

**Third Reduction and the Concept of Givenness
in the Phenomenology of Jean-Luc Marion: As
a Way of Overcoming Metaphysics**

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**Third Reduction and the Concept of Givenness in the
Phenomenology of Jean-Luc Marion: As a Way of
Overcoming Metaphysics**

**Jean-Luc Marion'un Fenomenolojisinde Metafiziğin
Üstesinden Gelmenin Bir Yolu Olarak Üçüncü Redüksiyon ve
Verililik Kavramı**

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Abstract

My research will aim to elaborate the phenomenological notion of givenness [Gegebenheit] of Jean-Luc Marion. His main purpose in evoking this concept is to overcome metaphysics which could be only possible by phenomenology. Although phenomenology wished to bring the limits done by states of metaphysical enterprise to an end by Husserl and then Heidegger, Marion argues that it never succeeded in both attempts. In order to accomplish the overcoming of metaphysics in phenomenology, Marion tries to go beyond Husserl and Heidegger. By doing so, Marion's attempt to go beyond Husserlian and Heideggerian metaphysics in phenomenology from the perspective of horizon and subjectivity will be clarified. His project of overcoming metaphysics comes to get new approaches in phenomenology in the context of saturated phenomenon. By the explanation of saturated phenomenon, Marion comes to the understanding of a new kind of self which is called "l'adonné" [the gifted] as a result of this non-metaphysical phenomenology. This study focus on the new phenomenology of Jean-Luc Marion by examining his renovation of the concept of givenness and reduction in phenomenology and also by considering his relation to Husserl and Heidegger on the way to overcoming metaphysics.

Özet

Bu çalışma Jean-Luc Marion'un verililik nosyonunu ayrıntılı bir şekilde inceleyecektir. Marion'un bu kavramı canlandırmasının temel sebebi, sadece fenomenoloji ile mümkün olduğunu düşündüğü metafiziğin üstesinden gelme projesidir. Her ne kadar fenomenoloji önce Husserl ve daha sonra da Heidegger ile metafizikî bakiyeyi bir sona getirmeyi istese de, Marion her iki çabanın da bunu başaramadığını söylemektedir. Fenomenolojide böyle bir şeyi gerçekleştirmek için Marion, Husserl ve Heidegger düşüncelerini öznellik ve ufuk açısından aşmaya çalışmaktadır. Marion'un bu projesi, doygun fenomen kavramıyla da daha yeni boyutlar kazanmaktadır. Doygun fenomeni açıklayarak, Marion metafizikî olmayan bir fenomenolojinin sonucu olarak yeni bir kendilik anlayışına varmaktadır: "verilen". Bu çalışma, verililik ve redüksiyon kavramlarının yenilenmesini ve Marion'un Husserl ve Heidegger düşünceleri ile ilişkisini ele alarak, metafiziğin üstesinden gelinme yolunda Marion'un yeni fenomenolojisine odaklanacaktır.

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Introduction

By virtue of its mere notion the ground falls
outside of what it grounds...
The Science of Knowledge, Fichte

The many attempts, through a variety of strategies, to confront what is contained in the idea of “metaphysics,” has been a definitive strand in the history of philosophy. This relationship, between philosophers and metaphysics, is often expressed in one of two ways: at times they try to re-appropriate it in their thought, while at times they see it as the only stumbling block on way to the thought. Given the centrality of this concern in the last century, and the splintering of philosophy that occurred with it, the catch phrase of twentieth-century thought is no doubt nothing more than “the overcoming of metaphysics.” While perhaps originating, at least in an explicit manner, with Nietzsche’s critique of philosophy as a Platonism, the birth of phenomenology by Edmund Husserl also suggested a way to go beyond metaphysics. Not long after, Heidegger’s attempt to criticize metaphysics brought forth a new philosophical stage and the Heideggerian theme of overcoming metaphysics can be read throughout the works of his

predecessors. Jean-Luc Marion is one of these philosophers on the endeavor of overcoming metaphysics.

The usage of the concept of metaphysics, and the problems and discussions it's resulted in, have different variations of meanings according to philosophers after Heidegger. However, this theme could be seen as distinctly Heideggerian, given that his attempt is the most obvious determination of the problem, and that his critique of metaphysics revealed that metaphysics is a way of philosophy which must be overcome.

Moreover, Heidegger's definition and problematizing this issue paved the way for the subsequent critiques issued by philosophers in the Continental tradition of philosophy. In this sense, Jean-Luc Marion's impetus for the overcoming of metaphysics can be seen as stemming from Heidegger's notion of the metaphysics, and so the path he takes on his phenomenological project follows this gesture. In order to be clear on the concept of metaphysics, Heidegger's understanding of it will first be explained, and then we will come to examine what Marion understands by the concept of metaphysics. My intent is not to give a detailed account of the Heideggerian concept of metaphysics – which can lead away from our topic –, but to see how an understanding of Marion from the concept of metaphysics can arise from a Heideggerian context, and how Marion leans on this critique for his phenomenological motive of overcoming metaphysics.

For Heidegger, metaphysics can be defined as the forgetting of ontological difference between being [Sein, être, esse] and beings (entities) [Seiende,

ens, étant] – if it is to be able to be fit into a short definition.¹ In this regard, the history of metaphysics in Western thought “from Anaximander to Nietzsche” is the concealment of “truth of Being”² because by metaphysical thinking, being as such (Sein) is thought only in terms of beings without considering the ontological difference. The oblivion of ontological difference leads metaphysical thinking, in a way that has occurred throughout the history of philosophy, to shape in various forms a grounding relation by attributing an ontological faculty to ontic being so as to provide “fundamentum absolutum et inconcussum” for the other which is grounded.³ This reciprocal foundation between the ground and grounded gets a causal relation between them when the metaphysical tradition comes to think God. Heidegger declares this more detailed relation as follows:

Metaphysics thinks of beings as such, that is, in general.

Metaphysics thinks of beings as such, as a whole. Metaphysics thinks of the Being of beings both in the ground-giving unity of what is most general, what is indifferently valid everywhere, and also in the unity of the all that accounts for the ground, that is, of the All-Highest. The Being of beings is thus thought of in advance as the grounding ground. Therefore all metaphysics is at bottom, and from the ground up, what grounds, what gives account of the ground, what

¹ In English, the term being signifies both an entity and the being of the entities; so in order to point the difference in this study, we will use “Being” for Sein, être, esse and “beings” for Seiende, ens, étant.

² Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, p. 280.

³ Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, p. 28.

is called to account by the ground, and finally what calls the ground to account.⁴

This account of God in the metaphysical tradition brings forth another Heideggerian term that echoes the use of metaphysics in 20th century philosophy through the sense that, as Heidegger states and as it will be shown, “metaphysics is ontotheology”:

The Being of beings is represented fundamentally, in the sense of the ground, only as *causa sui*. This is the metaphysical concept of God. Metaphysics must think in the direction of the deity because the matter of thinking is Being; but Being is in being as ground in diverse ways: as *λόγος* (*logos*), as *ὑποκείμενον* (*hypokeimenon*), as substance, as subject.

This explanation, though it supposedly touches upon something that is correct, is quite inadequate for the interpretation of the essential nature of metaphysics, because metaphysics is not only theo-logic but also onto-logic. Metaphysics, first of all, is neither only the one nor the other also. Rather, metaphysics is theo-logic because it is onto-logic. It is onto-logic because it is theo-logic. The onto-theological essential constitution of metaphysics cannot be explained in terms of either theologic or ontologic, even if an explanation could ever do justice here to what remains to be thought out.⁵

⁴ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 58

⁵ *Identity and Difference*, p. 60

These passages of Heidegger, who speaks on behalf of the entire metaphysical tradition, explain the function of God as *causa sui* which rules both ontological and theological determinations of beings as the supreme founding being (entity) which founds itself. This is the fundamental problem of metaphysics, whether it is about God or the subject (ego or transcendental subjectivity), that has been discussed by many philosophers. Although Jean-Luc Marion's works on Descartes and theology encounters this ontotheological constitution of metaphysics in a very Heideggerian sense, in order not to digress, and since "phenomenology always deals with what is radically immanent, never with the transcendent," this study is going to try to be far away from the issue of God and ontotheology. Our main issue is to delineate the metaphysics in phenomenology and how Marion's phenomenological project handles this issue and overcomes the metaphysics in the phenomenology.

Here it is important to explain what is meant by transcendence and immanence, as they have a distinct meaning in the phenomenological tradition. For Husserl, the term immanence "is used primarily to refer to the manner in which consciousness, its lived experiences and intentional objects are to be understood after the phenomenological reduction. Husserl contrasts immanence with transcendence and speaks of phenomenology as proceeding in immanence. After the reduction, the entities in consciousness and even the ego itself have to be understood as a 'transcendence in immanence' or 'immanent transcendence' (immanente Transzendenz; CM §

47)”.⁶ It is useful to remember that “phenomenology’s relationship with the concept of transcendence is not all straight-forward”⁷ but in a simple way, the concept of transcendence can be thought as opposed to immanence. For Husserl, phenomenological reduction aims to remove all traces of transcendence in knowledge so transcendence can be determined negatively as the sphere of the non-immanent.⁸

The widespread problems of metaphysics have been argued not only in philosophy but, as Heidegger claimed, all “The Western Civilization” for more than two thousand years which can be thought together with the metaphysics.⁹ Philosophers who are aware of these problematical results of metaphysics have different approaches towards the meaning of overcoming of metaphysics. It is therefore necessary to mention what Marion understands as “overcoming” in order to understand his phenomenological project as “a way of overcoming metaphysics.” For Marion, “overcoming” is reaching beyond the conceptual determinations of its definition and exceeding the limits that occur by these determinations. Christina Gschwandtner, in her detailed work on the entirety of Marion’s thought—which sees a coherent relation among his works about theology, phenomenology, and history of philosophy (mostly concerning Descartes)—defines what Marion understands as “overcoming” as follows:

⁶ Moran and Cohen, *The Husserl Dictionary*, p. 161.

⁷ Moran, Dermot, Immanence, *Self-Experience, and Transcendence in Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, and Karl Jaspers*, in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82 (2008), No. 2, p. 265.

⁸ Bernet, Rudolf, Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology, p. 54

⁹ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 60

“Overcoming” comes to mean defining clearly, pushing this definition to its limits, playing with it and widening it, and thus finally getting beyond its boundary. It never suggests that one ignore the thought that has gone before or the particular expression metaphysics may have found in a given thinker (be it Husserl, Heidegger, Levinas, or Derrida). Rather, it always takes that thinker's work very seriously and works within the parameters provided in order to get beyond those very restrictions and overcome their limitations. Metaphysics is not overcome by ignoring its discourse or simplistically contradicting it. Rather, overcoming always means understanding and taking seriously the limits of a particular thought. Only by playing with those limits and by finding exceptions to them can one overcome their restrictions and discover a way beyond them.¹⁰

The major theme in Marion's entire corpus is no doubt “overcoming metaphysics” whether he writes on theology or phenomenology or history of philosophy, but since this study is only going to deal with his phenomenology, I will not delve into the other parts of Marion's thought. Before starting this examination, it is necessary to point out the relation of theology and phenomenology considering the context of metaphysics in the thought of Jean-Luc Marion. There is not a clear demarcation line between philosophy and theology in Marion's thought—the relationship and the gap between them are blurred if we look at his corpus, and a number of critiques

¹⁰ Gschwandtner, *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 29-30

from philosophers and theologians appear because of this blurred line. For some, he “seeks to be both Barth and Heidegger at once,”¹¹ but this indeterminate, intertwined relation becomes apparent only under the consideration of his theological works such as *The Idol and Distance*, *God Without Being*, and *Prolegomena to Charity*. Surely, Marion’s theological works, from the point of overcoming metaphysics in the phenomenological style and its concomitant reputation, render such discussions about this relation inevitable. However, this should not lead us to think that what he does in his phenomenological works is “theological hijacking of phenomenology”¹², as some, including Janicaud and even Derrida,¹³ have accused.

The point on which I want to rely is Marion’s own distinguishing of his phenomenology from theology, as outlined in his “phenomenological trilogy.” In the preface to *In Excess*, Marion defines his three books—beginning with *Reduction and Givenness*, followed by *Being Given*, and ending with *In Excess*—as a “phenomenological trilogy”. This study will look at these books in particular, bringing in various other works of Marion’s to supplement the discussion.

At the same time, however, no one can deny that his phenomenological works are theologically motivated, as his renewal of Husserlian and

¹¹ Milbank, John. ‘Only Theology Overcomes Metaphysics’, in: *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 37.

¹² Janicaud, *The Theological Turn in French Phenomenology; in Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate*, p. 53 : “Phenomenology was taken hostage by a theology which does not want to say its name”.

¹³ Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, p.56

Heideggerian phenomenology can be thought of as discussing the phenomenological possibility of revelation in a non-metaphysical way. As we see in the next chapters of this study, in the explanation of the fifth kind of saturated phenomenon, Marion marks a separation between the actuality and possibility of revelation, and shows this distinction by writing theological revelation with the capital, as “Revelation”. As Christina Gschwandtner states:

“While phenomenology can show that a phenomenon of revelation is possible and what its phenomenality would be, if it were to appear, it can never confirm that such an appearing has actually taken place or say anything about its actuality. Phenomenology can think about the possibility of a phenomenon of revelation only, but never about God as such, or the actuality of such a revelation, or the question of whether revelation has taken place historically. This is the case because phenomenology always deals with what is radically immanent, never with the transcendent, which is excluded through the reduction”.¹⁴

In this sense, Marion’s phenomenological endeavor cannot be thought as a theological way of philosophy. Even if he uses phenomenology as a kind of tool in order to think phenomenological possibility of revelation, it is obvious that Marion’s phenomenology does not blur the demarcation line between philosophy and theology. It does not violate its own borders and try to fulfill the process of the overcoming metaphysics by being loyal to the

¹⁴ Gschwandtner, Christina, A new ‘Apologia’: The Relationship between theology and Philosophy in the work of Jean-Luc Marion, *The Heythrop Journal*, XLVI (2005), p. 305.

phenomenological motives; that is to say, by dealing with what is immanent to cognition.

