant upheld that philosophy is essentially comprised of four key questions: 1) What can I know? 2) What should I do? 3) What may I reasonably hope for? and 4) What is a human being? (Kant 1988, 25)

In response to the third question, the a priori hope which could be upheld, which, indeed, could not but be upheld by finite reason, though it itself transcended finitude, was the harmony of virtue and happiness. It was on account of this hope, and not because of Being itself, that one continued to subsist in being (Levinas 2000, 59-61). The Other in its radical alterity serves just a function for Levinas, as does love and the phenomenon come from elsewhere in Marion.

In extending Levinas' argument, Marion asserts that one overcomes indifference, and effectively deals with the ennui of being, in exposing oneself to this radical alterity and welcoming, or, in Marion's terms, loving outside reciprocity, certainty, limit, or even the guarantee of subsistence in being (Marion 2003, 70-71). In admitting this possibility, this love without reserve, which thereby admits that its act may not meet with a corresponding re-action, which in fact is accomplished all the better in its absence, the ego is assured of itself as lover in and through its "love without being" (Marion 2003, 71-72). It is only on account of this possibility, this exposure and welcoming of an indeterminate other, and not the various aspects of my actuality -- the tasks I complete, the acquaintances that surround me every day -- that the ego feels assured enough to carry on with existence. Through an opening to the radical alterity of the given, outside certainty, self-reflexivity, and general economy, love takes on what for it is the otherwise unobtainable significance of a theoretical concept. Bearing this in mind, the idea of infinity proffered by Levinas, and continued in Marion, stands well apart from that of Descartes, whose assurance, whether on the level of objectness or beingness, only threatens the integrity of the entity it is meant to safeguard.

## *Chapter 5 - Consequences of Saturated Phenomena*

### *5.1 - Without Why*

This critique of the need for an elsewhere considered outside the horizon of the object and of being having been laid to rest, we may now rightfully move forward in laying out the implications of the saturated phenomenon that gives itself from itself. If the phenomenon arrives at a stroke, from itself and by itself, as an incident whose coming inaugurates and partakes in the facticity of the individual self by pressing itself onto it, then the latter's search for causes which might account for the incident's upsurge into phenomenality is something of an ineffectual endeavor. The phenomenon is always already there, or at any rate, already coming, advancing, garnering attention not in anticipation, but in a surprise, however dim, which ensnares and enraptures. The phenomenon thus not only has no need of any exterior condition, a cause, if you like, in order to achieve its appearance, but, coming in this way as it does, we can begin to see how the call for causes issues not from some beneficent desire to fully come to terms with the event, but out of a base fear of its impact, out of a desire to lighten it, to alter the power relation.

Leading this charge, Descartes makes the following declaration: "Now it is manifest by the natural light that there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause. For where, I ask, could the effect get its reality from, if not from the cause? And how could the cause give it to the effect unless it possessed it?" (Descartes 1985, 28). Marion points out, however, that the efficient cause of an event does not itself suffice to account for its happening (Marion 2002a, 163). Even were an efficient cause to be cropped out and rendered discernible in its effectiveness apart from

all the others, which is highly questionable,

other factors, provisionally negligible or unknown, of an indeterminate number but always required, can also interfere. In particular, the privilege brutally accorded to efficiency (here called total -- sole sufficient) hides the residual function of the final cause, the material cause -- not only the material (which can still on principle be perfectly known), but the indeterminate factor (hyle), the work that can make the material play, deforms it in opposition to the form and admits conforming only to a final deformity (Marion 2002a, 163).

Just as the giver cannot foresee the nature of the gift he makes, much less how it will turn out or be received by its recipient, with the invariable involvement of such indeterminate factors in the springing forth of an effect, if an effect it be, the cause(s) of the effect are equally blind to the effects they produce, to the extent that it is no longer proper to say they have produced them as such. On account of these unforeseeable effects involved in the produced effect, without which the latter cannot be fully determined, we may say that "the effect contains always as much, often more, reality (possibly dangerous or negative) as the cause" (Marion 2002a, 163). All this becomes that much more problematic once we consider that the validity of Descartes' claim -- that the effect is wholly owing to its cause -- rests on the possibility that cause and effect themselves rest together in space and time. Unless this is the case, such a comparative analysis cannot be justifiably undertaken (Marion 2002a, 163-164). Insofar as time continues unabated, the coming of the effect spells disappearance for its so-called cause. For we've shown how the phenomenon, in order to truly give itself, must do so from itself, surging up into phenomenality, thereby standing as an addition to it, unlike causes which, to exist as such, must already be there in reality, stable, treading water, so as to be readily available and thus discernible to the naked eye (Marion 2002a, 164).

