Ethics of In-Visibility

Imago Dei, Memory, and Human Dignity in Jewish and Christian Thought

edited by

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Givenness and the Disappearance of the Gift:

Ethics and the Invisible in Marion's Christocentric Phenomenology

Elliot R. Wolfson

One of the many contributions of Emmanuel Levinas to contemporary philosophical discourse is the nexus he forged between ethics and invisibility. As is well known, for Levinas, the ethical act is gauged by the categorical responsibility that the self must bear vis-à-vis the irreducible alterity of the other, an irreducibility grounded meontologically in the transcendence of the infinite, the inapparent illeity that resists representation and thematization. We can thus speak of the invisibility of the infinite assuming visible shape in the ethical relationality – the divergency that Levinas calls the glory – that binds us together in an interpersonal community resting on the presumption that the obligation to the other is a debt "that increases in the measures that is paid. […] The positivity of the infinite is the conversion of the response to the infinite into responsibility, into the approach of the other." (Levinas 1974, 14; 1991, 12) The aniconic nature of the infinite is secured insofar as the other for whom I am morally responsible can never be assimilated by experience or comprehended as a quantifiable and knowable object – the technical terms used by Levinas to convey this idea are inadequation and noncoincidence – and therefore remains invisible (cf. Levinas 1961, 51; 1987, 32). It is in this sense of attending to a phenomenon that is perforce beyond phenomenology – the excess of essence or the otherwise than being – that Levinas famously identified ethics as a spiritual optics: the invisibility of the other makes the other visible to me in his or her invisibility (cf. Levinas 1969, 78).

In this study, I will examine Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of the gift from the vantage point of the ethical implications of his embrace of the nonvisible, and especially in light of his indisputable privileging of the Eucharist as the most suitable and viable expression of the gift that must remain ungiven in its givenness (French: *donation*; German: *Gegebenheit*). Does the appropriation of the eucharistic symbol compromise the ethical valence that one might ascribe on Levinasian terms to the nonphenomenalizable phenomenon of the gift by limiting it to a specific liturgical community? On the face of it, it could be argued that partaking of the Holy Communion, which affords the believer the means to be integrated into the body of Christ, is allegedly open to all hu-

man beings irrespective of ethnic difference, since in that body all distinctions are overcome. However, if one were to choose against this option, defying such integration out of the desire to preserve an independent ethnic or religious identity, then it would appear that the professed inclusivity is, in fact, exclusionary. Marion's construal of the gift, accordingly, would fall short of marking the transcendence that prevents the reduction of the other to the same, and as a consequence, his appeal to the phenomenology of givenness as the foundation of the ethical, advancing charity or love as opposed to justice as the primary mode of access to the other, is unsatisfactory.[1] As James K.A. Smith astutely observed:

> Marion's "religious phenomenon" is collapsed into a *theological* phenomenon; correlatively, his (albeit impossible) phenomenology of religion slides towards a very possible, and very particular, theology. The result is both a *reduction* of religion to theology, and also *particularization* of religion as Catholic or at least Christian – which, of course, is also a kind of reduction, a reduction which reduces the size of the kingdom and bars the entrance to any who are different. Part of my project will be to locate the *ethical* issues behind these apparently benign discussions of method, suggesting that behind Marion's understanding of the phenomenology of religion lies a certain kind of *in*justice. (Smith 1999, 18)[2]

The ensuing analysis will attempt to elucidate that injustice by a careful investigation of the inviolable link between the theological and the phenomenological in Marion's account of the gift, which results in the closing of the space of difference fostered by the preference accorded to Christian faith as the most pristine expression of the saturating phenomenon.

I will begin with a comment in which Marion, somewhat uncharacteristically, relates the image of the gift specifically to the Jewish tradition, perhaps due the influence of Jacques Derrida[3]:

> The Name has no name in any language. No language says it or understands it. This is why the Jew never pronounces the Tetragrammaton, which he nevertheless reads. By orally substituting other titles for it, one indicates that the Name does not belong to our language

[1] The complex role accorded the ethical in Marion's thought is explored by McKenny 2007. On the theological and phenomenological dimensions of love in Marion, see Horner 2007, Milbank 2007, and Romano 2007.

[2] See Smith 1999, 27f: "Marion's reduction, then, is also a particularization which reduces the size of the field and restricts both entry and appearance. What one will encounter in the phenomenology of religion is the saturated phenomenon, which is a kind of theophany […] The result is that religion itself is reduced and particularized – or, more aptly, colonized in the name of a Christian imperialism […] Marion's *piety* leaves no room for difference and will not permit any other gods to appear, indeed, one may be concerned that this pious phenomenology of religion is not beyond crusading to eliminate such paganism" (emphasis in original).

[3] Needless to say, many scholars have weighed in on the nature of the gift in Derrida and Marion. For instance, see Caputo 1999, 185–222; Carlson 1999, 190–236; Horner 2001, 123–137; Gschwandtner 2007, 72–76; Welz 2008, 362–364; James 2012, 26–29.

but comes to it from elsewhere. The Name appears as a gift, where, in the same gesture, the unthinkable gives us a name as that in which it gives itself, but also as a gift that gives the unthinkable, which only withdraws in the distance of the gift. The name therefore delivers the unthinkable, as the unthinkable that *gives* itself; the same unthinkable also gives *itself*, and hence withdraws within the anterior distance that governs the gift of the Name. The Name delivers and steals away in one and the same movement.[4]

The ineffable name serves as a model to illumine the paradoxical nature of the gift as that which can only be manifest to the extent that it is withheld. Thus, in language that is in basic accord with the Derridean perspective, Marion argues that for the gift to become actual it would be "inescapably transformed into its contrary, according to a threefold assimilation to exchange and commerce," that is, the triadic structure of donor, object, and recipient essential to the bestowal of the gift. What comes to light is a "radical phenomenal instability that gives the gift the appearance of a phenomenon but leaves it incapable of being constituted as an objective phenomenon." The conception of giving underlying the gift is such that for it to appear, it must disappear, since once given, the giver is rewarded, the recipient indebted, and the gift occludes its character as gift by becoming an object in the economy of exchange:

Either the gift appears as actual but disappears as a gift, or it remains a pure gift but becomes unapparent, nonactual, excluded from the instance of things, a pure idea of reason, a simple noumenon incompatible with the conditions of experience. […] Either the gift remains true to givenness but never appears or it does appear, but in the economy of an exchange, where it is transformed into its contrary – to be precise, an exchange, a given that is returned (*do ut des* [I give so that you will give]), something given for a return and returned for a given, part of the trade and management of goods. Exchange is imposed as the truth of the gift, and cancels it. By submitting itself to an economy, the gift exchanges its essence as gift for an actuality that denies it – precisely in exchange. For an economy economizes the gift.[5]

[4] Marion 2001, 142. Compare Marion 1999, 38: "The Name does not name God as an essence; it designates what passes beyond every name. The name designates what is not named and says what is not named. There is nothing surprising then in the fact that in Judaism the term 'Name' replaces the Tetragrammaton which should not and can never be pronounced as a proper name, nor that, amounting to the same thing, in Christianity it names the fortunate and necessary 'absence of divine names' (Hölderlin)."