As it is said above, Marion's conceptualization of metaphysics in phenomenology has Heideggerian origins. Robyn Horner makes the most precise definition of the Marionian use of the term: "metaphysics in this sense is (or involves elements of) a conception in terms of being as presence, with a claim to some kind of absoluteness, on the foundation of a transcendental I, whose existence and certainty is guaranteed by a term posited beyond the conceptual system".¹⁵ These two motives are fundamental traits of metaphysics that Marion seeks to overcome with a kind of rehabilitated phenomenology. The starting point for Marion is undoubtedly Husserlian phenomenology which provides, in spite of itself, the possibility of exceeding metaphysics:

I often assume that phenomenology makes an exception to metaphysics. I do not, however, defend this assertion in its entirety, since I emphasize that Husserl upholds Kantian decisions (the conditions for the possibility of phenomenality, the horizon, the constituting function of the I) and similarly that Heidegger upholds subjectivity in Dasein no less than the privilege of the question of Being. It should, therefore, be admitted that phenomenology does

¹⁵ Horner, Robyn, Translator's Introduction in *In Excess*, p. xiii

not actually overcome metaphysics so much as it opens the official possibility of leaving it to itself.¹⁶

For Marion, the metaphysical enterprise of phenomenology rooted in Husserl and Heidegger limits givenness of phenomenon. As he summarizes these points above, they are “the conditions of possibility of phenomenality, the horizon and the constituting function of I.” These constraints of metaphysics over phenomenology rule over the self-showing of phenomenon and decide on phenomenality of phenomenon instead of phenomenon; that is to say they condition the self-showing of phenomenon. Marion’s entire phenomenological project aims to put away any authority over the self-showing of phenomenon other than phenomenon. On the purpose of clearing away any other authority on the self-showing of phenomenon, Marion engages with Husserlian and Heideggerian restrictions on the self-showing of phenomena. In this respect, the kind of metaphysics he encounters in phenomenology (Husserl and Heidegger) puts restrictions on the self-showing of phenomena and determines the conditions of phenomenality. As quoted above, Marion identifies these restrictions of metaphysics as the conditions of possibility for phenomenality, the horizon, and the subjectivity. To be clear, the former is characterized by the latter two.

¹⁶ *Being Given*, p. 4

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My research will aim to elaborate the phenomenological notion of givenness [Gegebenheit] as employed by Jean-Luc Marion. His main purpose in evoking this concept is to overcome metaphysics in a way which could only be possible by phenomenology. From the beginning, phenomenology's departure was freeing presence from any condition or precondition for receiving what gives itself as it gives itself, and, therefore, by doing so it aimed to bring metaphysics to an end.¹⁷ Although phenomenology wished to bring the limits imposed by metaphysical enterprises to an end, first by Husserl and then Heidegger, Marion argues that neither attempt was successful.

For Marion, Husserl's project is able to go further by employing phenomenological reduction in a different way. Phenomenological reduction can serve to move beyond metaphysical restrictions imposed upon phenomena to a point where phenomena can give themselves as themselves without any condition. The previous reductions of Husserl and Heidegger, for Marion, limited the self-showing of phenomena to objectness and beingness. In this sense, Husserl's phenomena become objects to be constituted by consciousness. Marion thinks that Husserl's notion of objectness [Gegenstaendlichkeit] reduces phenomena to objects which are

¹⁷ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 1

not only present to consciousness but actually controlled by its constitution of them in signification. On the other hand, Heidegger saw Husserl's metaphysical boundaries on the self-showing of phenomena but went beyond the Husserlian reduction toward the meaning of the Being of beings. As Marion argued, this second reduction is executed through the analytic of Dasein and ontological difference. Heidegger's reduction also failed to let phenomena give themselves as themselves without any restriction by giving privilege to the meaning of the Being of beings. According to Marion, in order to overcome metaphysics, phenomenology must go further than these two reductions, which are obsessed with the constitution of objects (Husserl) and the meaning of the Being of beings. Neither Husserl's reduction nor Heidegger's reduction were successful to free phenomenality from every other authority – that is to say, horizon and subjectivity. Marion wishes to push Husserl's project further by employing the phenomenological reduction in a more radical sense. By doing so, he contends that Husserl's silence on the givenness of phenomena was not freed from presence; that is to say, Husserl (and also Heidegger) did not allow that which shows itself to be seen without imposing any kind of limitations upon the self-showing of the given. This is because, for Marion phenomenology must uphold the privilege of pure givenness. His attempt is to radically re-envisage the whole phenomenological project beginning with the primacy of givenness.

To sum up, this research is going to aim to understand Marion's third reduction and as well givenness. In this manner, I will try to show, firstly,

how reduction to givenness differs from Husserl's and Heidegger's reduction, and secondly, how this renewed phenomenology of Marion overcomes the metaphysical restrictions of horizon and subjectivity.

In order to do so, at the beginning of this research I shall define the concept of metaphysics in phenomenology from the view of Marion. After this explanation, we will come to discuss Husserl's and Heidegger's reductions and at the same time, giving detailed accounts of the metaphysical enterprises they have. In this first chapter, Marion's critique of these two phenomenological projects will be examined in terms of their relation to metaphysics and Marion's third reduction and the determination of givenness as the sole framework of all phenomena will be closely examined.

In the second chapter, saturated phenomenon – a new term of Marion's – is going to be discussed and explained. By doing so, Marion's attempt to go beyond Husserlian and Heideggerian metaphysics in phenomenology from the perspective of horizon and subjectivity will be clarified. His project of overcoming metaphysics comes to get new approaches in phenomenology in the context of saturated phenomenon. Marion's phenomenology of givenness finds its way to express "the excess" by his assertion of saturated phenomenon. Moreover, his conceptual declaration of saturated phenomenon reveals a new response to the question "who comes after the subject." His configuration of the non-metaphysical self as *l'adonné* [the gifted] will be shown to be an important result of the new phenomenology. In a nutshell, while closely examining three reductions, the notion of

givenness and saturated phenomenon, this study will aim to explain
Marion's project of the overcoming of metaphysics in phenomenology.

1 Givenness and Reduction

Not only the rose but any phenomenon is without why,
since any phenomenon is as it gives itself.

*The Visible and the Revealed*¹⁸

In this chapter, my plan consists of explaining the concept of givenness [*Gegebenheit, donation*] and the third reduction and by doing so, we will get to the key points of Marion's phenomenology and then to see how Marion comes to the idea of the non-metaphysical phenomenology. Marion's attempt to overcome metaphysics in phenomenology arises from the same phenomenological endeavor [*Zu den Sachen selbst, To things themselves*] set by Husserl, but his project also goes beyond the metaphysical restrictions of Husserl's and Heidegger's projects. Moreover, givenness is the very Husserlian notion of phenomenology which Marion re-emphasizes in order to free the appearing of phenomenon from any restrictions of the metaphysics.

From the start, phenomenology's departure was freeing presence from any condition or precondition for receiving what gives itself as it gives itself,

¹⁸ *The Visible and the Revealed*, p. 5

therefore, by doing so it aimed to bring metaphysics to an end.¹⁹ Although phenomenology, first in the work of Husserl and then afterwards in Heidegger, wished to bring an end to the limits imposed by states of metaphysical enterprise, Marion argues neither succeeded. For Marion, Husserl's project is able to go further by employing the phenomenological reduction in a different way. That is to say, the phenomenological reduction can serve to move beyond metaphysical restrictions imposed upon phenomena to a point where phenomena can give themselves as themselves without any condition. The previous reductions of Husserl and Heidegger, for Marion, limited the appearing of phenomena to (respectively) objectness and beingness. In this sense, Husserl's phenomena become objects to be constituted by consciousness. Marion thinks that Husserl's notion of objectness [Gegenstaendlichkeit] reduces phenomena to objects which are not only present to consciousness but actually controlled by its constitution of them in signification. On the other hand, Heidegger saw the metaphysical boundaries on the appearing of phenomena in Husserl's phenomenology but he went beyond the Husserlian reduction toward the meaning of the Being of beings. As Marion argued, this second reduction also failed to let phenomena to give themselves as themselves without any restriction by giving privilege to the meaning of the Being of beings. According to Marion, in order to overcome metaphysics, phenomenology must go beyond these two reductions which are obsessed with constitution of objects and the meaning of Being of beings. Neither Husserl's reduction nor Heidegger's

¹⁹ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 1

reduction were successful to free phenomenality from every other authority – that is to say, horizon and subjectivity. Marion wishes to push Husserl’s project further by employing the phenomenological reduction in a more radical sense. By doing so, he contends that Husserl’s silence on the givenness of phenomena was not freed from the presence; that is to say, Husserl (and also Heidegger) did not allow what shows itself to be seen without imposing any kind of limitations upon the self-showing of the given. This is because, for Marion, phenomenology must uphold the privilege of pure givenness. Thus, his attempt is to radically re-envisage the whole phenomenological project beginning with the primacy of givenness.

Breakthrough of Phenomenology

“A breakthrough [work], not an end but rather a beginning”.²⁰ In the second edition of his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl describes his book’s importance for the further phenomenological studies with these words. This breakthrough of *Logical Investigations* is not clear to one who wishes to see phenomenology from only one side, and this therefore it gives the opportunity to be interpreted very differently by philosophers such as Heidegger, Derrida and others.

In *Reduction and Givenness*, Jean-Luc Marion, after giving a long explanation of different interpretations of Husserl’s breakthrough, he

²⁰ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, translation by J. N. Findlay, London and New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 3

considers the breakthrough of Husserl as the broadening of the domain of intuition in company with signification's autonomy. In Marion's perspective, intuition is recognized by Husserl as a primary source of knowledge.²¹ This is what Husserl calls the categorical intuition. Categorical intuition is one of the most important developments of phenomenology and through categorical intuition it differs from the previous Kantian and also post-Kantian philosophy. For Husserl, concepts and relations present themselves prior to any deduction of categories described by Aristotle or by Kant.²² In this respect, categorical intuition expands the domain of experience beyond the transcendental philosophy and empiricism. By the same token, it is categorical intuition on which Heidegger relies and even at the end of his life in Zahringen Seminars mentions from it as a ground: "I finally had the ground".²³ No doubt that by the direction of the notion of the categorical intuition, Heidegger became able to provide the ground in order to ask the question of Being because Husserl's accomplishment in *Logical Investigations* is the liberation of Being from theoretical judgment.²⁴ However, Husserl's endeavor to convert phenomenology into a transcendental philosophy and the use of the transcendental ego provoked Heidegger to aim arrows of criticism against Husserl on his track to the meaning of Being of beings. In order not to

²¹ *Reduction and Givenness*, 18

²² *Counter-Experience*, p.4

²³ *Four Seminars*, p.67.

²⁴ *Counter-Experience*, p.8

digress, I will not venture into the details of these criticisms which are outside the scope of our discussion.

If we turn away from Heidegger's criticism of Husserl and look at the breakthrough, we will come to the second interpretation of the breakthrough which considers the autonomy of signification over intuition.²⁵ For Husserl, however, signification does not rely on a fulfilling intuition in order to signify; Marion quotes Husserl: "*The realm of signification is, however, much wider [sehr viel umfassender] than that of intuition*".²⁶ The autonomy of signification is upheld by Derrida as another interpretation of Husserl's breakthrough. His criticism to Husserl in *Speech and Phenomena* is orientated by this interpretation of the breakthrough which privileges the *First Investigation of Logical Investigations* as opposed to Heidegger's *Sixth Investigation*.²⁷ For Derrida, Husserl repeats a metaphysics of presence by being unfaithful to signification through again having it require the guarantor of intuition. Husserl at first sees the possibility for fully autonomous signification, according to Derrida, and then against this autonomy, he demands that each signification (or "meaning- intention") needs to be met with adequate fulfilling intuition.²⁸ This is the reason why Derrida says that signification is always haunted by presence. Derrida's criticism of Husserl as the metaphysics of presence is also not our focus in our discussion so we cannot delve into the explanation of this critique of

²⁵ *Reduction and Givenness*, p.

²⁶ *Logical Investigations*, vol 2, p. 824 in *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 30.

²⁷ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 25.

²⁸ *Speech and Phenomena* from "A Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion", p. 186

Derrida's. However, as opposed to Derrida, Marion argues that it is possible to have presence without intuition.²⁹ Against Derrida's equating of intuition and presence, according to Marion's reading of Husserl, signification is sufficient to present something to presence without the corresponding intuition, and it presents a new sui generis mode of presence in which signification is also said to be "given" in consciousness.³⁰ Subsequently, for Marion, givenness sets aside both intuition and signification in what it gives to appearing in presence. As he says:

The Investigations accomplish their breakthrough not first by broadening intuition or by recognizing the autonomy of signification, but by being amazed, as by a "wonder of wonders", by a correlation. ... 'The correlation between appearing and that which appears as such... that which appears, nothing less than an actual being, appears in person in the appearance, because, according to a necessity of essence (the correlation), it gives itself therein'. Phenomenology begins in 1900-1901 because, for the first time, thought sees that which appears appear in appearance; it manages to do this only by conceiving the appearing itself no longer as a "given of consciousness", but indeed as the "givenness to consciousness" (or even through consciousness) of the thing itself, given in the mode of appearing and in all of its dimensions (intuition, intention, and their variations): 'Beings, whatever their concrete or abstract, real or ideal sense, have their own modes of self-givenness in person [Weisen der Selbstgegebenheit]' (*Logical Investigations*, VI, §39).

The phenomenological breakthrough consists neither in the broadening of intuition, nor in the autonomy of signification, but

²⁹ *A Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 186

³⁰ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 28.

solely in the unconditional primacy of the givenness of the phenomenon. Intuition and intention, as liberated as they may be, are so only through the givenness that they illustrate – or rather that never ceases to illuminate them and of which they deliver only modes – the "modes of givenness" of that which appears.³¹

Marion states that the breakthrough phenomenology accomplished is nothing more than the unconditional primacy of the givenness of phenomenon. In the correlation between appearing and that which appears, appearing is not considered as a datum for the conscious subject but as “the givenness of what appears”.³² In this sense, givenness precedes both intuition and intention because the sense they make is only for and through an appearance. According to Marion, Husserl gives the privilege to givenness even from his early work, *Logical Investigations*, and then again in *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1907), before fully being aware of it and explaining it in *Ideas* (1913). He clearly says in *The Idea of Phenomenology* that “Absolute givenness [Gegebenheit] is an ultimate”.³³ Since givenness precedes everything, for Marion intuition is a mode of givenness and it does not contradict signification’s autonomy that Husserl established. Marion’s radical reading of Husserl harmonizes the primacy of intuition with signification’s autonomy by way of the more originary notion of givenness:

The "broadening" of intuition does not contradict the autonomy of signification but rather implies it: in both cases it is a question solely of the originary givenness, which can increase one of its modes only

³¹ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 32.

