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LA JEAN-LUC MARION

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Nicolae Turcan

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M E T A F I Z I C I I

*Teologie și fenomenologie
la Jean-Luc Marion*

E I K O N

BUCUREŞTI, 2016

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INTRODUCERE

Jean-Luc Marion este un filosof contemporan francez, specialist în Descartes¹ și gânditor original, care îmbină reflecția teologică și rigoarea fenomenologică într-o operă relevantă deopotrivă pentru filosofi și teologi. Reprezentant de marcă al direcției numită, inițial peiorativ, „turnanta teologică a fenomenologiei franceze”² – de fapt „cea mai impor-

¹ A scris mai multe cărți despre părintele filosofiei moderne: JEAN-LUC MARION, *Sur l'ontologie grise de Descartes. Science cartésien et savoir aristotélicien dans les Regulæ*, seconde édition, revue et augmentée, Vrin, Paris, 1993 (1975); JEAN-LUC MARION, *Sur la théologie blanche de Descartes. Analogie, création des vérités éternelles, fondement*, PUF, Paris, 1981; JEAN-LUC MARION, *Sur le prisme métaphysique de Descartes. Constitution et limites de l'onto-théo-logie dans la pensée cartésienne*, PUF, Paris, 1986; JEAN-LUC MARION, *Questions cartésiennes*, PUF, Paris, 1991; JEAN-LUC MARION, *Questions cartésiennes II*, PUF, Paris, 1996; JEAN-LUC MARION, *Sur la pensée passive de Descartes*, PUF, Paris, 2013.

² DOMINIQUE JANICAUD, *Le Tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française*, Éditions de l’Éclat, Combas, 1991. Această denumire a fost considerată greșită de către unii comentatori tocmai pe baza faptului că „turnanta teologică” avansează pe calea deschisă de Husserl, în a cărui fenomenologie se pot citi dezvoltările ulterioare ale lui Lévinas și Marion (vezi THOMAS FINEGAN, „Is the Compatibility of Jean-Luc Marion’s Philosophy with Husserlian Phenomenology a Matter of Faith?”, *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society* (2009), pp. 134-138). Anul de apariție al „turnantei” este considerat 1961, anul morții lui Merleau-Ponty și, mai ales, al apariției cărții lui Lévinas, *Totalitate și infinit*, după cum este argumentat în BERNARD MARIE, „Le «tournant théologique» de la phénoménologie française?”, *Recherches Philosophiques* 2 (2006), p. 49. Marion nu e de acord cu această critică și argumentează

tantă gândire filosofică contemporană privitoare la creștinism și religie”³ – Jean-Luc Marion reduce în discuție Revelația creștină, unicitatea ei teologică și relevanța ei fenomenologică, alăturându-se altor reprezentanți de excepție ai gândirii creștine franceze de astăzi: Michel Henry, Jean-Yves Lacoste, Jean-Louis Chrétien, Rémi Brague și alții.⁴

Cu toate că oferă deschideri pentru ambele domenii, filosofie și teologie, cărțile lui Jean-Luc Marion sunt contrariante pentru teologi și filosofi deopotrivă.⁵ Pe de o parte, teologii l-au considerat fie prea „conservator”⁶, fie prea critic față de nume ce constituie pentru Biserica Romano-Catolică repere îndepăsabile (precum Toma d’Aquino și Karl Rahner, de pildă), au fost nevoiți să accepte că Marion se inspiră cu aceeași dezinvoltură din teologia apofatică răsăriteană (Sf. Dionisie Pseudo-Areopagitul, Sf. Grigore de Nyssa) și din gânditori protestanți

că este vorba despre o dezvoltare firească a fenomenologiei care și-a pus întotdeauna problema lui Dumnezeu (Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler). De asemenea, îi răspunde lui Janicaud mai întâi prin monumentalul volum *Fiind dat*, iar apoi prin critica pe care i-o aduce, arătând că Janicaud nu este un bun cunoscător al lui Husserl, ci doar un heideggerian. A se erija în păstrător al ortodoxiei husserliene este astfel o atitudine problematică. JEAN-LUC MARION, *La rigueur des choses. Entretiens avec Dan Arbib*, Flammarion, Paris, 2012, pp. 204-206.

³ IOAN I. ICĂ JR, *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1, Deisis, Sibiu, 2008, p. 40.