We have noted that phenomena outstrip what might be considered their causes

owing to the indeterminate factors always involved in their rise to phenomenality, but let us also not go without discussing the positive dimension influencing this ascent. It is also the over-determination of the saturated phenomenon that renders unsuccessful any search for causes. Take the Second World War. The difficulty involved in assigning its events stable causes lies not in the indeterminacy of the situation, in the lack of information or knowledge, but in the fact that there is too much information (Marion 2002a, 168).

No one will be surprised if we say that events such as the Second World War are so bloated with details that the assignation of causes to their incidents is simply impossible. But the same can also be said of more ordinary ongoing: I am walking outside and turn a corner, I look down the street at the row of houses and suddenly find myself swamped by a sensation as inexplicable as it is undeniable; a hazy warmth that loosens and delights at once. As basic and apparent as the situation is, it ushers forth an excess which surprises and forces itself upon me, rendering me unable to determine its causes. The everyday happening, much like the large-scale event, in initiating itself and us, its recipient, into its phenomenality, its order, thus escapes causes and foresight. Besides, what would be the result of a world of events wedded to causes? When we consider that events so often bound to an inordinate number of causes, WWII for example, often leave one doubting their very reality, the answer seems clear: a world of simulacra. Events are so often today pinned to causes that their sheer factuality, their all too obvious presence and truth, inverts into its opposite, into sheer unreality. Far from feeling more certain or comfortable with these certain phenomena, we are often left feeling cold before them, wondering if reality hasn't perhaps always been a matter of simulacra, taken apart and reassembled at will.

However paradoxically, it is those events that are not seen, that do not form a clear and distinct object made plainly available to the gaze that, in their very im-possibility,

resonate and leave lasting, if incomplete, impressions which, for precisely that reason, bring people outside themselves and "render[s] communication possible" (Marion, 2002a, 229). This saturation comes forward, as we have just seen, through the excess of quantity, through the plurality of horizons and the wealth of information spawned therein; but it also occurs through the idol, that is, according to quality, the exorbitant intuition interrupts and exposes it to itself as an extremity that is not an essence, but the place where no essence is possible, and where the subject comes toward itself in coming outside itself, in shifting perspectives, angles, and approaches to the work that bears it forward, that gives it to itself as gifted.

We have witnessed this form of saturation in the painting, but we might in this moment also note, anticipating later developments, that saturation knows two further forms: that of the flesh and the icon. The former, in short, is saturated in that it is unrestrained and unconditional, an immediate and originary manifestation of the subject as an affectivity affecting itself in and by itself. Finally, there is the icon, the counter-intentional gaze of the Other, in whose silent stare, which is felt, undergone, yet never rendered plainly visible, there is concentrated the saturation of each of the three previous stages, that of quantity, quality, and what we will call immediacy (Marion, 2002a, 233). Heightening and bringing together all four of the aforementioned modalities of saturation, and in turn exposing the extremity of phenomenality, as possibility liberated from all worldly determination, given inasmuch as given, and therefore without any reserve or remainder, is saturation taken to the second degree in the paradox of paradoxes, that of revelation, which is exemplified, at least for Marion, in the coming of Christ. Here we acknowledge that there are in fact subtleties of gradation where givenness is concerned (Marion, 2002a, 234). Revelation indicates and inscribes itself at the edges of phenomenality but never crosses or annihilates it as such; at its extremity and effectivity,



rather, it manifests that its possibility, even, or rather especially, in its impossibility, fully achieves all dimensions of phenomenality according to givenness.

## ***5.2 - Saturation and the Sphere of Art***

Phenomena thus stand over and above the knowledge we can have of them. Traditionally, when this is recognized as being the case, it is owing to the deficiency of the phenomena in question. For Kant, fortifying this tradition, states that a phenomenon is only possible when it agrees "with the formal conditions of experience, that is, with the conditions of intuition and of concepts" (Kant 2008, 239). Put differently, a phenomenon does not give itself from itself, imposing itself on man, but in meeting a condition exterior to itself, in complying with man's capacity for knowledge (Marion 2002a, 182). Since the phenomenon must look elsewhere for its possibility, since it is deficient in this respect, its appearance no longer attests to its givenness but to the principle of sufficient reason, which, as we've seen, states "that nothing happens without its being possible for one who has enough knowledge of things to give a reason sufficient to determine why it is thus and not otherwise" (Leibniz 1973, 199).