³² *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 32.

³³ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 49

by increasing the other – which conditions the first. Intuition can be broadened only by broadening its fulfillment, and therefore by depending on the meant spaces to be fulfilled. If intuition must give, it is therefore already and especially necessary that significations be released, and therefore that they be already given, without intuition and in full autonomy.³⁴

Marion establishes the primacy of givenness over intuition and signification by his reading of Husserl with the emphasis on givenness. Concerning the issue of presence, Husserl determines it by attributing it to signification. This outline of Marion approves Derrida's critique to Husserl which declares him as the last figure of "metaphysics of presence" because of Husserl's commitment to "the reduction of presence to intuition alone."³⁵ In addition to Derrida's interpretation, Marion claims that givenness has the potential to fulfill phenomenology's fundamental discovery, that of givenness beyond presence. However, it is because of Husserl's determination of givenness with objectivity as "self-giving objectivity", that phenomenology has repeated a "metaphysics of presence" with Husserl.³⁶ As it is stated above in Marion's critique of Derrida, Marion re-discovers a givenness that sets aside both intuition and signification in what it gives to appearing in presence. Even if Husserl was not fully aware of the discovery of givenness he made, it is the main enterprise Husserl accomplished with phenomenology according to Marion. Here, I would like to put a short emphasis on an easy-reading of Marion from the perspective of a Derridean

³⁴ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 34.

³⁵ *Reduction and Givenness*, p.35.

³⁶ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 37.

point of view, and, as concomitant with these kinds of reading, labelling of Marion's rehabilitated phenomenology as an example of metaphysics of presence. Since *Idol and Distance* (1977), Marion has pondered upon the issue of metaphysics of presence, and as a post-Husserlian phenomenologist he aims to overcome the metaphysical approaches of phenomenology established by Husserl and other phenomenologists. As a matter of fact, the concept of givenness is the fruit of the consideration of these discussions that took place around the metaphysics of presence. Again, in order to not digress, I am not going to give a full and detailed account of the Derridean critiques against Marion and his response to them, but I cannot help saying that what Marion wishes to renovate in the metaphysical enterprise of phenomenology is not different than Derrida's critique to phenomenology – and also not same with Derrida's critique to phenomenology. However, the account of metaphysics in phenomenology Marion suggests to overcome also considers the Derridean background about phenomenology and in his attempt, Marion as a phenomenologist after Derrida seeks to go beyond the limits of former phenomenologies. In a word, Marion's phenomenology cannot be easily labeled as an example of metaphysics of presence.

Three Reductions

Before scrutinizing Husserl's executing of givenness through the constitution of phenomenon on the horizon of objectness, we are going to look at Heidegger's analysis of Husserl's breakthrough and his engagement

with givenness in the unfolding of the meaning of the Being of beings. In this way, after the examination of Heidegger, we will come to explore the reductions of Husserl and Heidegger; and then the third reduction of Marion.

As it is discussed above, Marion's carefully and elucidatory examination of Husserl's breakthrough helps him to find the origins of givenness which Husserl did not think radically enough. Marion can then look closely at Heidegger, who sees these limitations of metaphysics along with the breakthrough of Husserl by making it a method for ontology. However, Marion's project takes into account the broadening of givenness beyond presence:

It seems permissible to suppose that Husserl, submerged by the simultaneously threatening and jubilatory imperative to manage the superabundance of data in presence, does not at any moment (at least in the Logical Investigations) ask himself about the status, the scope, or even the identity of that givenness. This silence amounts to an admission (following Jacques Derrida's thesis) that Husserl, leaving unquestioned the givenness whose broadening he nevertheless accomplished, does not free it from the prison of presence, and thus keeps it in metaphysical detention. Heidegger, to the contrary, seeing immediately and with an extraordinary lucidity that the breakthrough of 1900-1901 consists entirely in the broadening of givenness beyond sensible intuition, assumes precisely the Husserlian heritage by making the entire question bear on what such a givenness means

– and therefore in being careful not to reduce it too quickly to presence, even under the figure of categorical intuition.³⁷

For Heidegger, phenomenology is the only way of ontology: “There is no ontology alongside a phenomenology. Rather, ontology [as a rigorous] science is nothing but phenomenology.”³⁸ Moreover, in his magnum opus, *Being and Time*, Heidegger puts phenomenology onto the task of ontology. In 1925, Heidegger states: “Phenomenological research is the interpretation of entities with regard to their Being.” Marion claims that this appropriation of phenomenology to the service of ontology by posing the question of Being [Seinsfrage] is the transition of phenomenological inquiry from beings to Being: “Ontology means here (and inadequately) this displacement of phenomenology from beings to Being”.³⁹ Heidegger’s transition on the field of phenomenology from beings to Being does not mean that Husserl did not take notice of any ontology as a result of bracketing, the *epoche*. Husserl’s engagement with the Being of beings or phenomena is different than Heidegger’s consideration of Being because for Husserl the mode of Being of phenomena depends on their constitution in appearing to the presence of consciousness. They are the lived experience of consciousness and are reduced to their appearing in presence.⁴⁰ This is the point where Heidegger takes issue with Husserlian phenomenology, because for Husserl, givenness itself is interpreted in turn as the givenness of an

³⁷ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 39.

³⁸ *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 72.

³⁹ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 46.

⁴⁰ *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 62.

actual presence for consciousness with a view to certitude.⁴¹ In this sense, it is not givenness that determines phenomenality; rather consciousness has the authority over the givenness by reducing every phenomenon to the certitude of actual presence.⁴² Due to this reason, for Marion, we can come to the conclusion that since “the phenomenality of the ‘reduced phenomenon’ is reduced to objective and permanent presence, every phenomenon that is not reduced to that presence is of itself excluded from phenomenality”.⁴³ From now on, for Husserl, the phenomenality of the phenomenon is defined in terms of presence. However, Heidegger follows quite a different path than Husserl on the determination of the phenomenality of the phenomenon.

The metaphysical enterprise undertaken by Husserl about the phenomenality of phenomenon is well recognized by Heidegger. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger defines phenomenon as follows: “the expression phenomenon signifies *that which shows itself in itself*”.⁴⁴ By this definition, Heidegger does not engage with presence, which for Husserl has a stake in the reduction of phenomenon to the object. It is not consciousness, but rather phenomenon’s own visibility that makes possible for phenomenon to appear. Moreover, Heidegger seeks to consider unapparentness of phenomenon as non-manifest together with phenomena’s showing itself as

⁴¹ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 51

⁴² *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 51.

⁴³ *Reduction and Givenness*, p.56.

⁴⁴ *Being and Time*, p.51.

manifest.⁴⁵ Heidegger's contemplation on the non-manifestness of phenomenon, which proceeds by considering the phenomenology of the unapparent, mirrors his more obvious purpose conducted throughout all his philosophy: "The Being of beings 'is' not itself a being"⁴⁶. Marion states that Heideggerian phenomenology seeks more than presence, which is evidence of objectivity: "Phenomenology must bear on the unapparent because Being does not appear, 'is not perceivable'; Being is never perceived within the horizon of presence as a perfectly obedient and lawful phenomenon. Why? Because the presence uncovered in evident permanence receives, and is suitable to, beings alone; only a being can remain here and now in order to respond 'present!' to the command of evidence; but 'this Being itself is nothing of a being [nichts Seiendes]. Likewise what belongs to the Being of a being remains in obscurity'"⁴⁷. Marion's agreement with Heidegger in the matter of going beyond Husserl's objected presence is interrupted in the point where Heidegger uses phenomenology in the service of the question of Being and the analytic of Dasein which also bears an egological character for Marion.

Here, before delving into the second reduction and Dasein in Heidegger's quest for the meaning of Being, we are going to discuss Husserl's reduction and his conceptualization of the subject. Then, by seeing Heidegger's attempt to use reduction in terms of his manner of phenomenological

⁴⁵ *Being and Time*, p.57.

⁴⁶ *Being and Time*, p.26.

⁴⁷ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 60

investigation, we will clearly notice the step which Heidegger took further from Husserl but at the end, we will realize the futility of both of the attempts on the path of the overcoming metaphysics.

Reduction is one of the fundamental concepts of phenomenology that Marion recognizes as cornerstone of phenomenology and, moreover, as a phenomenological method in order to reveal givenness of phenomenon. Although from *Logical Investigations* to his manuscripts, the concept of reduction gets various meanings, functions and characteristics as a phenomenological method throughout Husserl's rehabilitation of his own phenomenology, Marion concentrates on the main role of the method.

Reduction goes ahead with the suspension of the "natural attitude". For Husserl, "natural attitude" means that essential correlation between the existence of some transcendent world out there to our internal or immanent acts of consciousness. Moreover, this suspension was also named by Husserl as bracketing, which means to bracket any account of the "reality" of the world. It is useful to explain that what Husserl means by bracketing is not a kind of Cartesian doubting or solipsism because he does not raise doubt about the reality of the world as Descartes did. Rather, Husserl sets the existence or absence of the world out of play, that is to say, he does not consider its appearance in consciousness. The reason for this suspension of the natural attitude is that the natural attitude makes a mistake in distinguishing the "objects" of cognition from the intentional acts of consciousness: perception, imagination, and signification. Husserl's genius

lies in his insight that these two elements of cognition cannot be separated but are always found together in an intrinsic relation. This insight results in a revaluation of the epistemological categories of transcendence and immanence.⁴⁸ In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl says “I must accomplish a *phenomenological reduction: I must exclude all that is transcendently posited*” and then defines the phenomenological reduction by stating, “everything transcendent (that which is not given to me immanently) is to be assigned the index zero, i.e., its existence, its validity is not to be assumed as such, except at most as the *phenomenon of a claim to validity*”.⁴⁹ Husserl’s reduction, first to the sphere of consciousness, then to the sphere of ownness (Eigenheitssphäre) in *Cartesian Meditations*, establishes the possibility of appearing only within the sphere of immanence, the sphere of “transcendental subjectivity” opened by the epoché or bracketing.⁵⁰ Here immanence can be understood in respect of horizontality; in order for the phenomenon to be constituted by the ego, it must appear within the horizon of the ego.⁵¹ By that account, excepting that which is evident in consciousness, reduction brackets everything else that is transcendently posited.⁵² To put it another way, the experience of the conscious subject, that is to say the constitution of an evident object on the horizon of objectness in consciousness, is the condition of possibility for appearing of phenomenon. Hence, we can say that the understanding of the

⁴⁸ *A Genealogy of Marion’s Philosophy of Religion*, p. 82

⁴⁹ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p.4.

⁵⁰ *Speech and Theology*, p. 18

⁵¹ *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 44-6.

⁵² *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 40.

subject put forward by Husserl is egological and begins from itself. From *Logical Investigations* to *Cartesian Meditations*, as a result of Husserl's phenomenological reduction, this egological subject is at work from the beginning in Husserl's thought—even if some of its capacities are developed and problematized by Husserl during the later development of his phenomenology.

However, Heidegger recognized the metaphysical performance of Husserl's reduction and he clearly explains the difference of his new reduction from the Husserlian one:

For Husserl, phenomenological reduction, which he worked out for the first time expressly in the *Ideas Toward a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* (1913), is the method of leading [Rückführung] phenomenological vision from the natural attitude of the human being whose life is involved in the world of things and persons back to the transcendental life of consciousness and its noetic-noematic experiences, in which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness. *For us*, phenomenological reduction means leading [Rückführung] phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever may be the character of that apprehension, to the understanding of the Being of this being

(projecting upon the mode of its unconcealedness [Unverborgenheit]).⁵³

On account of the fact that Heidegger's engagement in his phenomenology with the Being of beings rather than beings, we can draw the conclusion that what he seeks for in his phenomenological reduction is nothing more than the meaning of Being. Marion asserts Heidegger's achievement as the following: "Heidegger's enterprise, which was phenomenological from beginning though in an original way, can be deployed as an illumination of being in the direction of its Being (and not only of the phenomenon on the basis of a consciousness that gives)".⁵⁴ Heidegger was well aware of the function of the first reduction performed by Husserl. For him, the constitution of the object by consciousness keeps the metaphysical elements in the heart of Husserlian phenomenology, so it is betraying phenomenology's slogan "to things themselves". Heidegger's broadening of the function of reduction separates him from Husserl; that is to say, the transition of the appearing of phenomenon from the horizon of objectness stated by consciousness to the Being of beings, the horizon of Being. However, Heidegger's attempt to go beyond Husserl does not achieve the fundamental goal of phenomenology. Marion's major concern is with what he claims to be is a substrate of Cartesianism in Heidegger's reliance upon

⁵³ *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 21

⁵⁴ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 66

the role of Dasein and its capacity to deliver access to ontological difference.⁵⁵

In *Reduction and Givenness*, Marion gives a detailed analysis of the different definitions and developments of the meaning of ontological difference in Heidegger. In this detailed and subtle reading, Marion comes to the conclusion that Heidegger does not properly define ontological difference in *Being and Time* because Heidegger's account of ontological difference is intervened by the consideration of the analytic of Dasein.⁵⁶ Since Dasein is the only being which is able to ask the question of being—understood, in other words, as “being which in its Being has this very Being as an issue”⁵⁷—the question concerning Being is not at stake in *Being and Time*, rather the question concerning the meaning of Being: “...the real story and the final word of the question – what it wants to know (das Erfragte) the meaning of Being (Sinn von Sein). The meaning of Being marks the final aim of the question concerning Being: it is not only a matter of going back, starting from a being and as if through it, to its Being (first divergence, ontological difference), but also, thanks to the Being of that being, of reaching even the meaning of Being ...”.⁵⁸ The reason of this divergence from Being to meaning of Being is to be taken account of Dasein, because Heidegger does not only deal with an ontic determination

⁵⁵ *A Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 86.

⁵⁶ *Reduction and Givenness*, 71.