[5] Marion 2005, 104f. See the analysis of this passage in O'Leary 2005, 152. On the agreement between Marion and Derrida on the need to remove the gift from the horizon of economy, see Marion's remark in Kearney 1999, 62. For a slightly different, but obviously related, account of the "paradox inscribed in the logic of the gift," see Lacoste 2004, 158f. Lacoste focuses on the fact that since "the gift (the thing given) is what the giver relinquishes, the giving (the act of giving) carries within itself the conditions of its forgetting." This is not to deny the fact that the gift can, and indeed at times does, retain "a trace of the giving," and thus it bears "witness to the giver," but it is possible and often is the case that the gift runs "the risk of being effaced because the gift is no longer perceived as such, but as a possession." Inasmuch as "the giver has no right over what he has given," it follows that "the destiny of the gift lies in the hands of whoever has received it." The forgetfulness of the giving can lead, therefore, to a state of ingratitude. Lacoste goes on to say that the "global structure of experience," that

The gift loses its sense of being a gift when it is subject to the economy of exchange determined by the threefold structure of giver, recipient, and given. For the gift to be gift, it must free itself from the reciprocity between donor and beneficiary. "As reduced to the givenness within it, the gift is accomplished in an unconditioned immanence, which not only owes nothing to exchange, but dissolves its conditions of possibility." (Marion 2011, 76)

Givenness, as Marion summarized the basic principle of Husserlian phenomenology, "breaks out because the appearing of appearance becomes the apparition *of* what appears – in short, launches what appears onto its own appearing. […] Appearances no longer mask what appears; they give it its own aspect so that it may appear." (ibid., 25) Phenomenologically, the mandate is not only to let the intentional objects appear – to get back to the things themselves – but to let the appearing of the appearance appear, for only in such a way can it be fathomed that givenness is the criterion that determines the essence of the phenomenon – what it is for X to be is for X to appear, but for X to appear, X must be given (cf. Marion 2011, 26; see the analysis in Gschwandtner 2007, 67–72; Schrijvers 2011, 51–80). The gift of which Marion speaks stems from the phenomenality of givenness construed in this manner of showing:

> The fold of givenness [*le pli de la donation*], in unfolding itself, shows the given that givenness dispenses. For the phenomenon, showing itself is equal to unfolding the fold of givenness in which it arises as a gift. Showing itself and giving itself play in the same field – the fold of givenness, which is unfolded in the given. (Marion 1997, 102; 2002a, 70)

The given has no justification apart from the givenness whence it is given, and consequently, the given is without any principle that justifies its being given. Pure givenness gives of itself (cf. Marion 1997, 107; 2002a, 73f), not as an ontic given and without a metaphysical or ontotheological foundation (cf. Marion 2011, 20). To the extent that a gift is really given, it becomes a phenomenon independent of the giver: "This disappearance of the giver does not result from any recalcitrance on the part of the recipient, but from the very definition of the gift given; it is not ingratitude that causes the exclusion of the giver, yet this exclusion ultimately results by virtue of the very phenomenality of the gift given, in itself exclusive and appropriating." (ibid., 77)

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is, our sense of the world, entails that the gift of Being, the "gift par excellence," invariably escapes our notice. "A reality entirely different from creation, the world must – here – be defined as the denial that Being is a gift; and insofar as being-in-the-world defines the initial logic [*logique initiale*] of existence, this denial is a judgment man has always already made, an a priori. […] Atheism or paganism, whether existential or thematized, can neither kill God nor give underived existence [*aséité*] to the world. But in their transcendental or existential forms, they clearly and distinctly manifest that one can only know [*connaître*] Being as a gift (experientially and theoretically) by undertaking the critique of the world." Compare Lacoste 2008, 166–171, and analysis in Schrijvers 2012, 73–75, 84–92.

For the gift to appear as that which cannot appear, it must withdraw from the giver understood à la the Cartesian *inconcussum quid* as the unchanging ground of a transcendental and constitutive ego: "As long as the *ego* remains, givenness remains inaccessible; it appears only once the *ego* giver is bracketed." (Marion 1997, 113; 2002a, 77) Going one step further, Marion conjectures that to appear as given, not only the giver but the gift itself must disappear. "Givenness would therefore remain intact – would appear as givenness – only at the price of the disappearance [*la disparition*] or nonappearance [*l'inapparence*] of the gift given. Such a nonappearing [*non-apparition*] of the gift in no way implies renouncing its phenomenality." (Marion 1997, 114; 2002a, 78) The gift, accordingly, can never be seen; indeed, the paradoxical logic of the "eidetic law" decrees that the "gift becomes *more* invisible as it gives itself *more* effectively. It disappears precisely in direct proportion to its appearing." (Marion 2009b, 16) In a manner that resonates with the view of Heidegger,[6] Marion asserts that the true gift nullifies itself inasmuch as it recedes from the givenness of the gift:

> In effect, just as the gift appears only if the giver disappears, the gift thus abandoned ends by masking in itself not only the giver but the very process of the gift. […] Paradoxically, a gift truly given disappears as given, too. […] What is specific to the gift – once we grant that it implies relinquishment in order to appear – thus consists in disappearing as given, and in allowing nothing more to appear than the neutral and anonymous presence, left without any origin, of a thing, of a being, or of an object, coming only from itself, never from elsewhere – nor originating from a giver or from a process of giving. The major aporia of the gift derives from this paradox: the gift given can appear only by erasing in its phenomenon its giver, the process of its gift, and, ultimately, its entire gift-character. (Marion 2011, 78f)

The gift, then, reveals givenness quintessentially as the apparent nonappearance of the saturated phenomenon,[7] the hyper-plenitude, whose "ownmost property is to render thinkable the measure of manifestation in terms of givenness," the criterion that Marion identifies as "the one and only paradigm of phenomenality." (Marion 1997, 316; 2002a, 227) The saturated phenomenon receives this accolade because it instantiates the paradox of "the counter-appearance" (*la contre-parence*) and "the visibility that is against what is [visually] intended" (*la visibilité à l'encontre de la visée*),[8] that is, "its essentially unforeseeable character" (*son caractère essentiellement imprévisible*) entails that it "cannot be aimed at" (*ne peut se viser*) (Marion 1997, 280; 2002a, 199). On account of

[6] In Marion 2011, 80f, the discussion of the disappearance of the gift is linked with Heidegger's idea of beings appearing in such a way that they remain concealed in the unconcealment.