The privileging of the intellect over the phenomenon implied in this supposition looms large in the history of philosophy. Husserl, for one, also states that a "surplus in meaning remains" since "the realm of meaning is much wider than that of intuition" (Husserl 1970, 775). Yet the principle of all principles, as we now well know, puts intuition forward as a "source of right for knowledge", that is, so long as it itself comes forward as origin, as originary, so that the limits within which it appears are its own and nothing else besides (Husserl 1998, 44). We must therefore search for the conditions, if any, under which it would be possible for an intuition to give itself originally.

For as we've shown, following the principle of all principles, the giving intuition, to achieve phenomenality, cannot simply come, but must come 'to us' (Husserl 1998, 44). To enable the intuition to be given originally, the I to which it is given can no longer be considered as constituting agent, but as we've already implied, as recipient, as gifted rather than giver. The I -- or, better, the 'me' -- would here no longer serve as a condition but as a necessary component in the phenomenon's ascent to phenomenality. Let it not be said, however, as Janicaud and other detractors have, that only religious or otherwise spiritual phenomena call for such a relation. Marion himself, as we've seen, puts forward the painting as the visible par excellence. It falls to us to continue with this and suggest that the givenness of the phenomena is best reached in the light of the sphere of art. For Kant, the idea assumes two forms: 1) that of reason, whereby the mind's representation unfolds in line with its capacity for knowledge, and 2) that of the aesthetics, whereby the representation unfolds in line with the imagination provoked by the excess of intuition.

Kant states that "the representation of the imagination...occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e. concept, to be adequate to it" (Kant 1978, 218). An idea of the sublime, which "no language fully attains or makes intelligible" (Kant 1978, 192), owes this not to the poverty of its intuition, which would need the intention of the constituting agent to bring it to the clear light of day, but to its saturation, to the fact that it is more present than the present, so that its presence overflows the present and cannot be ensnared therein.

It is against the background of this insight that we should understand Marion's conception of the saturated phenomenon. As with the artwork, whose manner of creation and ensuing result escapes all forms of foresight and complete comprehension, the saturated phenomenon, however ordinary, does not allow itself to be situated in a network of causes and effects; its components, excessive and unforeseeable in number, frustrate

expectation, and exceed the mind's power of knowledge (Marion 2002, 206). The saturated phenomenon thus exceeds the horizon as limiting or otherwise constituting factor, however, in keeping with this tradition of the artwork, it doesn't annul the horizon altogether (Marion 2002, 209). Put differently, this re-conception of the horizon does not result in an "anything goes", but, instead, just as the elements and effects of a phenomenon are many and excessive, it necessitates that the horizons through which it comes into play are many, shifting, and always incomplete (Marion 2002, 210). It is, in part, on account of this shifting, irregular nature of the horizons that the saturated phenomenon so brilliantly achieves its phenomenality and ensnares our attention. As a result, "the bedazzlement it provokes would become phenomenologically acceptable, indeed desirable, and the passage from one horizon to another would become a rational task for the [endless] hermeneutic" (Marion 2002a, 211).

### ***5.3 - The Pure Form of the Call***

The characteristics of the saturated phenomena before us, we will now look to see how the phenomena, in the pure form of the call, affords the self as gifted its unique identity and opening to the future. We have seen how the certainty of the subject traditionally conceived fails to furnish it with assurance to go on. The ego holds itself before itself and remains certain of its existence in the mode of an object so long as it remains there in thought, but why should it bother to continue holding itself there, especially given that, more often than not, it exists elsewhere, outside the realm of objects? And, besides, where is this subject left if not in a tautology (I = I), an autism, an all too comfortable bachelorhood? To enable the call of the saturated phenomenon to engage the self in terms other than those of a stultifying possession, whether in "the

nominative case (intending the object -- Husserl)" or "in the genitive (of Being -- Heidegger)", we will focus on it outside such delimited horizons, in its original, indeterminate essence, "in the terms of the dative: I receive my self from the call that gives me to myself before giving me anything whatsoever" (Marion 2002a, 269).