⁴ Cf. MIHAIL NEAMȚU, „Jean-Luc Marion – arhitectonica unei gândiri”, în JEAN-LUC MARION, *Crucea vizibilului. Tablou, televiziune, icoană – o privire fenomenologică*, trad. Mihail Neamțu, cuvânt înainte de Ioan I. Ică jr., Deisis, Sibiu, 2000, p. 138.

⁵ Semnificativă este neînțelegerea lui Marion de către reprezentanți ai filosofiei analitice. Vezi CHRISTINA M. GSCHWANDTNER, „Being and God: a systematic approach in confrontation with Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jean-Luc Marion”, *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 4 (2012).

⁶ Cf. RUPERT SHORTT (ed.), *God’s Advocates: Christian Thinkers in Conversation*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2005, p. 16.

(Luther, Kiekegaard, Barth)⁷; de asemenea, cu toate că vorbește teologic și profund despre Biserică și euharistie, ei au avut de luptat cu un limbaj filosofic dificil⁸, care angrenează „sfârșitul metafizicii” și conversația cu Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Lévinas și alții.⁹ Pe de altă parte, Marion nu este mai puțin contrariant pentru filosofi, datorită originalității sale și angajamentului teologic: în timp ce exercează depășirea gândirii heideggeriene¹⁰, comentează pe larg textele biblice¹¹, propune lărgirea fenomenologiei prin descrierea unor fenomene noi, adesea provenite din teologie, și reconsideră reducția transcendental-fenomenologică pentru a o înțelege, în mod radical, ca reducție la donație, avansând fenomenologic dincolo de Husserl și Heidegger.

Întâlnirea dintre filosofie și teologie la Marion face parte, de altfel, din formarea sa. Elev al lui Jean Beaufret (în liceu) și Ferdinand Alquié (la L'École Normale Supérieure), Marion a fost îndrumat de Louis Althusser și Jacques Derrida, i-a avut printre conferențieri pe Michel Serres, Gilles Deleuze și Jacques Lacan¹², fiind de asemenea influențat și datorându-le enorm lui Emmanuel Lévinas și Michel Henry.¹³ Recunoaște

⁷ Vezi REINHARD HÜTTER, „God Without Being: Hors-texte, by J.L. Marion, 1991; review essay”, *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994), p. 239.

⁸ NICHOLAS COFFMAN, „Jean-Luc Marion's Theology of Eucharistic Presence”, Seminary of Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, 2008, p. 25.

⁹ REINHARD HÜTTER, „God Without Being...”, p. 243.

¹⁰ Această depășire a fost criticată că ar porni de la o interpretare infidelă a lui Heidegger, vezi BOGDAN MINCĂ, „Jean-Luc Marion, lecteur de Heidegger”, în CRISTIAN CIOCAN, ANCA VASILIU (ed.), *Lectures de Jean-Luc Marion*, Cerf, Paris, 2016, pp. 255-272.

¹¹ REINHARD HÜTTER, „God Without Being...”, p. 243.

¹² JEAN-LUC MARION, *La rigueur des choses*, p. 37.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 39. Între Marion și M. Henry este o relație de elev-profesor, nu de discipol-maestru, vezi OVIDIU SORIN PODAR, „Jean-Luc Marion, lecteur de Michel Henry”, în CRISTIAN CIOCAN, ANCA VASILIU (ed.), *Lectures de Jean-Luc Marion*, p. 338.

într-o discuție că n-a fost discipolul niciunui dintre ei.¹⁴ Fără a avea studii de specialitate, a învățat teologie sub îndrumarea unor nume importante ale noii teologii franceze (*la nouvelle théologie*), orientate spre critica neo-scolasticismului catolic și spre reîntoarcerea la sursele patristice¹⁵: Louis Bouyer, Jean Daniélou, Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar.¹⁶ A condus revista *Résurrection* (1968-1973), unde și-a publicat primele articole cu teme teologice și unde și-a dublat formația filosofică primită la L'École Normale Supérieure, cu o formăție teologică „de asemenea intensă”.¹⁷ A studiat astfel istoria spiritualității și patristică, citind Dionisie, Augustin, Maxim Mărturisitorul, Grigore de Nyssa, Irineu. Din 1974 a condus ediția franceză a revistei *Communio*, inspirată și inițiată de Hans Urs von Balthasar¹⁸, și recunoaște că în această perioadă a existat o „turnură spirituală”, concretizată prin practica rugăciunii adorării euharistice.¹⁹

Opera lui Marion a trezit interesul încă de la apariția cărții *Dieu sans l'être* [Dumnezeu fără ființă], 1982, cercetările avansând pe măsură ce au apărut și celealte titluri ale sale. Astăzi Marion este cunoscut și cercetat – în calitate de gânditor, iar nu doar ca specialist în Descartes – în SUA, unde filosofia continentală are un spațiu privilegiat la câteva universități

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 164.