[7] Marion 2000; Marion 2008, 18–48, 119–144; Marion 2002a, 199–221 (Marion 1997, 280–296); Marion 2002b, 104–113, 158–162; Marion 2004, 1–45; and the critical evaluations by Horner 2004, 70–76; Gschwandtner 2007, 59–86, 150–155, 233–242; Mackinlay 2007, and the fuller treatment in Mackinlay 2009; Welz 2008, 351–374.

[8] Marion 1997, 315; Marion 2002a, 225. I have modified the translation of *la visée*.

these qualities the saturated phenomenon effectuates the reversal of the relationship between givenness and showing: "In this case, phenomenality is calibrated first in terms of givenness, such that the phenomenon no longer gives itself in the measure to which it shows itself, but shows itself in the measure (or, eventually, lack of measure) to which it gives itself." (Marion 1997, 316; 2002a, 226) The visibility of the given increases in inverse proportion to its invisibility, and thus envisioning the phenomenon of revelation can be viewed – in the spirit of the apophatic mystical tradition[9] – as an act of blindness, the seeing of what cannot be seen, an event that "gives itself without manifesting itself for the curious spectator."[10] The gift qua saturated phenomenon "gives itself as absolute, that is, as free from any analogy with common law phenomena and from any predetermination by a network of relations, with neither precedent nor antecedent within the already seen (the foreseen) […] But this opening denial, and thus this disfiguration, still remains a manifestation. Thus, in giving itself absolutely, the saturated phenomenon gives itself also as absolute: free from any analogy with the experience that is already seen, objectivized, and comprehended." (Marion 2000, 208) The saturated phenomenon represents the "ultimate possibility" of phenomenology, for it is "not only the possibility that surpasses actuality, but the possibility that surpasses the very conditions of possibility, the possibility of unconditioned possibility – in other words, the possibility of the impossible." (ibid., 212)

With respect to this issue, Marion, unlike Derrida and Heidegger, introduces God into his phenomenology of the gift: the depiction of the saturated phenomenon coming into phenomenality without the world recognizing or accepting it (ibid., 208) is an obvious allusion to the incarnation of the Logos in Christ (as noted by Welz 2008, 353). Elsewhere, Marion is more explicit about his theological intentions: "The phenomenological figure of 'God' as the being-given par excellence, hence as the abandoned, can be outlined by following the guiding thread of givenness itself. As the given par excellence, 'God' is given without restriction, without reserve, without restraint." (Marion 2008, 62) The unreserved giving – the being-given that is the being-abandoned – supplies the rationale for identifying the gift as God. Insofar as this giving is without limit, the "absolute presence that follows from it saturates any horizon, all horizons, with a dazzling evidence. Now, such a presence without limit (without horizon), which alone suits givenness without reserve, cannot present itself as a necessarily limited object." The saturated phenomenon is displayed in the "atonal tonality of bedazzlement" wherein the presence of God "shines by absence." Rather than contradicting the phenomenality of the givenness, the

[9] For discussion of Marion's apophatic phenomenology, see Horner 2001, 94–97, 119f, 160–172; Jones 2011, 110–118, 130–154.

[10] Marion 1997, 437; Marion 2002a, 319. For an analysis of this motif, see Carlson 2007, 158f.

unknowability attests to its supremacy. "'God' becomes invisible not in spite of givenness but by virtue of that givenness. […] The phenomenon par excellence on account of that very excellence lays itself open to not appearing – to remaining in a state of abandon." (ibid., 63) Givenness finds its culmination in what is not-given, just as the appearing of the inapparent is the most conspicuous form of appearance.

The question that we must pose is one that Marion himself raises: does the phenomenology of givenness so conceived implicate one in "the revival of transcendence in its most resolutely metaphysical, if not to say theological sense?" (Marion 1997, 103; 2002a, 71) This fear would seem to be alleviated by Marion's insistence that the fact that a gift can also be called a "present" does not imply that the gift is a presence.

> The *parousia* certainly governs *presence* [*la* présence], but it does not always control the *present* [*le* présent]. The present does not owe everything to presence, and could quite possibly owe it nothing at all. The question of givenness is not closed when presence contradicts the gift: it is, in contrast, opened to the possibility of the present without presence – outside Being [*hors d'être*]. (Marion 1997, 116; 2002a, 80)

By his own admission, Marion is here offering an interpretation inspired by but in opposition to Derrida's aporia of the gift. A knot of negation becomes apparent from the fact that the truth of the gift is equivalent to the non-gift, that is, the being of the gift, when brought to light, abolishes the gift. The choice of the term *parousia* to illustrate "the possibility of a present without presence" (*la possibilité du présent sans présence*) is surely not coincidental or inconsequential. This is clearly a deliberate attempt on Marion's part to introduce a theological dimension into his phenomenological analysis of pure giving.[11] As Caputo expressed the matter, "For the gift has a kind of *ex opere operato* quality for Marion – it works by itself – prior to the agency of the donor or recipient, rather like a Catholic sacrament." (Caputo 1999, 202)

The dogma of the second coming of Christ sheds light on the convergence and divergence with the paradox of the gift. The *parousia* exemplifies the temporality of what is present as what is to come, the expectation of the already but not yet presence that is present by being absent, which opens up the phenomenon of givenness to the possibility of a present without presence that is outside Being. In contradistinction to the visible immanence associated with the presentness of the presence that is part and parcel of the routine gift (cf. Marion 1991, 25–52), the *parousia* is an invisible transcendence that gives itself by not giving itself (cf. Marion 2007, 103), a sacrificial gesture of kenosis (cf. Mari-

[11] Marion has been criticized on these grounds by a number of thinkers, including Janicaud and Derrida. See the discussion in Horner 2001, 102–108; Welz 2008, 357–360; James 2012, 27–31. Compare Lacoste 2008, 173–177.