The chief objection raised against such a call consists in the fact that, if the call of the saturated phenomenon not only comes forth wholly of its own initiative, but also gives the self to itself, without itself calling for any intentional fulfillment, won't it be wholly empty, and, what is more, wouldn't an empty call by principle fall by the wayside? (Marion 2002a, 283) We will address this objection, in keeping with Marion, by showing how the call is first heard in the response. The first, and perhaps finest, example of a call illuminated in the response is that which is demonstrated in Caravaggio's, *The Calling of Saint Matthew*. A darkened room with daylight casting diagonal lines down upon five individuals huddled together over a wooden table as though for warmth. The two farthest on the left have their sights set of the coins strewn about the table while the two on the opposing end gaze calmly, vaguely, out in the general direction of the two figures standing hunched in the shadows. One, with his back turned to us the viewers, motions indistinctly to the figure perched on the far right of the table, while the other of the two, Christ, extends his arm further out in the general direction of those at the table, to which Matthew, sitting in the middle of all of them, inquisitively, and with some alarm, gestures at himself with his hand, as though asking, "me? is this for me?" (Marion 2002a, 285).

Christ's arm, extended to all, in a pointed yet indeterminate gesture, shakes loose and individualizes Matthew's attention, and in so doing, receives some manner of determination itself (Marion 2002a, 284-285). We thus alight upon and hear the otherwise inaudible call of Christ in Matthew's animated expression, in his response, without which the call would come to nothing. In this sense, with the call coming to

phenomenality, and thus to audibility, only in the response wrung from the self as gifted, before even being said, it is heard (Marion 2002a, 288). Paradoxical as this may seem, if there is to be any question of an appearing deserving of the name, how could it be otherwise? Were one to plainly hear, see, or otherwise anticipate that to which one is responding, then one would already stand in relation of adequation with the present phenomena, which would thereby reflect and confirm its intention, and return the self to its roundabout copulation with itself (I-I).

If the call is to retain the saturation proper to what initiates its ascent into phenomenality, then it must continue to spur on surprise, that is to say, it must bring the self out into an exteriority and ask it to recognize its very self as issuing from there, in lending a degree of determination to the indeterminable, in saying (though never once and for all) what cannot be said, in naming without knowing that which is named, and thus in continuing to write, to philosophize, even -- or, perhaps, especially -- here where the matter at hand does not immediately lend itself to thematization or representation. Though the saturated phenomenon may thus flirt with the limit of philosophy, it is a limit that is at the same time its source, its wellspring, past and future.

For although there may here be temptation to view the nature of this call as an attempt to deflect phenomenology toward decidedly religious terrain, it in fact issues from a very basic and essential philosophical motivation. Philo-sophy, as a love of knowledge, does not first possess but rather desires knowledge. Urged by this desire, by this desire for a knowledge still unknown and other to it, far off and unseen, the philosopher, first and foremost, is open to the unexpected and is thus able to partake in a relation of reception rather than mere exchange. Similarly, the self as gifted, and never as constituting I, who, remnant of a dying bourgeois mentality, fears being seduced, and claims to see "without wanting and before wanting", acknowledges that "[in] order to see,

one must first want to see" (Marion 2002a, 305).

Since this wanting (or desiring) precedes constitution, and thereby attests to the initiative of the given phenomenon, there is a delay intrinsic to the self as gifted (Marion 2002, 289). The response always comes after the call, like one of Kafka's perennially late protagonists. The necessity of this structure is born out in the unfolding of day-to-day life:

The gifted is late ever since his birth precisely because he is born; he is late from birth precisely because he must first be born. There are none among the living who did not first have to be born, that is to say, arise belatedly from his parents in the attentive circle of waiting for words that summoned him before he could understand them or guess their meaning (Marion 2002a, 289).

Since one is always already behind the call, whose saturation frustrates any attempt at complete comprehension, the gifted accesses its own-most self only through inauthenticity, not authenticity, which implies "self-appropriation, without remainder or difference" (Marion 2002a, 290). The call is not fully tended to in a framework of correspondence, in the response adequately responds to the call, as though communing with it. The call is heard in the response, yes, but this is not to say that one is equal to the other; it is the excess of the call, and our inability to fully or completely respond and thus commune with it which necessitates a move outside this framework of correspondence, this authenticity, toward an inauthenticity, an incompleteness that is not a fault but an active receptivity to the excess of the call and, in a knowing without or before knowledge, an acknowledgment of our relation to it as one of disproportion and incommensurability.

Against this background, the justification for Marion's pure form of the call better betrays itself. The call is pure, that is to say, anonymous, not so as to afford it an other-

worldly tint, but so as to avoid giving it any manner of tint whatsoever. Only as anonymous, in excess of any name, or aggregate thereof, does the call abide by the logic of the gift (Marion 2002a, 297). As we've seen, only when the giver is suspended, rendered anonymous, so that there is no longer a determinate origin whose donation would thereby call for a reciprocal gesture, is the gift truly given, outside all such economy. Here the call is no different.