⁵⁷ *Being and Time*, p. 39

⁵⁸ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 128-9.

of Dasein but also its very Being.⁵⁹ As Marion claimed, in *Being and Time* ontological difference is not only defining the difference between beings [Seindes] and Being [Sein], but it expresses also another difference between “Being of Dasein” and “Being as such”: “the intervention of Dasein as the ontically ontological being renders the (dual) ontological difference operative only by confusing it with and inscribing it in the question of Being (constructed with three terms). Thus, in *Sein und Zeit*, the ontological question had to fade behind the question of Being – had to let itself be covered over by the "ontological difference" between the way of Being of Dasein alone and that of other beings – precisely because the question of Being is Dasein itself”.⁶⁰ Marion states that Dasein, which has the only access to the question of Being, prevents Heidegger to hold up the ontological difference (between beings and Being) because for Heidegger the Being of Dasein also has a stake in the unfolding of the meaning of the Being. Moreover, Marion explains that Heidegger saw his own intervention of Dasein, as well as the incompleteness of the “breakthrough” attempted with *Being and Time*, at the end of his book’s §83, as a kind of confession.⁶¹

In addition to the misuse of the ontological difference for the analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time*, Marion chides Heidegger in terms of Dasein’s egological character. As it was said in the previous chapter, the ego is established in terms of constant presence while the beings are ontologically

⁵⁹ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 134.

⁶⁰ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 135.

⁶¹ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 140.

dependent on the ego, which has the role of ontologically grounding them while it itself is an ontic being. Marion sums up the function of ego in the metaphysical conceptualization of the modern subject: “The ego is set up by Descartes, and after him by Kant no less than by Hegel, as a being which is privileged to the point that it must account for all other beings and take the place of any meaning of Being in them; in short, it must guarantee them ontically and legitimate them ontologically”.⁶² In this sense, Heidegger’s phenomenological project is opposed to Husserl’s appropriation of Descartes and the further egological philosophies. The way that goes to Dasein passes through the destroying of Cartesian ego. From the point of view of Marion, Heidegger has two main critiques to Descartes. First, Descartes fails to think the Being of ego sum [I exist] because he focused on the epistemic evidence of the cogito. For Heidegger, “the evident certitude of ego allows Descartes only to desert any interrogation of the mode of Being implied by that very certitude and leads him to consider the meaning of its Being as self-evident, evident by itself”.⁶³ Secondly, Descartes fails to think the Being of any being because he prescribes to the world its “veritable” Being on the basis of an idea of Being (Being=constant Being present at hand).⁶⁴ Descartes degrades the Being of the world to certitude of an object present at hand so the phenomenality of the world is a permanent subsistence like mathematical knowledge. Contrary to ego, Dasein “gives Being by determining the way of Being of the other beings, because it itself,

⁶² *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 93.

⁶³ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 88.

⁶⁴ *Being and Time*, p. 132.

in advance and according to its privilege, determines itself to be according to its own way of Being".⁶⁵ In this respect, Marion claims that Dasein made a radical change in the subversion of the subject. Furthermore, Heidegger's revolution is not only about undermining Cartesian ego or Kantian transcendental subject (both of them are appropriated by Husserl) alongside Husserl's phenomenological subject. Dasein, according to Marion, is not a spectator as the subject constitutes objects. Subjectivity for Dasein is not located in the objectivization of the object because its intentionality, that is to say, being in the world, is expanded to encompass not simply the constitution of objects (Husserl) but rather an opening of a world.⁶⁶ Rather than objective constitution, Dasein is involved in the world as that being for whom its own Being is at stake, and it is that one for whom the Being of all other beings is at stake – not because the being of objects is constituted by the subject, but rather because Dasein is that being which is in-the-world, as always already involved, and cannot escape its worldliness.⁶⁷ For Marion, this determination of Dasein, which is its own Being and for which the Being of all other beings is at stake for it, gives an account of mineness [Jemeinigkeit] by Dasein's worldliness. However, this account of Dasein that is acceding to Being, results from Dasein's risking itself as it is exposed to death. That is to say, Being opens itself to Dasein in the way in which death affects Dasein as a possibility; in person, in the first person, according to the mode of unstitutability. Being-toward-death, for Dasein, is the

⁶⁵ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 93

⁶⁶ Marion, *The Final Appeal of Subject*, in *Deconstructive Subjectivities*, p. 86

⁶⁷ *The Final Appeal of Subject*, p. 87

ultimate possibility of access to Being, and so by risking itself in the first person it attains its proper Being as the mineness of Being. However, “the "mineness" of Being no longer indicates that the I subsists in an essentially unshakeable subjectivity, but that Being remains inaccessible to Dasein (and thus absolutely concealed) insofar as Dasein does not risk itself through exposing itself without reserve and without certainty, as the possibility of impossibility”.⁶⁸ In this way, Dasein accomplishes the mineness by anticipatory resoluteness. In accordance with resoluteness, Heidegger highlights three phenomena: anxiety, the guilty or indebted conscience, and Being-towards-death. These phenomena, which determine the Being of Dasein as care, only define anticipatory resoluteness as an open extasis towards nothing.⁶⁹ Marion focuses on this openness to nothingness, which distinguishes and isolates Dasein from other innerworldly beings, because Dasein provides its ipseity [Selbstheit] with its openness to nothingness: Dasein exists “qua itself”.⁷⁰ Dasein remains a self which is constant and permanent in its resoluteness, and for Marion this mode of subjectivity that is Dasein is in the end the very subjectivity shared by the Cartesian ego: “the extasis of care, which radicalizes the destruction of the transcendental subject in Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, nonetheless leads to a miming of the subject by reestablishing an autarky of Dasein, identical to itself through itself up to the point where this ipseity stabilizes itself in a self-positing”.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *The Final Appeal of Subject*, p. 87.

⁶⁹ *The Final Appeal of Subject*, p.89

⁷⁰ *The Final Appeal of Subject*, p.89

⁷¹ *The Final Appeal of Subject*, p.90.

In short, Marion explains that Dasein cannot get rid of the Cartesian ego, even if Heidegger wanted to do so:

... the I can just as well have to be “destroyed” as to be able to be “confirmed”, according to whether it is repeated by one or the other of the possible determinations of *Dasein*; either inauthentically, in the Cartesian way of the persistent and subsistent *res cogitans*; or authentically, in the way of anticipatory resoluteness, of the structure of care, of the mineness of *Dasein*. The ‘I think’ therefore no longer appears as a metaphysical thesis to be refuted, among others, in order to free up the phenomenon of *Dasein*, but as the very terrain that Dasein must conquer, since no other terrain will ever be given to Dasein in which to become manifest. *Ego cogito, sum* states less a counter case of *Dasein* than a territory to occupy, a statement to reinterpret, a work to redo.⁷²

In terms of Marion’s analysis of the mineness of Dasein, ego and Dasein have the role of the first person and keep a kind of metaphysical solipsism through Dasein’s speaking as “ego sum” [I am] in the same manner that “ego cogito” [I think] is spoken by the Cartesian ego. In this sense, Heidegger’s project of overcoming the metaphysical subject encounters a difficulty—a stumbling block that Heidegger cannot overcome even as he strives to go beyond it.

On this point, Marion uses Husserl against Heidegger via the account of reduction. Even if Heidegger’s reduction, the second reduction, went a step further than Husserl’s reduction in the overcoming of metaphysics by

⁷² *Reduction and Givenness*, p.106

considering ontological difference, Heidegger could not bracket the question of Being as Husserl did. Contrary to Heidegger's critique of Husserl on the issue of ignoring the question of Being, Marion asserts that Husserl did indeed think the question of Being, but that his intoxication with the constitution of objects prevented him from thinking an ontology beyond the horizon of objectness. On the other hand, Heidegger also betrayed the main impetus of phenomenology, "to things themselves," by thinking phenomena according to the horizon of Being, due to his pre-occupation with the meaning of Being. As a consequence of his phenomenological ontology, so Marion claims, Heidegger could not achieve "what Husserl had liberated" on the bracketing of the question of being—that is, going beyond the horizon of Being through "the unlimited power of the reduction"—because "Heidegger presupposes that the question of Being might reduce the reduction: he never demonstrates it".⁷³ Marion searches for a different reduction than Heidegger's reduction that goes beyond Being:

the ultimate possibility of phenomenology would consist in the question of Being no more than it is exhausted in the objectivity of the constituted object; beyond the one and the other equally, a final possibility could still open to it – that of positing the I as transcendent to reduced objectivity, but also to the Being of beings, that of positing itself, by virtue of the reduction carried out to its final consequences, outside of Being.⁷⁴

⁷³ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 163

⁷⁴ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 161-2

This reduction carried out to its final consequences is the third reduction of phenomenology, the reduction to pure givenness. In both (previous) reductions, the phenomenon is not allowed to give itself from itself, but rather there are limits of objectness and beingness on the apparition of the phenomenon. For Marion, this third reduction allows one to consider givenness as such: “Apparition is sufficient for Being only inasmuch as, in appearing, it already perfectly gives itself; but it thus gives itself perfectly by the sole fact that it appears only inasmuch as it is reduced to its givenness for consciousness”.⁷⁵ In this sense, the phenomenon is no longer conditioned by the horizon established by Husserl’s subject or Dasein. In order to overcome metaphysics, in Marion's view, phenomenology must move beyond its obsession with the constitution of objects as well as beyond its infatuation with Dasein and the language of Being.⁷⁶ Marion’s third reduction goes further than the reductions of Husserl and Heidegger, establishing for Marion how to think and articulate the new possibility of the appearing of phenomenon without any limit; givenness of phenomenon. Marion concludes his book *Reduction and Givenness*, and starts his other book *Being Given*, with the final and ultimate principle of the phenomenology: “So much reduction, so much givenness.”

⁷⁵ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 203.

⁷⁶ *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 67

Givenness

In the beginning of his magnum opus, Marion declares his intention with the work: “*what shows itself, first gives itself* – this is my one and only theme.”⁷⁷ It is this very possibility of phenomenology that offers a way to go beyond metaphysics and ontotheology. The result Marion reaches through his investigations on Husserl’s breakthrough and reduction allows him to consider reduction and givenness as the main impetus of phenomenology and clearly says that “without reduction, no procedure of knowledge deserves the title ‘phenomenology.’”⁷⁸ Therefore, he states a new and final principle for phenomenology: “*autant de réduction, autant de donation*”, so much reduction, so much givenness.

Although the final principle of phenomenology which links reduction with givenness is never formulated until Marion, he claims that Husserl is the first person who gives this relation between reduction and givenness in his texts. In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl provides many links between reduction and givenness. According to Marion’s textual foundation to Husserl, phenomena as given are not confirmed only by appearing, but also by their reduced character;⁷⁹ reduction conducts the exclusion of the

⁷⁷ *Being Given*, p. 5

⁷⁸ *Being Given*, p.13

⁷⁹ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p.5: “It is not the psychological phenomenon in psychological apperception and objectification that is an absolute givenness [Gegebenheit], but only the pure phenomenon, the reduced [phenomenon; das Reduzierte].”

transcendence of what is not absolutely given;⁸⁰ by reduction we attain an absolute givenness which owes anything to transcendence⁸¹ and “*The givenness of a reduced phenomenon* [die Gegebenheit eines reduzierten Phänomens] *in general is an absolute and indubitable* [givenness].”⁸² All of these explanations by Husserl show that “the link between reduction and givenness is found to be established, and by Husserl himself. A phenomenon only becomes absolutely given according to the extent to which it is reduced.”⁸³ Marion feels there is a necessity for a textual explanation of (showing) the relation between reduction and givenness by reference to Husserl in order to drown out the orthodox Husserlian critiques. However, because of our issue in this thesis and the limits we have to keep, we shall only go into a cursory analysis of the present critiques of Marion on the topic of reduction and givenness.

Marion calls this principle – so much reduction so much givenness – of givenness the last and final one because it does not contradict the phenomenon’s right to show itself from itself. This principle deploys reduction to givenness, or the pure given, in order to give primacy to the

⁸⁰ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p.7: “Consequently, the concept of phenomenological reduction [phanomenologischen Reduktion] acquires a more narrow, more profound determination and a clearer meaning: the exclusion of the transcendent in general as existence to be admitted in addition, that is to say of all that is not an evident givenness [evidente Gegebenheit] in the authentic sense, an absolute givenness [absolute Gegebenheit] to the pure gaze.”

⁸¹ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p.34: “It is only through a reduction [.Reduktion] that we prefer to call phenomenological reduction [phänomenologische Reduktion] that I attain an absolute givenness [absolute Gegebenheit] that no longer owes anything to transcendence”.

⁸² *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 40

⁸³ *Being Given*, p.15.

phenomenon itself. Reduction to the pure given aims to break any other condition imposed on the self- showing of the phenomenon and allows for the phenomenon the possibility of appearing without preceding or managing it. The principle set up by givenness is precisely that nothing precedes the phenomenon, except its own apparition on its own basis.⁸⁴ Marion explains that “the reduction, by leading apparition back to the conscious I and to appearing itself, leads [the apparition] back to its pure given.” This pure given, then, “is defined without necessarily having recourse to any intermediary whatsoever that would be different from it. In particular the pure given giving itself depends, once reduced, only on itself.”⁸⁵

Furthermore, this reduction “intervenes after the manifestation of appearing which is displayed freely without any other principle”; so reduction to givenness does not have the role of the constitution of the phenomenon in the manner of an *a priori*, but instead it regulates, after the fact, that phenomena appears by themselves; “for the sole purpose of sanctioning a posteriori by reduction what, in appearing, truly deserves the title given phenomenon.”⁸⁶ In this sense, the reduction “does nothing; it lets manifestation manifest itself; it takes initiative (of considering seriously what is lived by consciousness) only in order to offer it to what manifests itself.⁸⁷ This is the primary distinction of Marion’s reduction, which does not give the given to itself but rather records in appearing that which gives

⁸⁴ *Being Given*, p. 18

⁸⁵ *Being Given*, p. 17

⁸⁶ *Being Given*, p. 18

⁸⁷ *Being Given*, p. 10

itself of itself. That which gives itself in this way points, in itself, towards its givenness.⁸⁸ Thus reduction, for Marion, leads back to the full givenness of phenomenon.