¹⁵ RUPERT SHORTT (ed.), *God's Advocates*, p. 16.

¹⁶ JEAN-LUC MARION, *La rigueur des choses*, p. 37; unii comentatori îl consideră pe Marion adevăratul moștenitor al ideilor lui Balthasar. Vezi TAMIN JONES, „Dionysius in Hans Urs von Balthasar and Jean-Luc Marion”, *Modern Theology* 24 (2008). Vezi de asemenea o discuție despre Marion și Balthasar în TINCA PRUNEA-BRETONNET, „L'univocité de l'amour en question: Jean-Luc Marion, lecteur de Hans Urs von Balthasar”, în CRISTIAN CIOCAN, ANCA VASILIU (ed.), *Lectures de Jean-Luc Marion*, pp. 287-303.

¹⁷ JEAN-LUC MARION, *La rigueur des choses*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

(Villanova, Fordham etc.), precum și în Europa și la noi.²⁰ Specialiștii, fenomenologi și filosofi ai religiei în special, unii dintre ei având și cunoștințe de patristică și teologie, au scos în evidență câteva teme importante. Prima dintre ele se referă la raportul gândirii lui Marion cu *postmodernismul*. Cu toate că Marion însuși nu se consideră postmodern, el a fost considerat astfel datorită intenției declarate de a depăși metafizica, atât de prezentă în postmodernismul filosofic.²¹ Alți cercetători au accentuat tocmai *situarea postmetafizică* a lui Marion, arătând că aceasta se realizează atât prin fenomenologia lui, cât și prin teologie.²² S-a semnalat că Marion a dus reducția fenomenologică până la ultimele sale consecințe, contribuind

²⁰ În România, Jean-Luc Marion a fost studiat și discutat de teologi: Pr. Ioan I. Ică jr., Pr. George Remete, Mihail Neamțu etc. (De altfel, Părintele Ioan I. Ică jr și Maria-Cornelia Ică jr au tradus în română și publicat la Editura Deisis din Sibiu majoritatea cărților lui Marion). Cu timpul, a crescut numărul de cercetări, conferințe, studii ocazionale și teze de doctorat care vin din zona filosofiei, semnate de Virgil Ciomoș, Cristian Ciocan, Anca Vasiliu, Livia Georgeta Suciu, Ștefan Afloroaei, George Vameșul, Alexander Baumgarten, Bogdan Mincă și alții. În 2013 Marion a fost invitat în România unde a conferențiat și a primit titlul de *Doctor honoris causa* al Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași. Contribuțiile au apărut în volumul CIOCAN, CRISTIAN; VASILIU, ANCA (ed.), *Lectures de Jean-Luc Marion*, Cerf, Paris, 2016.

²¹ MEROLD WESTPHAL, *Overcoming Onto-Theology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2001; JOHN MACQUARIE, „Postmodernism in Philosophy of Religion and Theology”, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 50 (2001); SCOTT DAVID FOUTZ, „Postmetaphysic Theology: a case study – Jean Luc Marion – Quodlibet Journal”, *Quodlibet Journal* 1, nr. 3 (1999).

²² CHRISTINA M. GSCHWANDTNER, *Degrees of Givenness: On Saturation in Jean-Luc Marion* (Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2014; CHRISTINA M. GSCHWANDTNER, *Reading Jean-Luc Marion. Exceeding Metaphysics* (Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion), Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2007; JOHN PANTELEIMON MANOUSSAKIS, *God after*

la posibilitatea dialogului contemporan cu teologia și la re-intrarea lui Dumnezeu în discursul filosofic.²³ *Fenomenologia radicală* a lui Marion a fost studiată, împreună cu conceptele sale cheie, fenomenul saturat, contra-experiența și adonatul (cel care vine după subiect).²⁴ Au fost subliniate influențele teologiei patristice, în special ale celor doi mari părinți răsăriteni, Sf. Dionisie Pseudo-Areopagitul și Sf. Grigore de Nyssa²⁵, ca-

Metaphysics: A Theological Esthetic (Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion), Indiana University Press, Bloomington–Indianapolis, 2007.