on 2011, 69–90), mirrored in the ascetic dispossessing of self-negation.[12] The phenomenon of revelation, the "saturation of saturation," is thus named "the *abandoned*" (*l'abandonné*), insofar as "the excess of the gift [*l'excès du don*] assumes the character of shortage [*l'aspect de la pénurie*]." (Marion 1997, 341; 2002a, 246) Sacramentally, the eschatological gift of presence is enacted proleptically in the Eucharist,[13] the rite that brings to the disposability of the present moment the irreducible presence of Christ – the revelatory present that bears in its bosom past and future, the Alpha of creation and the Omega of redemption – in the community of believers that partake of the mystery of communion with God (cf. Marion 1991, 165–167). In this manner, the theology of transubstantiation – the word become flesh so that the flesh may become word (cf. Marion 2002c, 152) – escapes the criticism of the reification of the eucharistic presence and avoids "the supreme as well as subtly dissimulated idolatry, the spiritual idolatry where consciousness becomes to itself the idol of Christ." (Marion 1991, 168)

Marion is well-aware that the task of thinking the "eucharistic presence without yielding to idolatry" is made difficult by the fact that the "very enterprise that claimed to criticize an apparently metaphysical eucharistic theology" results in the "metaphysical completion" of idolatry (ibid., 171). Nevertheless, according to Marion, it is possible to circumvent the idolization of the eucharistic presence to the degree that we are mindful of the fact that this is a presence that can be fully present only by not being fully present; the nonpresence of the presence presupposes a dispossession of the here and now that informs the ordinary conception of time.[14] Marion thus stresses the notion of distance by which the exteriority of Christ can be made present in the substance of the host without collapsing the difference so that it is reified as a presence and

[12] We can speak of a double self-negation of the sacrifice insofar as it occasions both a theosis of the human and an anthropomorphosis of the divine. See the analysis of the primordial sacrifice in Altizer 2003, 15–30, and the summary in Hart 2004, 63 n. 3.

[13] Compare the earlier analysis of the gift of a presence in Marion 2002c, 124–152. See also the discussion of the Eucharist as the hermeneutic site of theology in Marion 1991, 139–158, and see Gschwandtner 2007, 92–95, 148f; Rosemann 2007, 101–107.

[14] Marion 1991, 176. Compare Lacoste 2004, 82: "Theology knows and declares that, if the world is interposed between God and us, and that if there exists no clear alternative between a chiaroscuro omnipresence and the Parousia, it is because the world shelters a third presence by which the Absolute participates in the logic of inherence, namely, what Christology and the theology of the sacraments teach. And yet even the gift of the Eucharist, in which the Absolute occupies a place here and now, is made to us only on condition that the world interposes itself, and that a so-called 'real' presence does not render it diaphanous and theophanic. This interposition is ontically the most tenuous there is: the breadth and tenuity of the Eucharistic species, of bread and wine. But these tenuous realities bear within themselves all the ontological density of the world; and if they are the place of a presence that constitutes the joy of believing, they also constitute for him a constant reminder of his historiality. That is why this presence does not absolve us of the duty to be patient."

turns into an idol.[15] The eucharistic presence, accordingly, betrays the "privileged temporalization of time," the time of the present that is the fullness of the gift given by Christ under the species of the consecrated bread and wine. In the eucharistic gift there is a coalescence of the three modalities of time: the presentness of the present is adduced from memorializing the pledge of the past as awaiting the promise of the future. The theological treatment of the Eucharist, as opposed to an anthropological or a metaphysical orientation, underscores that the gift constitutes the presence that is experienced not as an "available permanence" but "as a new sort of advent." (Marion 1991, 171f) Doctrinally, the *parousia* provides the believer with the opportunity to implement the Pauline practice of forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, pressing on toward the goal of resurrection (Philippians 3:13–14). The stretching forward (*epektasis*) encapsulates the temporalization of the future, which "determines the reality of the present in the very mode of the advent. The eucharistic gift relies, so to speak, on the tension that raises it since and for the future." (Marion 1991, 174) Marion finds in the Christian symbolism the consummating expression of the gift of presence as the charitable bequeathing of the present of time that is the true essence of the time of the present:

> The initial demands – to think presence as a present, and the present as a gift – now finds an infinitely more concrete content. Presence must be received as the present, namely, as the gift that is governed by memorial and *epektasis*. Each instant of the present must befall us as a gift: the day, the hour, the instant, are imparted by charity. […] Of time in the present, it can well be said that one must receive it as a present, in the sense of a gift. But this implies also that we should receive this present of the consecrated Bread as the gift, at each instant, of union with Christ. (ibid., 175)

Nonpresence is thus brought to presence "at each instant, as the gift of that very instant, and, in it, of the body of the Christ in whom one must be incorporated. […] The eucharistic present thus organizes in it, as the condition of its reception, the properly Christian temporality, and this because the eucharistic gift constitutes the ultimate paradigm of every present." (ibid., 176) The temporality of the gift is one in which "the present, always already anterior to and in anticipation of itself, is received to the extent that the past and the future, in the name of the Alpha and the Omega, give it. Which means: what is named (and wrongly criticized) under the name of 'real presence' founders in the metaphysical idolatry of the *here and now* or else must be received according to the properly Christian temporality."[16] Marion has translated into overt theological

[15] Marion 1991, 169. For a more extended discussion of the theme of distance, see Marion 2001, 198–253, and see the analysis of Westphal 2001, 266–271.

[16] Marion 1991, 176. Compare Marion 2002c, 150: "Henceforth Christ comes to the disciples in each moment, because he comes to them from beyond time – from whence likewise he can come at the end of this same time. Alpha and Omega, because preceding time from the very heart of the Trinity."

language what he deems to be the true philosophic explanation of the gift of the present as the time wherein the identifiable absence of the expectation of the future presence is received:

> The present at last is accomplished, not as an enduring permanence, but as a present that is given, in short as a present that is received, not as a presence subsisting in itself. […] The present that is given accomplishes the present instant, precisely because it overflows presence. What is more: the arrival from elsewhere is not only accomplished in the present, it gives me my first present. With its passage, at last something – once again – happens. This gift of the precise present results from the arrival of an elsewhere within the indefinite future of my expectation. […] The expectation of this *elsewhere* thus does not only temporalize me; it identifies me by assigning me to my own – that which must happen for me (or us) tells me who I am (or who we are). The temporality of the expectation of an elsewhere defines originary individuality and, eventually, originary community. (Marion 2007, 34f)