According to this new account of reduction, the legacy of the appearing of phenomena resides in givenness alone. As we mentioned in the section on Husserl above, the essential correlation of phenomenology – appearing and what appears as such – is concluded by Husserl to be that givenness has the function in the both sides of the correlation as “the givenness of appearing and the givenness of the object”.⁸⁹ We came to the conclusion above that transcendental philosophy’s central distinction between subjective constitution of a thing and the thing itself disappears in the face of givenness because the appearance of a thing gives the thing itself to consciousness. By relying on the priority of givenness, Marion can claim that “appearances no longer mask what appears,”⁹⁰ because givenness lets the appearing and that which appears arise in the same moment: “This is to say that the two sides of the phenomenon arise at one and the same time because the two givennesses are always but one. And this is indeed the givenness: that of transcendence in immanence.”⁹¹ However, despite Husserl’s bringing forth this essential correlation on the basis of the givenness of phenomenon, his phenomenology can go no further, given that in his account of reduction, one side of the relation contained in phenomena appears on the horizon of

⁸⁸ Schribers, *Ontotheological Turnings*, p. 59

⁸⁹ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p.9-11

⁹⁰ *Being Given*, p. 25

⁹¹ *Being Given*, p. 25

objectness due to his obsession with transcendental subjectivity. According to the third reduction, the subjective constitution of appearances, as lived experiences of consciousness, no longer hold the role of conditioning the appearing of phenomenon. In this way, Marion's phenomenological project aims to liberate phenomenology from a subjective narration of lived experiences of consciousness. In light of givenness, Marion describes consciousness as a screen. For Marion, phenomenology begins when consciousness realizes that its lived experiences are "the place of givenness" and they are "not its origin but rather its point of arrival":

For phenomenology does not begin with appearing or evidence (otherwise it would remain identical to metaphysics), but with the discovery, as difficult as it is stupefying, that the evidence, blind in itself, can become the screen of appearing— the place of givenness. Place of givenness, therefore not its origin but rather its point of arrival: the origin of givenness remains the "self" of the phenomenon, with no other principle or origin besides itself. "Self-givenness, Selbstgebung, donation de soi" indicates that the phenomenon is given in person, but also and especially that it is given of itself and starting from itself.⁹²

Marion states that givenness does not have the same delimiting horizon contained in *the phenomenology* of Husserl and Heidegger (objectness and beingness, respectively). In *Being Given*, Marion explains Heidegger's recovery of givenness and Heidegger's consideration of it in light of Ereignis. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger asserted "es gibt" [it gives, there is]

⁹² *Being Given*, p. 20

on account of considering the phenomenality of Being which “is” not; but as explained above, the analytic of Dasein did not allow Heidegger to ponder givenness.⁹³ However, Heidegger who sees the power of givenness, also emphasizes the role of “es gibt,” though not in *Being and Time*. Rather, Heidegger did so almost four decades later in *Time and Being*: “We say of beings: they are. With regard to the matter ‘Being’ and with regard to the matter ‘time’, we remain cautious. We do not say: Being is, time is but rather it gives [es gibt/there is]⁹⁴ Being and it gives time. For the moment we have only changed the idiom with this expression. Instead of saying ‘it is’, we say ‘there is’, ‘It gives.’”⁹⁵ From the point of view of Marion, the “es” of “es gibt,” the “cela,” is not an enigmatic power and cannot be thought according to causality – this is what Heidegger somehow relies on when he defines Ereignis. Heidegger names the cela [es, it] as Ereignis, “The It was interpreted as Ereignis.”⁹⁶ For Marion, this obscures the giving aspect of phenomenon by the naming of the It as Ereignis. However, Heidegger’s attempt to think givenness even beyond Being – while

⁹³ Heidegger confesses it in *Time and Being*, p. 44: “The passages in Being and Time were mentioned in which ‘It gives’ was already used without being directly thought in relation to Ereignis. These passages appear today as half attempts – attempts to work out the question of Being, attempts to give that question the adequate direction. But they themselves remain inadequate.

Thus our task today is to see the themes and motives in these attempts which point to the question of Being and are determined by that question. Otherwise, one easily makes the mistake of regarding the investigations of *Being and Time* as independent studies which are then rejected as insufficient. Thus, for example, the question of death is pursued solely within the boundaries and motives which result from the intention of working out the temporality of “Dasein.”

⁹⁴ In *Being Given*, Marion uses “es gibt” in French as “cela donne”.

⁹⁵ *On Time and Being*, p. 5

⁹⁶ *On Time and Being*, p. 27

considering Being as given in the claim of “Es gibt Sein, es gibt Zeit” and “The gift of presence is the property of Ereignis. Being vanishes in the Ereignis”⁹⁷ – lasts until the abolishing of givenness on the side of Ereignis: “the first move—reducing presence (Being) to a gift appropriate to givenness— is completed (and also annulled) by a second— abolishing givenness in the Ereignis.”⁹⁸ In this sense, Marion asserts, Heidegger does not want to confirm his emphasis on the primacy of givenness over Being. However, one can argue here that Marion does not want to see the historicity of Ereignis. In Heidegger’s own thinking, the conceptualization of Ereignis brings forth a kind of historical approach on the disclosure of truth. I shall not discuss this issue in detail, but I would like to consider this deficiency of Marion on the critique of Ereignis without taking into account other layers of Ereignis, apart from the ontological ones.

Heidegger and Husserl thus effectively reach givenness as the ultimate principle. Although they make use of givenness, they do not affirm it as the key, but instead focus on other principles:

One of them, in ending up at objectness, lets givenness escape, while the other, by assigning beingness to the Ereignis, abandons it. Both are familiar with givenness without officially recognizing it as such. I ask: on what conditions would it finally become possible to recognize givenness as such? To answer, it helps to return to the

⁹⁷ *On Time and Being*, p. 22

⁹⁸ *Being Given*, p. 37

ultimate principle —“So much reduction, so much givenness”—
which makes an essential connection between the scope of givenness
and the radicality of the reduction.⁹⁹

As explained above, objectness and beingness are an attempt to determine givenness, though as Marion claims they “are legitimate but limited, quite exactly as horizons, which are outlined by and against the background of givenness.”¹⁰⁰ For Marion, the determination of givenness cannot be defined by the horizons of objectness and beingness, but rather must be defined “in itself and on its own terms,”¹⁰¹ as objectness and beingness assign “conditions of possibility to the given.” Marion claims that the conditions of possibility imposed on phenomena being manifested, on the horizons of objectness and beingness, are limits, and givenness cannot be determined by these horizons. Givenness would determine itself on the basis of itself; “nothing of what appears would appear otherwise than inasmuch as given.”¹⁰² Givenness only ever appears in the fold of given (as objectness in its connection with the object, as Being in difference with beings).¹⁰³ Marion’s project consists of identifying the intentional correlate of a phenomenon as, and with, a given, without immediately finding oneself on

⁹⁹ *Being Given*, p. 38

¹⁰⁰ *Being Given*, p. 39

¹⁰¹ *Being Given*, p. 39

¹⁰² *Being Given*, p. 38

¹⁰³ *Being Given*, p. 39

the path toward the object or the being and without borrowing its phenomenality from them.¹⁰⁴

In order to explain givenness in the fold of given, Marion takes the phenomenon of painting as an example. For now, we shall only explore the phenomenological universality of givenness by taking into account the possibility of irreducible phenomena – such as death and nothingness. In addition, however, through his claim to the primacy of the third reduction over the reductions of Husserl and Heidegger, we shall come to ask, with Marion, how to justify this privilege shown to givenness.

Marion states that “no being, no actuality, no appearance, no concept and no sensation could reach us, or even concern us if it did not give [itself] to us.” In this sense, no thing is, or affects, us except insofar as it is given to us, that is to say nothing arises that is not given.¹⁰⁵ For Marion, even nothing is given. In the case of givenness of nothing, it is givenness by denegation; not negation because, according to Marion, givenness excludes negation and in this case, he describes it as givenness by absence or lack; givenness without any given.¹⁰⁶ Marion takes the Heideggerian anxiety which shows that nothing gives itself with anxiety “where the very absence of beings as a whole affects me and therefore, at the same time, where Being in its difference from being as a whole ensnares me”.¹⁰⁷ In this sense, the nothing

¹⁰⁴ *Being Given*, p. 39

¹⁰⁵ *Being Given*, p. 54

¹⁰⁶ *Being Given*, p. 54, 95ff.

¹⁰⁷ *Being Given*, p. 54

is given positively through anxiety. In addition to this mode of giving of the non-appearing, Marion mentions other kinds of modes by looking at the history of philosophy: as the incomprehensible, where it gives the excess of the infinite (like Dionysius and Descartes); as the deficiency of intuition, where it gives the simple idea of reason (Kant, Husserl); and according to the negative, where it gives dialectic (Hegel).¹⁰⁸ All of these modes of giving are givenness without a given. They are not exceptions to givenness, “but rather marks the extent to which the latter embraces them and makes them possible. We could experience, say, or think nothing of them if we did not first experience them as givennesses possibly without given, therefore as givennesses all the more pure”.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Marion follows Husserl where he describes that non-being, absurdities and contradictions fall within givenness.¹¹⁰ In this sense, givenness is not equivalent to intuition, for it gives even without intuition. This is the point at which Marion disagrees with Derrida by claiming the givenness of non-meaning, for, according to Marion, even deconstruction is a mode of givenness:

If contradictions and absurdities all fall under givenness, it is hard to see how it could be otherwise for non-meaning, which is comprehended as such (as noncomprehensible) only insofar as it is in fact given; but then all meaning that is not validated by presence, or all meaning whose intuition— indeed whose concept— is endlessly deferred (differance), would remain in the field of givenness. Since, according to my fundamental thesis, givenness is

¹⁰⁸ *Being Given*, p. 54-5

¹⁰⁹ *Being Given*, p. 55

¹¹⁰ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 58

not equivalent to intuition and does not necessarily require it, the fact that a phenomenon (or a statement) lacks intuition does not prevent it from still appearing as a given, nor does it limit the scope of intuition. Deconstruction, which only considers sensible intuition (for categorical intuition perhaps still resists it), does not broach givenness, which would secure for it any and all pertinence in phenomenology. Deconstruction therefore remains a mode of givenness— to be quite exact that of givenness deferred.¹¹¹

After claiming that givenness does not presuppose a given, Marion comes to the idea that givenness also does not even necessarily require the givenness of someone (ego, consciousness, subject, Dasein, “life”). That is to say, givenness is not conditioned by the recipient, and it is at work without those whom it affects. In order to clarify this account, Marion deals with death in the phenomenological sense. While he is looking at death, Marion follows the Heideggerian explanation of death which gives and defines Dasein’s possibility. Death is “the possibility of impossibility” and is given to Dasein as a radical possibility because it “accomplishes nothing less than intentional exposure, thereby opening the world and therefore finally givenness itself”.¹¹² Heidegger does not describe death, therefore, but rather its phenomenological essence, being-toward-death, because it is given and gives one to oneself as the possibility par excellence.¹¹³ Since death gives to Dasein its ultimate determination, being-toward-death; death gives impossibility; it gives the experience of finitude as an existential

¹¹¹ *Being Given*, p. 55

¹¹² *Being Given*, p. 57

¹¹³ *Being Given*, p. 57

determination of Dasein. According to Marion, givenness never make itself more visible than in such a possibility.¹¹⁴ Even death and nothingness, for Marion, cannot escape givenness, and so Marion comes to the claim the indubitability of givenness (so that it is universal). However, in order to avoid any metaphysical result in this claim, he clarifies that the indubitability of givenness is not a substantial mode of indubitability, such as is found in the Cartesian ego, because Cartesian ego assures its indubitability in a performance of itself (existing) by itself (thinking); indubitability of Cartesian ego is a kind of self-certainty and this is the possession, and also production of, self by self.¹¹⁵ For Marion, on the other hand, we cannot mention any possession in givenness because it “assures itself of itself by dispossessing itself of itself, by producing another besides itself in whom it disappears, the given”.¹¹⁶ Marion adds that this indubitability of givenness can be understood as a universal act, but also that this universality is not a transcendental principle of possibility; it “can impose itself only prior to experience, while givenness is marked only in the very experience of the given, a posteriori more than a priori”.¹¹⁷ Moreover, this act is not a personal act; rather it is a phenomenological act which is always thought with reduction because it makes the given appear and sets the stage for the phenomenon. “Givenness comes forward and accomplishes, arrives and passes, advances and withdraws, arises and sinks

¹¹⁴ *Being Given*, p. 58

¹¹⁵ *Being Given*, p. 59-60

¹¹⁶ *Being Given*, p. 60

¹¹⁷ *Being Given*, p. 60

away. It is on the make; it makes the event without itself making up an event.”¹¹⁸ In this sense, as Marion states, even “denying givenness suffices to confirm it.”¹¹⁹

In short, we can dare to say that the phenomenon gives itself. Marion puts forth various claims in order to justify this fundamental notion of phenomenology. First of all, according to the definition of phenomenology set by Husserl, “The word *phenomenon* is ambiguous in virtue of the essential correlation between appearing [Erscheinen] and that which appears [Erscheinenden],”¹²⁰ this correlation opens two givennesses, “the givenness of appearing and the givenness of the object,” as we discussed above.

However, in light of this rehabilitated definition of givenness, the fold of givenness encompasses both givenness as given (appearing) and givenness as the arising of what gives itself.¹²¹ Secondly, the phenomenon cannot appear “as the appearance of something else more essential to it than itself” for through givenness, appearing does not need any rule of the *a priori* conditions of knowledge “by requiring that what appears force its entry on the scene of the world, advancing in person without a stuntman, double, or any other representative standing in for it.”¹²² For Marion, this can be named, from the point of view of the one who knows, as intentionality; from the point of view of the thing-itself, as givenness. Nothing appears in person

¹¹⁸ *Being Given*, p. 60-1

¹¹⁹ *Being Given*, p. 61

¹²⁰ *The Idea of Phenomenology*, p. 11

¹²¹ *Being Given*, p. 69

¹²² *Being Given*, p. 69

that does not give itself.¹²³ Lastly, Marion discusses the role and meaning of the “self” of phenomenon in the Heideggerian definition of phenomenon: “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.”¹²⁴ According to Marion, Heidegger uses this “self” of phenomenon in his works, but without thinking that it “is not self-evident that the privileged investigation into the meaning of Being of beings would permit us to the ‘self’ of their appearing. This is because such a self consists in the gap that distinguishes and connects the arising (givenness) to its given.”¹²⁵ Givenness fills this gap, however, because the appearing of phenomenon happens under the authority of givenness, not under the rank of object or being. “To show oneself by oneself demands a ‘self’. It comes only from the givenness that operates the given and that tinges it with a phenomenological mark, the very arising toward visibility. The phenomenon can and must show *itself*, but solely because it gives *itself*.”¹²⁶

The fundamental purpose of re-envisaging the concept of givenness is nothing more than putting away any conditions of possibility for the appearing of phenomenon. Until now, we have closely looked at the Husserlian and Heideggerian reductions which delimit appearing of phenomenon by imposing their horizons. A phenomenology determined by givenness paves the way to overcoming the metaphysics rooted in the phenomenology by following phenomenology’s own capability to do so.