²³ GEORGE REMETE, *Ființa și credința*, vol. 2: *Persoana*, Paideia, București, 2015; GEORGE REMETE, *Ființa și credința*, vol. 1: *Ideea de ființă*, Ed. Academiei Române, București, 2012; IOAN I. ICĂ JR., „Toate cele văzute se cer după cruce”, în JEAN-LUC MARION, *Crucea vizibilului. Tablou, televiziune, icoană – o privire fenomenologică*, trad. Mihail Neamțu, postfață de Mihail Neamțu, Deisis, Sibiu, 2000; IOAN I. ICĂ JR., „Un «opus magnum» al filozofiei contemporane. Repere introductory”, în JEAN-LUC MARION, *Fiind dat. O fenomenologie a donației*, trad. Maria Cornelia Ică jr, prezentare de Ioan I. Ică jr, Deisis, Sibiu, 2003; IOAN I. ICĂ JR., „Iubirea și filozofia – de la onoarea metafizică pierdută la demnitatea restaurată fenomenologic”, în JEAN-LUC MARION, *Fenomenul erosului. Șase meditații*, trad. Maria Cornelia Ică jr, Deisis, Sibiu, 2004; MIHAEL NEAMȚU, „Crucea vizibilului”, art. cit.

²⁴ SHANE MACKINLAY, *Interpreting excess: Jean-Luc Marion, saturated phenomena, and hermeneutics* (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy), Fordham University Press, New York, 2010; CHRISTINA M. GSCHWANDTNER, *Reading Jean-Luc Marion*; JOHN PANTELEIMON MANOUSSAKIS, *God after Metaphysics*; LIVIA GEORGETA SUCIU, *Problema darului și a donației la Jacques Derrida* (Universitas), Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2011.

²⁵ TAMSIN JONES, *A Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion: Apparent Darkness* (Indiana Series in the Philosophy of Religion), Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 2011. A se vedea și recenzie semnată de GEORGE VAMEȘUL, „Jean-Luc Marion's Philosophy of Religion: Between Methodological Rigorousness and Hermeneutics”, *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy* III, nr. 2 (2011), pp. 535-541.

pacitatea apologetică a scriierilor lui Marion²⁶ și influența *apofatismului* teologic asupra gândirii sale.

Teologia lui Marion a fost analizată în câteva articole și lucrări²⁷ însă, încercând să rămână neutre științific, acestea nu au discutat pe larg raporturile cu învățatura Bisericii, pe care fie o consideră periclitantă pentru libertatea gândirii fenomenologice, fie o tăcere. Paginile care urmează își propun să realizeze o lectură a lui Marion din perspectiva temelor dogmatice, luând în discuție prezența și rolul lor pentru gândirea sa. Teza susținută va fi aceea că, din punct de vedere teologic, Marion practică o *apologie postmetafizică*, rămnând fidel tradiției Bisericii și învățaturilor sale de credință.²⁸ Temele teologice vor fi evidențiate și analizate în contextele fenomenologice și filosofice în care apar, fără ca prezența lor să fie amendată.²⁹

Având de-a face cu un fenomenolog care se ocupă de teologie, iar nu cu un teolog propriu-zis, nu se poate vorbi despre un discurs dogmatic elaborat, de aceea ideea unei „dogmatici” a lui Marion ar însemna prea mult; însă nu este mai puțin adevarat că, dacă s-ar trece sub tăcere prezența elementelor de teologie dogmatică, s-ar pierde mult din înțelegerea operei lui

²⁶ CHRISTINA M. GSCHWANDTNER, „A New ‘Apologia’: the Relationship between Theology and Philosophy in the Work of Jean-Luc Marion”, *The Heythrop Journal* 46 (2005); TAMSIN JONES, *A Genealogy of Marion’s Philosophy of Religion*.

²⁷ CHRISTINA GSCHWANDTNER, *Marion and Theology*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016; ROBYN HORNER, *Jean-Luc Marion: a theo-logical introduction*, Ashgate Pub. Co, Burlington, VT, 2005.