### ***Conclusion - Revelation and Phenomenology***

The phenomenon taken in its givenness has taken us outside the horizon of the object and of Being, toward the possibility that the phenomenon might give itself from itself. This possibility was most clearly evidenced in the painting as the more visible than visible, as the visible par excellence, which, quite apart from its backing materials, rose in its non-ontic coming-forward with an intuitive intensity heretofore inexperienced and shook the viewers gaze from its listless sliding upon this or that and employed it in the achievement of its own apparition. The basic model of this non-ontic coming-forward was then discovered in the gift. In contradistinction to Janicaud and Derrida, who upheld that the gift's possibility was its impossibility, that its necessary existence outside economy and presence rendered it null, we suggested that this presupposes that presence, knowledge, and identity hold a monopoly on appearance, and that, in bracketing the giver, the givee, and the gift itself, the gift could properly achieve its phenomenality.

Indeed, all phenomena, even those of the most ordinary sort, arise according to this model. From whence issues an ana-morphosis: inasmuch as the phenomenon gives itself from itself, without need of an exterior condition or horizon outside itself, the self, though still the centre of phenomenality, as the lightening rod, the 'unto whom' on which

phenomenon must strike so as to ascend to their distinct phenomenality from within themselves, no longer initiates or dictates the identity or manner of unfolding of either itself or the phenomenon. The upsurge into phenomenality begins with the initiative of phenomena, which make a gift of themselves and, in so doing, gives the self to itself as gifted. Though Janicaud again interjects, questioning the need for this move outside the horizons of objectness and beingness in order to attain and support a subject in excess of its powers of representation, citing the examples of Husserl and Descartes, this criticism falls short of its desired effectiveness: the certainty with which Descartes idea of infinity solidifies the subject all but mummifies it in a stupor unfit for its manner of activity. Caught in indifference, which asks, "Why bother?", a certainty hinging upon one's continued volition blinks and stands dumbfounded. Let the self shift to Dasein; let it acknowledge its nothingness and ask, "to be or not to be?" I can always, if only for spite, decide to end my being, and recover a higher dignity in suicide, rather than subsist and merely survive as a modality of Being, which precedes me and will continue long after my passing. Confronted with the face of indifference, Being is not enough for Being. Life lives -- rather than merely survives -- in the radical alterity of the Other, in the radical generosity of a love outside self-reflexivity, presence, and economy.

And so we continue: following the principle of all principles, we propose a saturated phenomena which, in the light of Kant's conception of the sublime, spawns much thought since no single one can exhaust its intuitive intensity. The saturated phenomenon unfolds according to the logic of the call, whose anonymity mirrors that of the giver. Much as the giver must harbor no awareness of itself as giver in order to give with abandon and thus avoid seeing its act dissipate in the circuit of economy and calculation, the call must not achieve an identity or voice of its own before being given to and resounding in the response of the responsal. Anonymity thus protects the call from



being said, whether in this tradition or that, before it is properly heard, from being exchanged as commodity, religious or otherwise, before it is received as a possibility. The saturated phenomenon is thus rightly a call; and a call come from elsewhere, ultimately, is a matter of revelation.

This revelation interests us conceptually, that is, as a possibility rather than actuality. Marion raises the figure of Christ in a similar manner:

The coming, according to which he comes forward, defines him so essentially that it embraces him and precedes him -- he himself depends on it without determining it; and he arises from this eventfulness because it attests that he does not come forward from himself ('I have not come of my own', John 8:43), but at the bidding of the Father ('You have sent me', John 17: 18:43) (Marion 2002, 237).

Christ serves as a specific, and altogether fitting, example of revelation as the pinnacle or limit of the saturated phenomenon, of the saturated phenomenon taken to the second order. To the extent that even this revelation (Christ's coming) is only inasmuch as it is given, it does not suffice to shatter phenomenality, but unfolds within it, according to it. Christ himself is late, behind his own coming, in a relation of non-adequation to it, in-authentic, and for that he is aroused by wonder, for that he is vigilant: "Open your eyes, be vigilant, for you do not know when the moment will come" (Mark 13:33). Phenomenology itself abides by the given in acknowledging its own non-adequation to it, in not, for this reason, replacing it with what it will, but by engaging in an exposed thinking that renders its late-coming more agile and makes of this past its future.

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