¹²³ *Being Given*, p. 69

¹²⁴ *Being and Time*, p. 58.

¹²⁵ *Being Given*, p. 70

¹²⁶ *Being Given*, p. 70

What Marion attempts to do is to focus on phenomenology's own endeavor, set from the beginning and in the pursuit of its own motives; he tries to unearth the concept of givenness. In the next chapter, we are going to look at the saturated phenomenon which takes its justification by stemming from givenness.

2 Saturated Phenomenon

I am also for the suspension of the horizon, but, for that very reason, by saying so, I am not a phenomenologist anymore. I am very true to phenomenology, but when I agree on the necessity of suspending the horizon, then I am no longer a phenomenologist.

Derrida

Marion's insistence on the primacy of givenness in phenomenality leads to rethinking both the phenomenon itself and the subject to whom it appears. Elucidating phenomenality and to whom phenomenon appears considers the possibility of phenomenon as given. According to Marion, the appearing of phenomena on behalf of givenness allows one to question the condition of possibility imposed on that appearing because it questions the very metaphysics that determines that possibility. Phenomenality, which stems from givenness, gives the possibility of appearing back to the phenomenon. There cannot be any other conditions which determine phenomenality apart from the phenomenon, not even those of the metaphysical enterprise in phenomenology, the transcendental subjectivity and the horizon.

Givenness [*Gegebenheit*] is, without exception, the ultimate determination for every phenomenon.¹²⁷ In this way, attributing primacy to givenness means accepting phenomena as given rather than in any way constituted, and excluding any suggestion of phenomena appearing under conditions imposed on them by a subject; ‘the phenomenon can and must show itself but solely because it gives itself’.¹²⁸ Thus Marion asserts that givenness must free itself from the justification and limit of the horizon of phenomenality and from any appropriation of the I wherein it poses itself as the subject and condition of experience in the constitution of phenomenon. Marion’s work moves not according to reservations of transcendentalism, but according to the pure givenness of phenomenon. Givenness can be considered, unconditionally and irreducibly, only this way.

Marion claims that the principle of the principles declared by Husserl regulates phenomenality. This principle has two gestures; on the one hand, it renders the appearing of phenomena to be subjected to the limits of metaphysics, and, on the other hand, in a way of going far away from metaphysics, it puts forward intuition as an only source of right for cognition. The principle of the principles says that “*every originally giving intuition is a source of right for cognition – that everything that offers itself originally to us in intuition (in its fleshly actuality, so to speak) must be simply received for what it gives itself, but without passing beyond the limits in which it gives itself*’.¹²⁹ Before discussing this principle’s limits upon on

¹²⁷ *Reduction and Givenness*, p. 203.

¹²⁸ *Being Given*, p. 70.

¹²⁹ Husserl, *Ideen I*, § 24, Hus. III, p. 52 quoted in *Being Given*, p. 12.

appearing of phenomena, it will be useful to remind ourselves that Marion doesn't see it as the fundamental principle of phenomenology. According to Marion, the principle states that a phenomenon does not need any other rights or ground except intuition in order to appear. That is to say, rather than givenness, intuition becomes itself "the measure of phenomenality".¹³⁰ Moreover, it is not concerned with reduction as an operative procedure of phenomenology in its account of intuition, while also holding that intuition is not an exception to the reduction. As we saw the last chapter, the phenomenon can give itself even without intuition, such as in the case of nothing. Since it does not consider the reduction, and upholds givenness over intuition, Marion criticizes the principle of the principles through his exploration of intuition's relation with givenness.¹³¹

¹³⁰ *Being Given*, p. 12

¹³¹ *Being Given*, p 17: "Intuition in particular, thus also the transcendence of intentionality that it fulfills, can sometimes intervene, but it does not define the given; for, certain apparitions are given without objective intentionality, therefore without fulfilling intuition. And even those that pass through these intermediaries are not consummated there. In effect, if intuition deserves a privilege, it owes it not to the ecstasy of intentional fulfillment but to its quality as giving intuition. Only holding the place of givenness allows intuition to exercise a regency for the truth. As such, intuition could make nothing visible, perceptible, or even capable of deception, if it did not set itself up by virtue of the givenness it puts into operation. What would an intuition matter to us and what authority would we acknowledge in it, if it gave us nothing— be it only the nothing? The limit of the "principle of principles" shows itself here: Just as one has to recognize that intuition as giving plays the role of "source of right" for phenomenality in all the cases where phenomena are subject to ecstasy and transcendence, so too for phenomena which would not be subject to these (if there are any to be found), intuition as such would contribute nothing and givenness could and even should be carried out without intuition, without intentional fulfillment, and therefore without its transcendent ecstasy. Givenness would then pass outside intuition because in such cases the latter would no longer secure the giving function, which is nonetheless indispensable. Givenness therefore is measured only by its own standard, not by that of intuition. The final restriction of the third formulation — "without passing beyond the limits in which it gives itself — in fact admits an ambiguity and a contradiction. An ambiguity because Husserl invokes not the limits of givenness, but those of intuition: apparition should be admitted within the strict limits of its intuition. Whence a contradiction: if intuition suffers limits (and this, according to all of philosophy, is one of its constitutive characteristics),

On the other hand, in the light of this principle, Marion claims that Husserl moves far away from Kant through stating a pure apparition and the authority of intuition in the appearing. However, at the same time, Husserl limits phenomena by imposing the conditions of the horizon and transcendental I, which must combine the flow of lived experiences and assemble them in order to give them meaning through constitution.¹³² In this sense, according to Marion, apart from the self-showing of phenomena, nothing can condition its appearing. However, the principle of principles also indicates two conditions for phenomenality: a horizon and a constituting “I.” Marion’s understanding of this principle can thus be seen in this way: the phenomenon’s right to appear is constrained by the fact that it has to appear ‘to us’ and by the fact that the intuition that the phenomenon gives admits of ‘boundaries.’ Here, the ‘to us’ indicates the transcendental subject, and the ‘boundaries’ which Husserl mentions indicates that the occurrence of the phenomenon always takes place within a certain horizon. For Marion, the possibility of phenomenality in Husserl depends upon the possibility of experience, as made evident by Husserl’s following of Kantian decisions. For Kant, “Appearances, to the extent that as objects they are thought in accordance with the unity of the categories, are called

givenness knows none. What gives itself, insofar as given in and through reduced givenness, by definition gives itself absolutely. To give itself admits no compromise, even if in this given one distinguishes degrees and modes: every reduced given is given or not. In contrast to intuition, givenness is not reducible except to itself and is therefore carried out absolutely. Reducing givenness means freeing it from the limits of every other authority, including those of intuition. The fourth formulation is finally established as the principle because it states clearly that givenness is accomplished by the reduction. The essential phenomenological operation of the reduction arrives this time— beyond objectness and beingness— at pure givenness”.

¹³² *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 76

phaenomena [italics belong to Kant]”.¹³³ Explicating the role of subjective constitution in the appearing of a phenomenon, Kant continues: “Sensibility and its field, namely that of appearances, are themselves limited by the understanding, in that they do not pertain to things in themselves, but only to the way in which, on account of our subjective constitution, things appear to us”.¹³⁴ As is clear in these passages, Kant describes phenomena according to the relation between sensibility and categories; by this relation the subjective constitution can decide on the possibility of phenomena. For Kant, the faculty of sensation is a receptive faculty, and its only function is to provide intuition with the sense data by bringing it under the formal conditions of intuition, which are time and space. In this way, the faculty of sensation is passive; there is no spontaneity to it. It is merely bound to the limits and conditions of the understanding. Since a phenomenon is given only through intuition, it necessarily has to comply with the demands of the understanding, and no excess is possible on behalf of the intuition. The right to appear is infallibly conditioned by the spontaneous faculty, that is, understanding as the faculty of thinking. As a result of this, we can say that Kant gives a priority to the understanding in the appearing of the phenomenon. The synthesis between categories and intuitions gives no way to any transgression on the part of the intuition. Intuition is always empirical and its conditions of appearing are determined *a priori* without any exception. Moreover, Kant determines that judgments occur in the faculty of

¹³³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 347, A249

¹³⁴ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 348, A251

the understanding, and that the understanding is settled by the acts of judging:

“Among the many concepts, however, that constitute the very mixed fabric of human cognition, there are some that are also destined for pure use a priori (completely independently of all experience), and these always require a deduction of their entitlement, since proofs from experience are not sufficient for the lawfulness of such a use, and yet one must know how these concepts can be related to objects that they do not derive from any experience. I therefore call the explanation of the way in which concepts can relate to objects a priori their transcendental deduction”¹³⁵

It is the transcendental deduction that determines the categories of judgments, and in this way, according to Kant, categories set the ways in which intuitions can give themselves to the understanding.

The function of this synthesis, according to Kant, resides in the category of modality. The possibility and impossibility in the categories of pure synthesis belong to modality. In his “postulate of empirical thinking” from the first Critique, Kant describes the possibility in this way: “Whatever agrees with the formal conditions of experience (in accordance with intuition and concepts) is possible”.¹³⁶ Kant then goes on to explain that the possibility means formal conditions of experience: “The postulate of the possibility of things thus requires that their concept agree with the formal conditions of an experience in general. This, however, namely the objective

¹³⁵ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 85, B 117, p. 220

¹³⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 218, B 265, p. 321

form of experience in general, contains all synthesis that is requisite for the cognition of objects.”¹³⁷

It is precisely Kant’s definition of the ‘formal conditions of experience’ that takes the possibility of the appearing of the phenomenon from the phenomenon itself and makes it dependent on the subject: “Clearly the possibility of the phenomenon results not from its own phenomenality, but from an authority that is marginal, other, if not external: that of the conditions of experience for and by the subject”.¹³⁸ Marion claims that Kant here follows a Leibnizian determination of sufficient reason on the appearing of phenomena. However, while Leibniz assigns the principle of sufficient reason to “the ultimate reason of things.... what we call God,” Kant, in a more radical way, attributes it to transcendental apperception, and therefore to finitude: “The supreme principle of the same possibility [of sensibility], in its relation to understanding, is that all the manifold of intuition should be subject to conditions of the original synthetic unity of apperception”.¹³⁹

In short, on Marion’s account, Kant aligns the phenomenon to the categories of the subject’s understanding and its transcendental makeup: what we can know is what can appear. It is this very metaphysics which Marion aims to

¹³⁷ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A220, B267, p.322-3

¹³⁸ *Being Given*, p. 181

¹³⁹ *Being Given*, p. 183. And see; Leibniz, *Monadology*, §32, Discourse on Metaphysics/Correspondence with Arnould/Monadology; and also see: Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*.

destroy along with the constraints of phenomena that define phenomenality in a metaphysical way.

Marion's endeavor to renovate the unconditioned and irreducible phenomenon leads him to show how Husserl maintained these limits of phenomenality. Marion sees the source of these delimitations where Husserl determinates phenomenality as a duality between appearing and what appears.¹⁴⁰ This correlation was performed with many different pairs by Husserl: intention/intuition, signification/fulfillment, noesis/noema.¹⁴¹ Husserl here takes the Kantian decisions, in which Kant proposes a unity between sensibility and understanding, and in which "the understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything. Only from their unification can cognition arise."¹⁴² Husserl, in paralleling the Kantian conditions of knowledge, introduces the term "adequation" in order to describe two sources of cognition: intuition and intention.¹⁴³

The manifestation of any phenomenon, in Husserl, is therefore achieved through the perfect adequation between these two terms: the subjective appearing is equivalent to what appears objectively.¹⁴⁴ According to Marion,

¹⁴⁰ *Being Given*, p. 190.

¹⁴¹ *Being Given*, p. 190. It is useful to explain what noesis and noema mean for Husserl. Noema is an intentional act of consciousness which is correlated with an object that is noema. This correlation is called noetic-noematic that makes the unity of act and object of consciousness. Here, Marion claims that Husserl follows a metaphysical gesture by the correlation of these pairs.

¹⁴² *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 194, A 51/B 75-76;

¹⁴³ *Being Given*, p. 190.

¹⁴⁴ *The Visible and the Revealed*, p. 32.

this kind of adequation parallels the most metaphysical definition of truth as “*adequatio rei et intellectus*.” In Husserl’s phenomenology, truth is achieved by adequation, and he names this limit of perception, in a Cartesian fashion, as “evidence.”¹⁴⁵ More precisely, objective truth is achieved subjectively through evidence, considered as the experience of adequation made by consciousness.

In phenomenology, this adequation is achieved by intention’s and signification’s surpassing intuition and fulfillment. Here, intuition remains essentially lacking, poor, needy and indigent. Moreover, for Husserl, this poverty exists in the case of formal logical and mathematical intuition. Intention thus has privilege over intuition because of intuition’s shortage and because of the poverty of mathematical and formal logic’s givenness, or even by the unreality of their (mathematics and formal logic) objects.¹⁴⁶

However, intention’s privilege over intuition cannot be conceived of for the whole phenomenology according to Marion. Husserl here suffers from the parallel tendency to define adequation as Kant defines it. This is to say that in Kant, truth relies on the equality of the concept with intuition. As Kant says: “Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is thus just as necessary to make the mind’s concepts sensible (i.e., to add an object to them in intuition) as it is to make its intuitions understandable (i.e., to bring them under

¹⁴⁵ *The Visible and the Revealed*, p.25.

¹⁴⁶ *The Visible and the Revealed*, p.27.

concepts). Further, these two faculties or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding is not capable of intuiting anything, and the senses are not capable of thinking anything.”¹⁴⁷

In the realm of phenomena, not the concept but the intuition is king: before an object is, and in order for it to be seen, its appearance must be given.¹⁴⁸

As Marion claims, however, Kant is also the first to invalidate this parallelism of adequation—if the concept corresponds with intuition, it nevertheless remains radically dependent on it.¹⁴⁹ This is because, as Kant says, intuition still gives, even if it is “blind”: “The object cannot be given to a concept otherwise than in intuition.”¹⁵⁰ The phenomenon is thought through the concept; but in order to be thought it must first be given and it is given only through intuition because “the category is a mere function of thought, through which no object is given to me, and by which I merely think that which may be given in intuition.”¹⁵¹ In this sense, intuition provides the condition of the possibility of the concept. This is because the phenomenon is thought with the concept; but to be thought, it must first be given, and it is only given in and through intuition.¹⁵² Marion thus comes to the point in which the priority of intuition over the concept fixes phenomenal givenness. Here, Marion draws attention to the givenness which is the main determination of the phenomenon, and so, in accordance

¹⁴⁷ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 193-4, A 51/B 75

¹⁴⁸ *The Visible and Revealed*, p.28.