²⁸ Acordul cu dogmele Bisericii este o atitudine moștenită de la filosofia medievală și de la patristică. Cf. CLAUDIU MESAROȘ, *Filosofii cerului: o introducere critică în gândirea Euvului Mediu*, cuvânt înainte de Alexander Baumgarten, Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2005, p. 10.

²⁹ Dogmatismul teologic a fost privit cu mefiență de unii comentatori, după cum semnala TAMSIN JONES în *A Genealogy of Marion’s Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 4-5.

Marion și a dimensiunii sale apologetice. Nefiind vorba despre un dogmatism filosofic, ci despre învățărurile de credință ale Bisericii, abordarea *teologică* a acestor teme va contribui la înțelegerea dimensiunii apologetice a gândirii lui Jean-Luc Marion, pentru timpul nostru.

Desigur că un asemenea demers nu rămâne fără riscuri interdisciplinare. Cititorul de filosofie trebuie prevenit că evidențierea teologiei și a apologiei în gândirea lui Marion va oferi o perspectivă care ar putea să-i pară impropriu, prea teologică, însă nu mai puțin fecundă³⁰ pentru gândire; cât despre cititorul teolog, acesta va trebui să conceadă abundența filosofiei în limbajul, referințele și meditațiile asupra textelor Scripturii, precum și în gândirea relevantă pentru teologie. După părerea noastră, ambele sunt inevitabile și orice eludare – fie a teologiei, fie a filosofiei – ar fi nefastă pentru înțelegerea gândirii lui Marion, gândire riguros fenomenologică, dar relevantă teologic.

Paginile care urmează îmbină teologia și fenomenologia în măsura în care ele încele se îmbină în opera lui Marion, păstrând totodată distincția, în acord cu insistențele repetitive ale autorului. Gândirea lui Marion prezintă o unitate de intenție, care nu va fi totuși periclitată: luând în serios sfârșitul metafizicii, ea urmărește elaborarea unui discurs care să avanzeze postmetafizic.³¹ Din punctul nostru de vedere, această depășire este relevantă pentru că surmontea limitele pe care onto-teologia le-a pus până acum teologiei, eliberând-o pe aceasta din urmă de seducțiile celei dintâi și reconducând-o către Revelație.

³⁰ De altfel s-a remarcat că această fecunditate este valabilă pentru întreaga „turnantă teologică”, vezi BERNARD MARIE, „Le «tournant théologique» de la phénoménologie française?”, p. 54.

³¹ Unitatea gândirii lui Marion a fost pusă și sub două motivații fundamentale, o intenție și un refuz: întoarcerea la lucrurile încse și refuzul idolatriei conceptuale (vezi TAMSIN JONES, *A Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion*, p. 1). Privite cu atenție, aceste două intenții ar putea fi considerate fenomenologică și, respectiv, teologică, fapt ce readeuce în discuție întâlnirea dintre cele două în opera lui Marion.

În structura cărții am ținut seama de dezvoltarea gândirii lui Marion și am pornit de la clarificarea raporturilor dintre, pe de o parte, teologie, apologetică și sfîrșenie și, pe de altă parte, filosofie, metafizică și fenomenologie. Am continuat cu răspunsurile lui Marion împotriva nihilismului nietzschean și sfârșitului metafizicii, trecând prin clarificarea conceptelor de idol și icoană și ajungând la înțelegerea Dumnezeului „fără ființă”. Am vorbit despre cunoașterea apofatică și Sfintele Taine, pentru a intra mai adânc în fenomenologia lui Marion, analizând darul, fenomenul saturat, Revelația și adonatul – concept pe care Marion îl propune ca succesor al subiectului modern. Am încheiat cu discuția despre iubire și cu lectura fenomenologică pe care Marion o face lui Augustin, argumentând încă o dată pentru utilitatea fenomenologiei donației în teologie și a fenomenelor teologice pentru fenomenologie.

În raport cu teza de doctorat în teologie – care stă la baza acestor pagini –, au fost operate câteva modificări: deși perspectiva teologică inițială a fost păstrată, anumite părți care nu se refereau strict la Marion au fost eliminate, în vreme ce altele au fost rescrise, în scopul sporirii coerentei interpretării propuse.

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Cartea de față n-ar fi apărut dacă Părintele George Remete nu mi-ar fi sugerat, cu câțiva ani în urmă, tema gândirii lui Jean-Luc Marion ca subiect pentru teza de doctorat în teologie, susținută în toamna lui 2015, la Universitatea „1 Decembrie 1918” din Alba Iulia. Îmi exprim aici întreaga gratitudine.