The Christocentrism of Marion's position is so blatant that it does not merit belaboring the point; the words speak for themselves. It is nevertheless incumbent on me to make the following methodological observation: it is one thing to use phenomenology to buttress one's theological commitments but quite another thing to argue that a particular theological tenet accommodates the phenomenological truth more than any other tradition, which is precisely what Marion has done in his assertion that one finds the epitome of the phenomenological nature of the gift as that which appears in the mode of what gives itself only in the Eucharist and *parousia*.[17] To say the least, it is not at all self-evident that the "eucharistic gift constitutes the ultimate paradigm of every present." I concur with Janicaud's assessment that Marion's "recourse to phenomenology is constantly biased by both a 'call' that is purportedly original and a reference, imposed on the reader, to religious experience. It is a question here […] of a Christian phenomenology [*phénoménologie chrétienne*], but whose properly phenomenological sense must fall away, for a nonbeliever, midway through the journey." (Janicaud 2000, 67) Lest there be any misunderstanding, let me state unequivocally that the issue for me is not the appropriateness of phenomenology to investigate the invisible as a decisive dimension of the visible; on the contrary, the inclination to move from the apparent to the inapparent is an

[17] A similar methodology is pursued in Marion 2008, 97f. Compare Marion 2012, 115. Giving witness to the nature of truth as the saturated phenomenon is epitomized in the words ascribed to Jesus, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), whence Marion educes the following conclusion: "Hatred (and love) of the truth can be addressed only to he who claims to incarnate the truth. It proves therefore epistemologically Christological, therefore theological. For it alone can both advise me and itself constitute the advice, verify and say what it verifies." On occasion Marion speaks of both Jewish and Christian revelation under the rubric of the saturated phenomenon. See Marion 2002b, 52f. Even so, the preponderance of evidence indicates that, according to Marion, the exemplary expression of the saturated phenomenon is the incarnation of the Word, and hence the phenomenological, theological, and Christological are virtually synonymous.

intrinsic aspect of the phenomenological inspection of the nature of givenness. Hence, I acquiesce to Marion's assertion that phenomenology can be called upon to make decisions about the type of phenomenality that would render the theological phenomenon such as the unnameable and unknowable God thinkable but it cannot make decisions about the actuality of that phenomenon.[18] The difficulty, however, is delimiting the invisible by which the visible is manifest theologically, arguing that the religious phenomenon is the "privileged index of the possibility of phenomenality,"[19] and even more perniciously, identifying Christian symbolism as the only acceptable language to deal with that which is given invisibly.[20]

It is worth recalling here the response of Marion to the question of Richard Kearney in a conference at Villanova University in September 1997 regarding the religious and theological nature of the gift that informed his speculation on giving and givenness: "Well, I shall disappoint you by saying that right now, at this stage of my work, I have to emphasize that I am not interested in the gift and I am not interested in the religious meaning of the gift. […] In fact, I was interested in the gift when writing theology, some ten years ago or more. But, with *Reduction and Givenness*, the question of the gift turned out to be profoundly modified for me by the discovery of the issue of givenness, *Gegebenheit*, in phenomenology, and by phenomenology I mean Husserl, and by Husserl I mean the early Husserl, the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations*." (Kearney 1999, 56) As Marion characterizes his own project, he has shifted from the focus on the gift and its theological repercussions to an attempt "to re-read phenomenology as such as the science of the given" as an alternative to investigating the phenomenon as an object or as a being (ibid., 56). Even in this dialogue Marion admits that "theological items," such as the Eucharist, "could appear as phenomena, too, because they have at least something in common with all the other phenomena, at different degrees, viz., to appear as given." Even so, he insists that the primary focus is on "the phenomenological dimension of givenness." (ibid., 57) Notwithstanding this explicit disclaimer,[21] Marion's publications since the time this remark was uttered demonstrate that he neither disposed of his interest in the gift nor did he ever shake loose of the

[18] Marion 1999, 39, and references to other essays on 52f n. 66.

[19] Marion 2000, 177. Compare Marion 2002b, 53.

[20] I thus take issue with the criticism of Janicaud's critique in Zahavi 1999a, 234–237, and Zahavi 1999b, 264f n. 69. The position I have taken is closer to Harding 2007, 163–167.

[21] It is of interest to note Derrida's response to Kearney's question about the possibility of a theological donation or a saturated phenomenon, "Contrary to Jean-Luc, I am interested in Christianity and in the gift in the Christian sense, and I would be interested in drawing conclusions in this respect" (Kearney 1999, 57). I suspect the comment was uttered with a touch of irony but its main rhetorical force seems to have been to compel Marion to acknowledge the Christological underpinnings of his position. To that end, Derrida reminds his interlocutor of his own sustained interest in the economy of the gift in Christian texts (see ibid., 59f).

preference ascribed to revelation, and particularly the revelation of Christ, as the premier example of the saturated phenomenon. Prompted by Kearney's question regarding this privileging of revelation (Kearney 1999, 63), Marion candidly responded, "Indeed, I think it is possible to describe, in the horizon of the phenomenology of givenness, what I would call the empty and just possible figure of revelation, which makes sense as a possibility within phenomenology. I suggest that revelation – of course, for me, the revelation of Christ, but also any kind of revelation, if there are other claims to revelation – can acquire phenomenological status and match other kinds of phenomena. In that precise sense, the distinction between the field of philosophy and the field of theology […] could be bridged to some extent. […] The gift, that is, the phenomenon as given, is also, I would say, a dimension of the experience of the world including the possibility of revelation too." (ibid., 63f)

The mythopoeic power of imagining the force of life as a gift and the lingering psychological need to render transcendence metaphorically are not difficult to comprehend. But, from a strictly philosophical perspective, the eventfulness of giving is far more neutral than what the image of the gift would suggest. I agree with Derrida that there is no necessary "semantic continuity" between the use of *Gegebenheit* in phenomenology and the problem of the gift.[22] Marion's presumption that there is such a continuity leads to the obfuscation of the line separating phenomenology and theology. To cite Derrida's pointed criticism of Marion's undertaking: "My hypothesis concerns the fact that you use or credit the word *Gegebenheit* with gift, with the meaning of gift, and this has to do with – I will not call this theological or religious – the deepest ambition of your thought. For you, everything that is given in the phenomenological sense, *gegeben*, *donné*, *Gegebenheit*, everything that is given to us in perception, in memory, in a phenomenological perception, is finally a gift to a finite creature, and it is finally a gift of God."[23] The phenomenological identification of givenness with the gift is driven by this anthropo-theologization.[24] I am not swayed by Marion's rejoinder to Derrida: "I am not trying to reduce every phenomenon to a gift and then to say that, after that, since this is a gift, and given to a finite mind, then there is perhaps a giver behind it all. […] My project attempts, on the contrary, to reduce the gift to givenness, and to establish the phenomenon as given." (Kearney 1999, 70) Givenness may be the "immanent structure of any kind of phenomenality," inasmuch as everything that appears must appear

[22] Kearney 1999, 58. See ibid., 60: "So Marion would try to account phenomenologically for the gift (which, again, I distinguish from *Gegebenheit*). But I doubt that there is a possibility of a phenomenology of the gift." The debate between Marion and Derrida on the gift and the phenomenology of the unapparent is analyzed by Caputo 1999, 203–208.