¹⁴⁹ *Being Given*, p. 193

¹⁵⁰ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A239 B298, p. 536

¹⁵¹ *Critique of Pure Reason*, A253 B308, p.349

¹⁵² *Being Given*, p. 193

with his project, he seeks the possibility of intuition over the concept, namely the excess of intuition over the concept.

On the other hand, while Kant shows the privilege of intuition over the concept, he nevertheless characterizes the phenomenon by its lack of intuition, and thus by the shortage of givenness, because intuition is only operative under the rule of limitation. In light of what was said above, the phenomenon is defined according to Husserl as delimited within a horizon, meaning a conditioned and constituting or transcendental 'I,' meaning its reduced – this is the very metaphysics that resides in the heart of the phenomenology asserted by Husserl.

Going even further, Marion's work claims that unconditioned and irreducible phenomena could become possible only if a nonfinite intuition ensured their givenness, because givenness is the ultimate principle of the phenomenology. For Marion, there is the possibility of an excess of intuition over concepts of understanding. This possibility arises from the saturated phenomenon which has neither a delimiting horizon nor a constituting I. The saturated phenomenon emerges in this point; the possibility of a phenomenon which is unconditioned (by its horizon) and irreducible (to an I).¹⁵³ Thus by the saturated phenomenon Marion gives priority to intuition, givenness; a phenomenon appears from itself as itself without relying on any other source – horizon or the subject which constitutes it. It is the givenness of the phenomenon; it gives itself as itself and it alone can secure

¹⁵³ *Being Given*, p. 189.

the justification of the phenomenon. Marion here takes his departure from the Kantian 'aesthetic idea' in order to show *the possibility of the impossible* of excess for the appearing of the phenomenon.¹⁵⁴

For Kant, the aesthetic idea can never become a cognition "because it is an intuition (of the imagination) for which no adequate [adaequat] concept can ever be found."¹⁵⁵ In the case of an aesthetic idea, there is inadequation, but it is not intuition's lacking, in the way in which concepts are lacking for Kant: "representation of the imagination furnishes much to think, but no determinate thought, or concept, can be adequate to it".¹⁵⁶ That is to say, it is the excess of the intuition over the intention, namely, concepts. The aesthetic idea gives so much, or it is so excessive, that concepts cannot bear the intuitive content of the phenomenon's giving. Intuition is no longer exposed within the concept, but saturates it and renders it overexposed; this very excess should prohibit the aesthetic idea from organizing its intuition within the limits of a concept.¹⁵⁷ The excess of intuition, and thus of givenness, over the intention, the concept, can be the main characteristic of such a phenomenon. It is the saturated phenomenon which saturates intention; that is to say, the intended concepts are saturated by intuition; it gives 'much' to intention, so the concept cannot bear this excessing of limits which reduce and condition intuition. Therefore the saturated phenomenon exceeds the categories and the principles of understanding drawn by Kant.

¹⁵⁴ *Being Given*, p. 218

¹⁵⁵ *Critique of Judgment*, p.215

¹⁵⁶ *Critique of Judgment.*, p. 182

¹⁵⁷ *The Visible and Revealed*, p.33.

Here Marion uses the Kantian categories of understanding – quantity, quality, relation and modality – in a reverse way in order to show the excess of intuition over the concept. Through this reversal, it seems clear, Marion removes the *a priori* basis they require in shaping the Kantian subject, as the transcendental sense of the “I” is done away with. Rather, as Kevin Hart claims, we are dealing with a very peculiar version of deconstruction in which a provisional inhabiting of the categories is undertaken only to reverse and displace them.¹⁵⁸

Marion investigates four kinds of the saturated phenomena; the saturated phenomenon will be invisible according to quantity (with regard to event), unbearable according to quality (with regard to the idol), absolute according to relation (with regard to the flesh), and incapable of being looked at according to modality (with regard to icon). Here, we will shortly examine these four kinds of saturated phenomenon drawn according to Kantian categories. While Marion makes a detailed analysis, in separate articles, of each kind of saturated phenomenon in his book *In Excess*, we will refrain from dealing with any in-depth explanation of these phenomena in order to keep our purpose and scope in this study.

Firstly, the saturated phenomenon cannot be foreseen, and it is invisible with regard to its quantity, it cannot be aimed at. According to Kant, quantity (extensive magnitude) is defined by the composition of the whole in terms of its parts, and this ‘successive synthesis’ allows for the

¹⁵⁸ *The Essential Writings*, p. 27

representation of the whole to be reconstituted according to the representation of the sum of its parts.¹⁵⁹ However, in the case of the saturated phenomenon, intuition is not limited by its possible concepts and its excess cannot be divided. This is to say, it could not be measured in terms of its parts. There can be no ‘successive synthesis’ because it is only possible when it permits an aggregate to be foreseen on the basis of the finite sum of its finite parts.¹⁶⁰ As Marion claims, the saturated phenomenon according to quantity is more than any measure in quantity, as it is incommensurable.¹⁶¹ This kind of saturated phenomenon cannot be predicted because of its suddenness and unforeseeability. Marion defines this kind of saturated phenomenon in respect to quantity as the historical event. For him, events are not produced; “in happening, it attests to an unforeseeable origin, rising up from causes often unknown, even absent, at least not assignable, that one would not therefore any longer reproduce, because its constitution would not have any meaning”.¹⁶² In the sense of any occurred event, it comes from its uncontrollable past because it is always already there even before we describe it. The occurrence of an event in the present is always unplanned; what appears cannot be constituted. Marion says that the hermeneutics of the event remains without an end.¹⁶³ We thus have only indirect access to the event as self-given. Instead of us awaiting,

¹⁵⁹ *Being Given*, p. 200

¹⁶⁰ *Being Given*, p. 200

¹⁶¹ *Being Given*, p. 201

¹⁶² *In Excess*, p. 31

¹⁶³ *In Excess*, p. 33

reproducing, or describing the event, it affects us, modifies us, and maybe even constitutes us.¹⁶⁴

The other saturated phenomenon, idol, is according to quality. An idol is unbearable, it dazzles us and it leads us to look away. The idol as a saturated phenomenon invalidates the Kantian category quality by its intensity. While looking at the idol, perception cannot anticipate the intensity of the saturated phenomena so it cannot be borne: “For the intuition saturating a phenomenon attains an intensive magnitude without measure, or common measure, such that starting with a certain degree, the intensity of the real intuition passes beyond all the conceptual anticipations of perception. Before this excess, not only can perception no longer anticipate what it will receive from intuition; it also no longer bears its most elevated degrees”.¹⁶⁵ Marion examines Kantian categories of quality according to “anticipations of perception,” which entails that every appearance has an “intensive magnitude; that is a degree” and every sensation must itself have a magnitude that determines its “degree of influence on sense.”¹⁶⁶ According to Kant, intensive magnitude cannot be measured by counting, so it is not like extensive magnitude (quantity); rather, we can realize it by comparing it to an absence of sensation where the intensive magnitude is zero. In this sense, for Kant, this comparison gives a kind of multiplicity and thus a

¹⁶⁴ *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 79

¹⁶⁵ *The Visible and the Revealed*, p. 36

¹⁶⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 209, A 166 B 208

degree of intensity in terms of multiplicity that can be seen in terms of the zero degree and its degree which it has.

Marion criticizes Kant by way of taking into account the privileging of phenomena of the weakest in intensity because of the lack in intuition.

Saturated phenomenon, in contrast, has the excess of intuition; so our senses can no longer bear the intensity of intuition as it is experienced in the case of bedazzlement.¹⁶⁷ This kind of saturated phenomenon is blinding because the gaze cannot bear what it sees; it comes to perception but is blinding; so it is still visible and our look cannot sustain its visibility.¹⁶⁸ A painting that has an excess of visibility can be an example for this kind of saturated phenomenon because intuition gives excessively intensely for the gaze to have enough heart to truly see what it cannot conceive and only barely receive; and this kind of blindness stems from the intensity of intuition.¹⁶⁹

Third, the saturated phenomenon according to relation is flesh. Marion's claim considers the appearing of this kind of phenomenon without having any relation to other phenomena. It appears absolute and this means it evades any analogy of experience.¹⁷⁰ It is far from all types of analogy because it cannot resemble all other *a priori* determinations of experience that might claim to impose themselves on the phenomenon.¹⁷¹ Marion regards the flesh as absolute according to the Kantian category, the relation.

¹⁶⁷ *Being Given*, p. 203

¹⁶⁸ *Being Given*, p. 203

¹⁶⁹ *Being Given*, p.203

¹⁷⁰ *Being Given*, p. 205

¹⁷¹ *Being Given*, p. 209

For Kant, this concept operates the regulation of the relations between the phenomena by considering time. So the phenomena are synthesized into a unity in terms of their relations to one another in time. This process is operated by three *a priori* synthetic principles of the analogies of experience; substance, causality and community.¹⁷² These principles are *a priori* conditions of experience, and so they are not themselves given in perception; rather they are imposed a priori and necessarily by the understanding in order to render our perception intelligible. By doing so, the relations of the perceptions to each other in time is determined, and so this possibility allows the subject to synthesize the manifold of phenomena into an intelligible unity of experience.¹⁷³

Marion explicates that these principles have three presuppositions which foreclose any possibility of the saturated phenomenon in regard to relation. According to first of these presuppositions, a phenomenon can manifest itself only by the unity of experience; that is to say, “a phenomenon would appear only in a site predetermined by a system of coordinates, itself governed by the principle of the unity of experience.”¹⁷⁴ However, according to Marion, there must be no reason to exclude the possibility of phenomena that “happen without being inscribed, at least at first, in a relational framework that gives experience its unity, and that they matter precisely because one could not assign them any substratum, any cause or

¹⁷² *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 182/ B 224

¹⁷³ *Interpreting Excess*, p. 132.

¹⁷⁴ *Being Given*, p. 207.

any commerce.”¹⁷⁵ The other presupposition of Kant’s posits a regulation on experience by necessity, and therefore assures its unity. However, as Kant says, this analogy does not have a constitutive role but regulatory one—this is thus the case of poor phenomena, such as mathematics.¹⁷⁶ Since the saturated phenomenon by definition is out of proportion with the ordinary phenomena of Kant’s analogies, “it would set itself free of them as from every other a priori determination of experience that might claim to impose itself on it.”¹⁷⁷ The last presupposition asserts that “all appearances are in time” for Kant.¹⁷⁸ According to it, all phenomena must appear in the horizon of time, which Marion overcomes by the saturation of the phenomena over concepts. For Marion, bedazzlement surmounts this horizon: “intuition ... does not cross them, however, running up against them, it reverberates, returns toward the finite field, blurs it, and renders in the end invisible by excess – bedazzlement”.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, Marion adds two other ways in which phenomena can fill up and spill over a horizon: a phenomenon can overflow its horizon, requiring additional horizons for its appearance after adequately filling its concepts; and also by way of a combination of both these two.¹⁸⁰

Flesh’s two features pave the way to its acceptance as the saturated phenomenon: the immediacy in which it affects me and flesh’s mineness. The immediacy in the self-affection of the flesh gives the featured character

¹⁷⁵ *Being Given*, p. 207.

¹⁷⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 297, A179 B222

¹⁷⁷ *Being Given*, p. 209.

¹⁷⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 299 A182/ B224.

¹⁷⁹ *Being Given*, p. 209-10.

¹⁸⁰ *Being Given*, p. 210.

of the flesh because being affected by my flesh is not affection by some other, it is an auto-affection. Its immanency to me, the being affected without any transcendental element gives this privilege to the flesh's self-affection. "Therefore, I do not give myself flesh; it gives me to myself in giving itself to me – I am given over [adonné] to it."¹⁸¹ As it said above, the saturated phenomenon does not have the common definition of phenomena – adequation between appearing/appearance and what appears, intuition and signification, noesis and noema. In the case of flesh, we cannot mention this distinction because in this sole case the perceived is one with the perceiver, the intentional aim is accomplished necessarily in an essential immanence, where what I could intend is blended with one possible fulfillment.¹⁸² That is to say, the flesh invalidates the distinction between appearance and appearing, noesis and noema, intuition and signification. In the case of flesh, signification is not able to consist of intuition since it precedes and makes possible all intentionality and thus also signification. The flesh is the very place where the fold of givenness unfolds most directly.¹⁸³

As discussed above, flesh as a saturated phenomenon excepts itself from the Kantian categories, from the relation. According to the Kantian principles, wherein all common phenomena must be fitted to the rules of experience, namely time, in admitting in advance a relation with precedents (whether of substantial inheritance, causality, or community between substances), "flesh only ever refers back to itself, in the indissoluble unity of the felt and of the

¹⁸¹ *In Excess*, p. 99.

¹⁸² *In Excess*, p. 99.

¹⁸³ *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 81

feeling.”¹⁸⁴ Flesh does not have any reference apart from itself, it affects itself. Thus it gets out of all relation in an absoluteness without compromise, without anything like it or equal to it – my pain, my pleasure, remain unique, incommunicable, unable to be substituted.¹⁸⁵ Here we can see how Marion’s understanding of flesh differs from Descartes who conceptualizes *cogitation* as the indubitable evidence for existence of the ego. According to Marion, Descartes fails to recognize the crucial distinction between extended, sensible bodies in the world and my sentient body.¹⁸⁶ Marion, in this way, claims that the ego’s thinking is possible in so far as it senses itself; in short “before cogito exists, the ego would be well and truly already established in its unconditioned existence as *corpus et sensus*. The feeling body would be anterior and not posterior to the *cogitatio*.”¹⁸⁷

The auto-affection of the flesh or the flesh’s auto-affection of itself is in suffering, pain, grief, pleasure orgasm. “Therefore, joy, pain, the evidence of love, or the living remembrance (Proust), but also the call of consciousness as anxiety in the face of nothing (Heidegger), fear and trembling (Kierkegaard), in short, the *numen* in general (provided that one assigns it no transcendence), all arise from the flesh and its own immanence.”¹⁸⁸ Flesh is by definition mine; my pain, my pleasure; all is mine and so is not substitutable. Nobody can enjoy pleasure or feel pain for me. In my giving me to myself, in my auto-affections, my flesh concerns

¹⁸⁴ *In Excess*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁵ *In Excess*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁶ *Interpreting Excess*, p. 138.

¹⁸⁷ *In Excess*, p. 86.