Multe din materialele bibliografice mi-au fost înlesnite de câteva persoane cărora le sunt recunoscător: Nicolae Zala, Ioan I. Ică jr, Alexander Baumgarten, Cristian Ciocan, Mihail Neamțu, John Panteleimon Manoussakis, Claudiu Ungureanu, Grigore Moș și Gabriel Noje.

APOLOGIA DUPĂ SFÂRȘITUL METAFIZICII

Rolul de mecena l-a avut vechiul meu prieten și fost coleg de liceu, Doru Vijîan, căruia îi rămân îndatorat.

Nu în ultimul rând, mulțumesc familiei mele, Laurei și lui Mihail, pentru dragostea și răbdarea lor.

SUMMARY

A bold and innovative thinker who specialises in Descartes and combines theological reflection and phenomenological rigour to create a monumental body of work, Jean-Luc Marion is discussed nowadays by philosophers and theologians alike. His thought provides new perspectives to both of these fields and indicates important guidelines for dialogue. As an renowned representative of the direction known, somewhat pejoratively at first, as “the theological turn of French phenomenology”, Jean-Luc Marion brought Christian Revelation, its theological uniqueness, and its phenomenological relevance back into the discussion, joining other exceptional French representatives of contemporary Christian thought such as Michel Henry, Jean-Yves Lacoste, Jean-Louis Chrétien, or Rémi Brague.

As part of our research, we analyse the presence and the role of themes pertaining to Christian dogmatics in Jean-Luc Marion's thought, as well as the relationship between these themes and his phenomenology. We argue that, from a theological standpoint, Marion's activity can be classified as a form of post-metaphysical apology, as he remains faithful to the tradition of the Church and to Christian teachings. We also seek to discover what theology really is to the French philosopher and how it is put to use in the vast phenomenological demonstration. Moreover, we attempt to demonstrate that theology is for phenomenology an inspiration, an example, truth, a form of exceeding metaphysics and onto-theology, as well as the holder of the meanings of Christian Revelation; as for phenomenology, we show that it acts as a philosophical paradigm for theology, having an important apologetic role.

Since Marion is a phenomenologist who also tackles theology and not a theologian *per se*, we cannot speak of an elaborate dogmatic discourse or of an actual “dogmatics” of his; however, it is also

true that we would not have such a clear understanding of Marion's thought if we overlooked the elements of dogmatic theology it contains and their overall importance.

We must warn readers of philosophy that Marion's emphasis on theology will provide a perspective that might seem inadequate, though not less fruitful for understanding his works; as for readers with a theological background, they will have to concede the presence of somewhat demanding philosophical meditations and references. In our opinion, both are inevitable and any avoidance of either theology or phenomenology would prove to be disastrous for understanding Jean-Luc Marion's thought, which is phenomenological and theological alike.

We took into account the progression of Marion's thought and we started with the texts on theological matters in order to clarify the relationship between theology, apologetics, and holiness on the one hand and philosophy, metaphysics, and phenomenology on the other. Then, we continued with Marion's responses to Nietzschean nihilism and the end of metaphysics, clarifying the concepts of *idol* and *icon* in the process and reaching an understanding of the God "without being". We also discussed apophatic knowledge and the Holy Sacraments in order to gain more insight into Marion's phenomenology, reflecting on topics such as the phenomenology of the gift, the saturated phenomenon, the Revelation, and the gifted one (*l'adonné*). The last part of our paper was dedicated to the discussion about love and to the phenomenological interpretation of Augustine's writings that Marion provides, once again arguing the usefulness of the phenomenology of givenness for theology and of theological phenomena for phenomenology.

Jean-Luc Marion has a sound knowledge of the Holy Scripture, of the Church's tradition, and of patristics, operating seamlessly with the history of doctrine even though he has no formal theological studies. In fact, he often acts as a theologian with a philosophical language who constantly defends Orthodoxy against heresies by using arguments of the Holy Fathers. We could argue that, from a dogmatic standpoint, his ideas show a certain faithfulness towards the teachings of the Church and towards the tradition

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that was common to the Christian East and West in the first millennium. Even when he puts forth new perspectives, they do not seek to overthrow tradition, but rather to enrich it through meditations which emphasise its depth and validity.