[23] Kearney 1999, 66. See ibid., 71, where Derrida again challenges Marion's equation of *Gegebenheit* and the gift.

[24] The coinage is used by Derrida in Kearney 1999, 67.

as given, but the enframing of that givenness as a gift requires an agency that is still circumscribed within the horizon of Being, whether as transcendent or immanent, in spite of Marion's protestation that his "proposal remains merely philosophical and without any theological presupposition." (ibid.)

Tellingly, in another passage, Marion owns up that to make the invisible gift visible, a phenomenology of the invisible – in line with what was enunciated by Heidegger already in *Being and Time*[25] but developed in greater depth in his later thought[26] – is necessary but not sufficient, since "the unseen can only be grasped by theology." Even this stipulation is brazenly qualified: "At least if by theology we mean Christian theology in its profound privilege of having its origin in a Revelation," a point supported exegetically by the verse "one can receive only what is given him from heaven" (John 3:27) (Marion 2009b, 17f). The theological principle that "every gift comes from God" illumines the phenomenology of the gift more generally, and the former is epitomized in the Christian conviction that God "gives nothing less than himself in the form of Christ." (ibid., 18f) The Eucharist, therefore, is "the paradigm of every gift of charity," for "the reduction of the gift to contingent and common reality, which are consigned to disappear, and become transparent, allows the donor (Christ) to appear, who in turn, by his own kenosis, makes possible the appearance of the Father. The real presence *de-realises* in fact the matter of the gift, which, in return and paradoxically, renders its donor phenomenal and makes the entire process of donation appear." (ibid., 26) For Marion, the Christian narrative is not one of any number of legitimate theologies; it is the only veritable theology, the prototype of theology, inasmuch as it imbibes the truth that to speak of God means that God is both the origin and objective of the theological discourse, that God "simultaneously speaking and spoken, gives himself as the Word, as the Word given even in the silent immediacy of the abandoned flesh." (Marion 1991, 139) The preeminence of Christianity "does not stem from singularity of meaning […] but from what, precisely authorizes this eminent singularity, namely, the very position given to meaning, to its statement, and to its referent. […] Christ does not say the word, he says *himself* the Word. […] He

[25] Heidegger 1993, 35f; Heidegger 1996a, 31; and compare the analysis in Marion 1998, 56–61.

[26] Heidegger 1983, 114f, cited in Marion 2002b, 110; Heidegger 2003, 79f. Compare Marion 1998, 60; Janicaud 2000, 72–75; Schrijvers 2011, 212f. The implications of Heidegger's phenomenological critique of phenomenology with its emphasis on the inapparent influenced a number of other phenomenologists, including Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Henry. See Zahavi 2007, 143–145. Zahavi also notes the reverberation of the Heideggerian phenomenology of the invisible in Derrida and Levinas. Compare Zahavi 1999a; Zahavi 1999b, 192–194; and see my own analysis in Wolfson 2012, 267–276, and the substantially expanded version in the third chapter of Wolfson 2014. One should, of course, add Marion to this list of thinkers for whom the focus of phenomenology is on that which exceeds appearance. On the excess of the phenomenological, see also Sebbah 2012.

says himself, and nothing else, for nothing else remains to be said outside this saying of the said, saying of the said said par excellence, since it is proffered by the said-saying." (ibid., 139f) Unlike Levinas, according to whom there can never be a confluence of the saying and the said, since the saying is never what is said, Marion presents Christ as the embodiment of this very coincidence that fills "the gap between the sign and the referent." (ibid., 140) As the Son that speaks the unspeakable Said of the Father, the *Verbum Dei* (cf. ibid., 142), Christ fulfills the essential mission of theology to be "a *logos* of the *Logos*, a word of the Word, a said of the Said."[27]

In spite of Marion's deflection of those who have criticized him, and a handful of scholars who have come to his defense, I am not persuaded that the criticism has been effectively invalidated. His effort to shift the "danger" from a "theologization of phenomenality" to a "transcendental phenomenalization of the question of God" is not convincing. The latter, after all, rests on his assumption – the phrasing of which in the interrogative is itself questionable, since it seems to be the foregone conclusion upon which the investigation is based – that "the fact of Revelation provokes and evokes figures and strategies of manifestations and revelation that are much more powerful and more subtle than what phenomenology, even pushed as far as the phenomenon of revelation (paradox of paradoxes), could ever let us divine." (Marion 1997, 337; 2002a, 243) For Marion, "there is nothing astonishing in the fact that one inquires after God's right to inscribe himself within phenomenality. What is astonishing is that one should be stubborn – and without conceptual reason – about denying him this right, or rather that one is no longer even surprised by this pigheaded refusal." (Marion 1997, 337; 2002a, 243) Try as he may, there is no phenomenological basis to inquire *after God's right to inscribe himself within phenomenality* – if there is such a God (and I will here not enter into the problematic nature of Marion's uncritical acceptance of the traditional gender taxonomy) the discipline of phenomenology cannot provide the means to speak of that God's right to self-inscribing. Marion wants it both ways: on the one hand, the topography of revelatory experience is to be determined by a dispassionate exploration of the phenomenological nature of givenness; on the other hand, revelation presumes the possibility of an experience that supersedes the bounds

[27] Marion 1991, 143. See, by contrast, the interpretation of Levinas in Marion 2012, 137. Utilizing Levinas's claim regarding the priority of the saying to anything said, Marion elicits confirmation of the notion that truth – or, to be more precise, what he calls the third-order truth – is neither a "predication about things" nor the "manifestation of the thing," but the "event of an evidence, which shows itself only inasmuch as I tolerate its excess. And I can do so only inasmuch as I love it." Truth, in other words, is not a matter of noematic correlation or unveiling, but the witnessing that ensues from speaking the truth, a matter of veracity or sincerity that is expressed in the vocal attestation of saying without anything being said.

of phenomenality, the appearance of which can appear only unapparently, the given that is given as what cannot be given.[28]