¹⁸⁸ *Being Given*, p. 231.

only me. My possibility “belongs only to my flesh to individualize me by letting the immanent succession of my affections, or rather of the affections that make me irreducibly identical to myself alone, be inscribed in it.”¹⁸⁹

This is what Marion calls the “mineness [Jemeinigkeit] of flesh”. In this way, Marion comes to rethink Husserl’s conceptualization of difference of flesh [Leib] and body [Körper]. For Husserl, “flesh is, in the first place, the medium [mittel] of all perception; it is the organ of perception and is necessarily involved in all perception... it is in this way that everything that appears has *eo ipso* [by itself] a relationship of orientation of flesh.”¹⁹⁰

Flesh’s role in the perception, as articulated by Husserl, does not give flesh in its immediacy as a phenomenon, but rather it is a “mittel” for the perception of phenomena. However, for Marion, flesh has a different role than being a means for the perception: “There is nothing optional about flesh – it alone converts the world into an appearance, in other words, the given into a phenomenon. Outside my flesh, there is no phenomenon for me.”¹⁹¹ Moreover, within Husserl’s very articulation of flesh as “mittel,” my flesh is so close to me that the ego can never distance itself from its flesh, and so no subject can be conceived of without flesh of some kind. Marion can therefore conclude that my flesh is itself that thing which is originally given to me and has for me the character of a self-givenness, and more.¹⁹²

To the extent that Marion follows Husserl’s articulation of flesh in the sense

¹⁸⁹ *Being Given*, p. 232.

¹⁹⁰ Husserl, *Ideas II*, Trans. Richard Rojcewiz and André Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 61” quoted in *In Excess*, p. 89.

¹⁹¹ *In Excess*, p. 89.

¹⁹² *In Excess*, p. 90.

of givenness, Marion asserts that what individualizes me is neither my physical body nor my thoughts, but my flesh. Thus my flesh gives my mineness which happens to me in my being taken in flesh: “there is admittedly a mineness [Jemeinigkeit], nevertheless not because I would have decided it, but because it happens to me, affects me and determines me, in short, because flesh, of itself and always already, takes me. I do not give myself my flesh, it is it that gives me to myself. In receiving my flesh, I receive me myself – I am in this way gifted [*adonné, given over*] to it.”¹⁹³ To sum up, flesh as a saturated phenomenon is an absolute given according to the Kantian category of relation because it only refers to itself in its auto-affection. As Marion elaborates, it is first given, and by its givenness it gives me to myself so the rest of the world is in turn rendered phenomenal for me by its givenness.

These three kinds of saturated phenomena in respect to quantity, quality and relation overcome the idea of the horizon drawn upon phenomenon.¹⁹⁴ In this sense, these kinds of saturated phenomena are not dependent on the conditions of possibility and so therefore are unconditioned phenomena.

Neither visible according to quantity nor bearable according to quality, but absolute according to relation, that is to say, unconditioned by the horizon, the fourth kind of the saturated phenomenon as icon is mentioned irregardable or ungazeble according to modality. As we discussed above, the Kantian category of modality decides on the possibility of phenomenon

¹⁹³ *In Excess*, p. 98.

¹⁹⁴ *Being Given*, p. 199

and also has priority over the other categories in the sense of how the determined object (by other categories) is related to the understanding. According to modality; an object is possible if it agrees with formal conditions of experience, actual if it is connected with material conditions of experience, necessary if its connection with the actual is determined by the general conditions of experience.¹⁹⁵ The aim of Marion is defying the Kantian limitation of phenomenon that takes its phenomenality from the phenomenon by assigning it to the experience of a subject. In light of modality, it alienates phenomenon from itself because phenomenon is shown by and for another; not showing and giving itself: “Far from showing itself it is staged only in a scene set by and for an other besides it, actor without action, submitted to a spectator and transcendental director. The Kantian sense of the categories of modality in the end produces the phenomenon’s alienation from itself; far from giving itself, it lets itself be shown, made visible and staged. In short, it becomes constituted as an object, one that gets its status from a previously objectifying intentionality, like a still and always “well-grounded” phenomenon— therefore, on condition.”¹⁹⁶ For Marion, this alienation of phenomenon from itself is the way of a subject’s looking at an object, but the saturated phenomenon is not this way; it is more. The saturated phenomenon appears with excess and it “refuses to let itself be regarded as an object precisely because it appears with a multiple and indescribable excess that annuls all effort at

¹⁹⁵ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 321, A 218 B 265

¹⁹⁶ *Being Given*, p. 212-3

constitution” – thus, it escapes from an imposed objectness of the subject.¹⁹⁷ It cannot be constituted as an object because it gives itself to be seen; not to be looked at. The gaze cannot control it and reproduce it. In this way, the saturated phenomenon gets rid of the boundaries of the transcendental “I” and its conditions of experience. While it appears, it cannot be looked at because “the excess of intuition over the foresight of the concept and the conditions of the I contravenes objectness, the phenomenon saturated with an excess of intuition can only be withdrawn from the gaze,”¹⁹⁸ so that it can therefore no longer be reduced to the conditions of experience that the “I” sets for them. By its autonomy, it does not appear under the conditions of the transcendental I but by itself and from itself. The saturated phenomenon thus appears as a “counter experience”. In this sense, “I” is no longer an active constituter; rather it is constituted by the phenomenon and it follows the phenomenon as its witness. So “I” does not give meaning to the lived experience and intuition; they give their meaning to “me.” Marion determines this kind of saturation as the face of the other. For Marion, in the phenomenon of the face of the other, if intentionality can be mentioned (even if there is no constitution), it is the other’s one on me; if intuition is, “it will fill no aim arising from me but will contradict instead all the object aims that I could foster.”¹⁹⁹ In this way, noesis does not prepare any noema but rather releases an uncontrollable and unexpected noematic superabundance and the noema appears as infinite and overflows all

¹⁹⁷ *Being Given*, p. 213

¹⁹⁸ *Being Given*, p. 215

¹⁹⁹ *In Excess*, p. 116

noesis.²⁰⁰ The saturated phenomenon in this case does not appear as visible but as excess. Marion says that the expression of the face expresses infinity of meanings so that what the face says is nothing more than a prediction of what it really meant to express. For Marion, therefore, the face opens the phenomenon of the other. This kind of experience, namely counter-experience, cannot be reduced to an object, for as Marion claims that the other cannot be constituted in my experience and in its infinity of meanings; no certain knowledge, no objectification can be maintained. Therefore, we come to see that this kind of saturation in the case of icon, namely the face of the other, converts the transcendental constitution of objects and so leaves it. We cannot mention any reference to the “I” while considering the appearing of any phenomenon in the sense of icon.

Here, Marion replaces the sovereign ego or the constituting “I” with a much more passive recipient. Rather than phenomena being produced or grasped by a subject, Marion accords the givenness of phenomenality, whose givenness is self-giving. This counter experience also overcomes the Cartesian residue in Husserl’s phenomenology. The ego no longer ensures any foundation by representing (itself); it finds itself always already preceded by the being-given.²⁰¹ As explained above, for Husserl intuition gives what appears only “to us,” and the constituting “I” fulfills the poor intuition.

²⁰⁰ *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 82

²⁰¹ *The Visible and the Revealed*, p. 61

In this manner, the saturated phenomenon will be invisible according to quantity (with regard to event), unbearable according to quality (with regard to the idol), absolute according to relation (with regard to the flesh) and incapable of being looked at according to modality (with regard to icon). There is a fifth kind of saturated phenomena that combines the features of event, idol, flesh and icon. This fourfold saturation is revelation. For Marion, the phenomenon of revelation is only described in its pure possibility and in the reduced immanence of givenness.²⁰² He does not speak on its actual manifestation or ontic status which is the topic of theology. Here Marion is still in the field of phenomenology, not of theology. He intends a strictly phenomenological concept: an appearance that is purely of itself and starting from itself and that does not subject its possibility to any preliminary determination. I would, however, like to mention the two kinds of problems originating from the phenomenological possibility of revelation, even if I will not discuss it in detail. Marion's gesture to think the phenomenological possibility of revelation in the field of phenomenology as saturated phenomenon *par excellence* is not only exemplifying a kind of phenomenological experience, but is in fact putting revelation into the heart of phenomenology as a new genus for phenomenological experience. Thus we come to see that the concept of saturated phenomenon is not a way to think revelation as a phenomenological possibility, but that the saturated phenomenon – not to say that it is the paradox of paradoxes, *par excellence* – is revelation as

²⁰² *Being Given*, p. 236

such. Moreover, in terms of Marion's own conceptual system, his equating of saturated phenomenon *par excellence* with the very Catholic understanding of revelation is not a fair thinking when we consider the universality of givenness as explained above. He does not even need to mention any possibility of understanding revelation other rather than the Catholic one. My aim to articulate these problems about the revelation as the saturated phenomenon *par excellence* is not a dismissal of his phenomenological project with the impetus of overcoming metaphysics.

It is the saturated phenomenon by which Marion paves the way to a new "possibility" of phenomena; it is this "possibility" that Husserlian orthodoxy, which is the residue remaining from Kant, declared impossible. The saturated phenomenon defies the conditions of possibility traditionally imposed upon phenomena by both Kant and Husserl. It contests both the idea that, for a phenomenon to appear, it is restricted to and limited by a horizon, and the idea that its appearance depends upon the anteriority of the transcendental subject. Phenomenology is that enterprise that investigates that which appears as 'that which shows itself in itself.' Perhaps, indeed, Marion's most important proposal is to extend Heidegger's definition of the phenomenon as follows: the phenomenon shows itself not only of itself but also as its self.²⁰³ When it gives itself of itself, it gives its self to consciousness (as the other of consciousness). The saturated phenomenon shows itself from itself and as its self, that is, the phenomenon appears in phenomenality and visibility (shows itself), autonomously (of itself) and

²⁰³ *Being Given*, p. 12

individually (as its self).²⁰⁴ Marion's attempt to re-orientate the phenomenology according to givenness, namely what gives itself and what is received, changes the situation of the self to whom the phenomenon gives. The orientation of phenomenology is no more than the constitutive powers of transcendental consciousness. In the new conceptualization of the self, for Marion, it is not the subject who decides on phenomenality and is determined on the *a priori* ground of consciousness; but it is rather *the gifted, l'adonné* who receives phenomenon and makes selfhood from it and who has no a priori horizon but one that is saturated by givenness.²⁰⁵

In a nutshell, Marionian phenomenology establishes the possibility of that which was rendered impossible by Husserl's dependence on the Kantian conceptualization of phenomenon. At the same time, however, Husserl's breakthrough in the phenomenology that highlights the givenness of the phenomenon in the appearing of it, paves the way to give the phenomenon's right to appear only to the phenomenon. Marion sees this potential in Husserl's phenomenology and tries to go beyond Husserl by re-evoking phenomenology's independence of any metaphysical assumption. Namely, he gives back the phenomenality to the phenomenon by removing the subject's sovereignty on the appearing of the phenomenon. This new conceptualized subject, which is a more decentered subject, namely, not a subject anymore, is called the gifted [*l'adonné*] by Marion.

²⁰⁴ *Being Given*, p. 12

²⁰⁵ *Being Given*, p. 12

Conclusion

We are not interested in phenomenology
but in the things phenomenology is interested in.

Heidegger

To conclude, or to come to a last point, according to what Marion has done in phenomenology, appears to be impossible, for a conclusion is usually the place where the author ties up loose ends. The aim of this thesis has been only to ask how Marion's phenomenological project tries to overcome metaphysics by taking into account former phenomenological approaches. In this respect, it is not easy to get a clear ground in order to reach some certain conclusions by considering the aspects stemming from his renewal of phenomenology. Since his project is "overcoming metaphysics," and since this notion has not been only a textual fact, the goal of Marion cannot be to prohibit us from questioning where philosophy, in particular phenomenology, will arrive by this endeavor.

Moreover, this new phenomenology, the phenomenology of givenness, is chided from various perspectives. At the very least, however, the range of

these critiques show that Marion's attempt at a renovation of Husserl and Heidegger in phenomenology makes him an important and inspirational figure in contemporary phenomenology and the discussions surrounding it. There has been a huge amount of literature both in France and in the English speaking world after Marion's phenomenological trilogy. One can even dare to claim that the contemporary phenomenological issues must pass – positively or negatively – via this new thought.

On the basis of overcoming metaphysics, his emphasis on givenness and showing the limited approaches of Husserl and Heidegger brings forth a possibility for the non-metaphysical philosophy which, according to Marion, can only be phenomenology. Additionally, his new conception of the self makes a significant contribution to contemporary deliberations on the subject, especially on the issue of “who comes after the subject.”

On the other hand, it is useful to keep in mind that the problem of metaphysics is not only a textual fact, and that what it means is not an easily definable point. With the help of the work done by Marion, we can reach some suppositions about the overcoming of metaphysics, but Marion's approach, or any other philosopher's approaches, cannot consist of the full multiplicity of aspects of this somehow undefinable idea and discourse. Although the path beaten by Marion in the direction of the overcoming of metaphysics helps us get beyond many restrictions made by metaphysics, such a claim of the end of metaphysics can mislead us in further thought about the issue.

The terrain we set out to explore has been mapped, and there is no need to make judgments concerning issues such as the end of metaphysics, or if we've finally come to think a non-metaphysical selfness after the subjectivity. However, we face a new kind of thought; one which still has an inclination to grow with the new works: *Certitudes Négatives*, *Figures de Phénoménologie* and *Courbet ou la peinture à l'œil*. I would like to end this work with the words of Kevin Hart about the thought of Jean-Luc Marion:

Marion is still a bird in flight and while we may think that we can tell where he is headed – deeper reflections on divine, perhaps with a more intimate rapport with Scripture, further work on Descartes and on the visual arts – we can have at best only anticipations that may be disappointed. Marion's writing is itself a phenomenon, an *event*, in all senses of the word: what is to come cannot be anticipated by anyone, yet we may well be assured that we shall be discussing what he has already given us for many years to come.²⁰⁶

As Kevin Hart explained, in a rather poetical way, Marion's thought is still developing, keeping its contact with theology, philosophy, art and the history of philosophy. Throughout these various strands, however, Marion's phenomenology, as well as, and perhaps especially, his understanding of the self—which this work sought to explore—form a significant step that he has taken in the development of his studies.

²⁰⁶ Hart, Kevin; Marion, Jean-Luc, Introduction, in *The Essential Writings*, p.38

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