The prospect of revelation as the paradox of the saturated phenomenon, particularly as it is embodied in the figure of Christ, has driven Marion's phenomenological studies of givenness, even if the rhetorical presentation leaves the impression that the order is reversed, so that the phenomenological inquiry of the saturated phenomenon culminates in the paradox of revelation, "one that concentrates in itself – as the figure of Christ establishes its possibility – an event, an idol, a flesh, and an icon, all at the same time. Saturation passes beyond itself, exceeds the very concept of maximum, and finally gives its phenomenon without remainder or reserve." (Marion 1997, 335; 2002a, 241) The assertion that the figure of Christ alone establishes the possibility of revelation cannot be vindicated phenomenologically; it is a theological creed that precedes the phenomenological investigation. The path of phenomenology may wind its way to the appearance of the inapparent but to identify the phenomenon that refuses to be confined within the phenomenological reduction exclusively as Christ falls outside the jurisdiction of a phenomenologist. To claim to see by not seeing the invisibility of the visible is germane to the phenomenological vocation; the same cannot be said for the claim to see by not seeing the visibility of the invisible. Moreover, for all of Marion's effort to distinguish between the icon of invisibility,[29] which is proper to Christianity, and metaphysical idolatry, it seems to me that his own portrayal of the eucharistic gift comes close to slipping into an idolatry that renders very dubious the apophatic attempt to salvage a God without being, a God not subject to ontotheology.[30]

Perhaps most importantly, demarcating the postphenomenological in this theological fashion has serious ramifications for the ethical import of Marion's thinking about the invisible. Here it is apposite to recall the observation of Jean-Yves Lacoste, "whatever decisions we make as regards God, the historical facticity of our being-in-the-world cannot be thought through to the end unless

[28] For a critique of Marion along these lines, see Tanner 2007. See also the extended discussion of phenomenology and God in Gschwandtner 2007, 150–177. Derrida 1978, 83, addressing the same question with respect to Levinas, maintained that his messianic eschatology "never bases its authority on Hebraic theses or texts. It seeks to be understood within a *recourse to experience itself*. Experience itself and that which is most irreducible within experience: the passage and departure toward the other; the other itself as what is most irreducibly other within it: Others" (emphasis in original).

[29] Marion 1991, 17f. Marion applies the Pauline depiction of Christ (Colossians 1:15) to all icons. See Welz 2008, 354f n. 81.

[30] A similar criticism against Marion is leveled by Schrag 2002, 64, 89–92. For an even more strident critique of Marion's non-metaphysical transcendence and the positing of a God without being, see Puntel 2011, 302–408.

we decipher the exigencies of ethics in all their ambiguity."[31] It would stand to reason that in Marion's case ethics is subsumed under theology, inasmuch as the ethical meaning of our facticity in the world has its foundation in the transcendent invisibility that is given immanently in the form of the gift that is the image of God incarnate in the body of Christ wherein all humanity must be incorporated. As I intimated in the opening paragraphs, however, the guise of inclusiveness – cast in the theological premise that we are all one in Christ's body – may in fact be rigidly exclusive. Marion may have succeeded in translating Christian dogma and ritual into a postmodern key by utilizing crucial features of the mystical *via negativa* to articulate a denominative or nonpredicative theology[32] – the *theology of absence* "where the name is given as having no name, as not giving the essence, and having nothing but this absence to make manifest." (Marion 1999, 37) But this would require that we substitute praise for predication (cf. ibid., 28–30) and the further presumption that this praise directs the worshipper to the one whose name cannot be said, even negatively, but which calls to the worshipper, the vocative name that serves as a signpost for the indecipherable giver of "the gift of the name above all names," an obvious allusion to God's bestowing the name upon Jesus according to Philippians 2:9.[33] If the gift is understood most perfectly as the ingestion of the consecrated bread, then it is so severely constricted that it cannot fulfill its comportment as the superfluity exhibited by its own disfiguration, and surely it cannot live up to the standard of universalizability dictated by the ethical. My critique dovetails with that of Smith: "Religion, for Marion, turns out to be very narrowly defined and, in a sense, reduced to its theological sedimentation. Second, and as a result of this, Marion *particularizes* religion and the religious phenomenon as quite Christian – at best, monotheistic, and at worst, downright Catholic. […] This *particularization* is yet another kind of *reduction*: a reduction which re-

[31] Lacoste 2004, 70. The matter of ethics and phenomenology is explored in more detail in Lacoste 2006, 231–256. On the ethical dimensions of Lacoste's thought, see Schrijvers 2012, 49–51, 106f, 149–152.

[32] On de-nomination – de-naming or un-naming – as the third way between apophatic negation and kataphatic affirmation, see Marion 1999, 24–28, and Derrida's comments in response to Marion, 45f. For further discussion, see Caputo 1999, 189–191; Min 2006, 107–113.

[33] Marion 1999, 42. The expression "the gift of the name above all names" is part of Marion's citation from St. Basil of Caesarea, *Against Eunomius*, 2.8 (*Patrologia Graeca* 29, 585b), which is an exegetical gloss on the verse from the hymn in the second chapter of Philippians. The passage from St. Basil serves as well as the epigraph for Marion's essay. Notably, Marion departs from his source, which, citing the scriptural text verbatim, speaks of God having "bestowed" (Greek: *echarisato*; Latin: *largitus*) the name on Jesus. Through Marion's prism this bestowing assumes the nature of a gift, a misreading that obviously reflects his theological predilection. For a more precise rendering, see St. Basil of Caesarea 2011, 140. On the alleged Jewish-Christian theologoumenon regarding Jesus bearing the hypostasized name of the nameless God, see Stroumsa 2003, 236–239.

duces the size of the kingdom, which keeps the walls close to Rome and makes it impossible for any who are different to enter." (Smith 1999, 23f)

Demonstrating an affinity with Levinas, Marion asserts that the ethical demand "established the other in an absolute transcendence," which is expressed by the eroticization of the other shining his or her face in the flesh that is mine (Marion 2007, 125). However, in contrast to Levinas, for Marion, the form in which the invisible crosses the domain of the visible, and the infinite is embodied, is not primarily in the moral obligation imposed by our shared intersubjectivity but in the potentially divisive theological belief in the incarnation of the Word in the flesh of Jesus. This strikes me as a violation of his own interdiction that "giving can never appear as something given since it exhausts and accomplishes itself in allowing to appear – it does not occupy the opening, because it opens it." (Marion 2003, 181f) Ostensibly, Marion distinguishes his conception of the event of giving from Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis*,[34] the event of appropriation, the dissolution of an ineliminable nothingness, the depresencing of a presence that can never be represented, embedded in the divestiture of the nothing that is indifferently identical in virtue of being identically different. And yet, upon closer scrutiny, it seems that Marion's contention that the gift "precedes" and "abandons" the ontological difference between Being and beings – or in the poetic images he enlists, the "gift crosses Being/being" and thereby opens up to the event of charity, which "remains unspeakable according to the language of Being," by "liberating being from Being" (Marion 1991, 101f) – can be discovered in Heidegger. Marion does, of course, credit Heidegger for thinking the correlation of the gift and giving with Being/being, attested in the expression *es gibt*, but he criticizes him for understanding the "enigmatic It" of the gift as arising "from the appropriation of Time to Being, hence also of being to Being." (ibid., 103f)

The model of the gift that Marion proffers has the advantage of distorting the ontological difference "by disappropriating in it what the *Ereignis* appropriates; being remains in its appropriation to Being […] Beings, hence Being/being, hence also *ousia*, over and above what is given to them by the pure and simple giving of the *Ereignis*, discover themselves taken up again, as unbeknown to them and from the point of view of another aim." (Marion 1991, 104f) Marion supplants Heidegger's appropriation with his conception of disappropriation, which preserves the distance that he will name not Being but "God," *Dieu*, written with the third letter crossed out with an X, the sign of the cross or the Greek letter *chi*, which is the first letter of the word Χριστός. Presumably, a response to the Heideggerian practice of the crossing out of be-

[34] Marion 1997, 59; Marion 2002a, 38; Marion 2003, 182f. See the discussion of Marion's reading of Heidegger in Elliott 2005, 91f, and Gschwandtner 2007, 62–65, 263 n. 28.

ing (*der kreuzweisen Durchstreichung des Seins*),[35] what Derrida called *sous rature* (Derrida 1997, 60), the orthographic anomaly of Marion reveals that God, the "term of distance," appears "only in the disappearance of his death and resurrection." This alone is the giving that "offers the only accessible trace of He who gives." (Marion 1991, 105) In the final analysis, Marion's treatment of the gift is based on a misreading of the notion of *Ereignis* as a regression to an ontological mode of thinking. This not only obscures his indebtedness to Heidegger's breakthrough but also leads to an unfortunate exaggeration regarding the novelty of his affirmation of the invisibility of the gift as its supreme visibility. Most significantly, the Christological interpretation of the gift fails to accommodate a vital element that allows the other to arise as an erotic phenomenon, which must, as Levinas insisted, always be a relationship with a mystery (cf. Levinas 1987, 75), the inexpressible secret of the not-yet-being (*le ne-pas-encore-être*) that "overwhelms the relation of the I with itself and with the non-I" (Levinas 1961, 237; 1969, 259), the metaphysical desire for the invisible (cf. Levinas 1961, 3; 1969, 33) that can assume presence only by declining to be incarnated in the flesh (cf. Levinas 1989, 148), the disincarnated face – indeed, "a face that goes beyond the face" (*un visage qui va au-delà du visage*) (Levinas 1961, 238; 1969, 260) – through which God, the transcendent, infinitely Other, is revealed (cf. Levinas 1961, 50f; 1969, 78f; see Wolfson 2012, 303f, 322). Marion's Christology, when viewed through the Levinasian lens, is guilty of transforming the ethical into the ontological, for by the divine taking on a body, transcendence is objectified in the hiddenly manifest sacraments of the mysterium rather than being manifestly hidden in the "erotic nudity" that expresses the secret as the refusal to express it (Levinas 1961, 237f; 1969, 260) except in bearing the suffering of one's neighbor.[36] As Marion himself ponders, "does not the ethical give access to the signification of the other through the universality of the commandment, thereby excluding the individuation that is precisely required by the lover? These two disputes – the ethical or the erotic, universality or individuation – have not ceased to occupy the lover, who only considers himself by trying to settle them." (Marion 2007, 101) I would agree that the charge before every human being is to negotiate these seemingly contradictory forces, to attenuate the erotic by the ethical and to enliven the ethical by the erotic. It has been rightly noted that, for Marion, "love and ethics appear to involve one another in an endless intrigue […] love seems to be a necessary condition for an ethical relation to the other, while ethics seems able to complete itself only by surpassing itself in love." (McKenny 2007, 340) One thing is certain: without the hospitality that welcomes the

[35] See, for instance, Heidegger 1996b, 410–413; Heidegger 1998, 310–312. Compare Marion 2009a, 88f.

[36] Levinas 1994, 171. For fuller discussion of the nexus between secrecy, eros, and the feminine in Levinas, see Wolfson 2010.

other neither the ethical nor the erotic is tenable. If the presence of God's gift is perceived as the gift of God's presence, the giving of the divine in love, the Eucharist should be understood as one of various ways – as opposed to the superlative way – that the invisible becomes visible, that the nonphenomenal traverses the province of the phenomenal.

At the conclusion of the essay "What Love Knows", Marion remarked that "the theology of charity could become the privileged pathway for responding to the aporia that, from Descartes to Levinas, haunts modern philosophy – access to the other, the most faraway neighbor. It is doubtful that Christians, if they want seriously to contribute to the rationality of the world and manifest what has come to them, have anything better to do than to work in this vein." (Marion 2002c, 169) Elaborating the point near the conclusion of *Being Given*, Marion writes that "in the realm of givenness [*donation*], the phenomenon of the Other, for the first time, no longer counts as anything like an extraterritorial exception to phenomenality, but belongs to it officially, though with the paradoxical title (saturated phenomenon). To receive the Other – that is equivalent first and before all to receiving a given [*un donné*] and receiving oneself from it; no obstacle stands between the Other and the gifted [*l'adonné*]." (Marion 1997, 442; 2002a, 323, translation modified). According to the "exceptional phenomenological situation" of what Marion calls "intergivenness" (*interdonation*) in lieu of intersubjectivity or interobjectivity, "the Other shows himself by giving himself to the gifted that I remain." (Marion 1997, 443; 2002a, 323) This situation "not only allows and requires reconsidering the thematic of ethics – of respect and the face, obligation and substitution – and confirming its phenomenal legitimacy. It would also perhaps authorize what ethics cannot attain: the individuation of the Other [*l'individuation d'autrui*]. […] This individuation has a name: love [*l'amour*]." (Marion 1997, 443; 2002a, 324) To implement this ideal, it would be beneficial to disentangle the phenomenon of the gift from the symbol of the Eucharist. A more charitable theology of charity must strive to be theologically pluralistic, entertaining a polydoxic faith predicated on the phenomenological plausibility of multiple channels to receive the givenness of the gift that disappears as it is given, the presence made present through the absence of its presence and absent through the presence of its absence.

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