Marion makes a clear distinction between philosophy and theology and although he considers himself a Catholic who specialises in philosophy, he rejects expressions such as “Catholic philosopher” and “Christian philosophy”. At the same time, it is also true that philosophy, according to him, can help consolidate certain theological viewpoints through the arguments that it proposes, thus acting in an apologetic manner.

Furthermore, Marion supports the intersection between theology and philosophy by making use of the doctrine of Christ incarnate, which he understands according to the tradition of the Church: Christ is one person with two natures – divine and human. He also states the importance of baptism and the abundance of life that the Church offers to the faithful through its sacraments, highlighting the possibility that through faith and participation to the life of the Church, people can also participate in the communion of the Holy Trinity.

As far as holiness is concerned, Marion places it under the paradox of invisibility and links the unknowability of the Father to the invisibility of his holiness.

Marion carefully makes the distinction between revealed theology and rational theology (which he sees as being equivalent to metaphysics), emphasising the authenticity of the former on several occasions. A theologian’s discourse must be based on the Revelation, on a certain progress towards holiness, as well as on the exceeding of metaphysics by way of prayer, church life, and communion through love with the Holy Trinity.

This understanding, however, does not cancel the possibility of apology; on the contrary, it nurtures it, because Marion sees the role of the theologian as one which also implies transforming the apostolic *kerygma* into arguments for those who do not believe. Through his masterful combination and demarcation between philosophy and theology, Marion proposes a new form of apologetics inspired by contemporary philosophical discussions and in-

fluenced by Christian Tradition. We could call this protection of Christian faith *post-metaphysical apologetics*: while keeping the distinction between the two disciplines and faithfully endorsing the eminence of theology, it does not hesitate to use the most recent conceptual apparatus in its defence of the Church's faith in the era of the end of metaphysics.

Rejecting the expression "Christian philosophy", which he accuses of being nothing more than a form of hermeneutics and of proving itself incapable to capture the richness of Revelation, Marion contrasts it with a *heuristic* method: it is useful insofar as new phenomena are brought into discussion, which philosophy cannot conceive on its own – such as holiness, forgiveness, communion, the icon, or the Resurrection – and which can be understood only because of the Incarnation of Christ. Theology can provide these phenomena to philosophy while keeping the supremacy of love for itself. The domain of dogmas remains theological, outside of philosophy.

In Marion's thought, *metaphysics* is understood unambiguously, starting with the history of philosophy. He criticises the possibility that metaphysics may understand the God of Revelation because it reduces him to a mere concept. We must emphasise that, at this point, the prevailing tendency in Marion's thought is that of differentiating between dogmatics and metaphysics, which is why his intentions of exceeding metaphysics do not affect the domain of Christian teachings. For him, dogmas are in some cases "pre-metaphysical", whereas in others they are gifts related to the Revelation. It would seem that this leaves us with an inconsistency criticised by philosophers, one derived straightly from the paradox that exceeding metaphysics does not also imply exceeding dogmatics; even if it may seem that this affects the purity of phenomenology, we must note that from the point of view of dogmatic theology, this is yet another proof of Marion's faithfulness towards the teachings of the Church.

As far as *phenomenology* is concerned, Marion broadens its meaning and proposes a phenomenology of givenness which overcomes the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger. The reduction to givenness is radical and goes beyond the reduction to objectness (Husserl)

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and the reduction to beingness (Heidegger). Its role is that of freeing the phenomena from anything *a priori*, which favours the act of discussing the phenomena related to religious experience and Christian Revelation. These phenomena overwhelm human understanding; in Marion's terms, this means that they are given in excess, saturating our concepts with intuition; hence, the name of *saturated phenomena*. Such an understanding is, once again, favourable to dogmatics because all its paradoxes can now be explained as saturated phenomena.

Marion's endeavour proves to serve a *double apologetic* purpose: by analysing phenomena imported from the field of theology, he emphasises them; by admitting their specificity and their theological meanings, he limits the capacity of phenomenology to fully understand them and gives them back to theology, which thus gains its magnificence and its legitimacy. Phenomenology becomes the domain called upon to exceed metaphysics and the one capable of offering a philosophical paradigm for theology, without mistaking itself for the latter and without usurping its rights and procedures. Moreover, phenomenology passes on the torch to theology in matters related to theological phenomena simply because theology can go a step further than phenomenological thought in underlining the meanings of Christian Revelation.

The death of God and the end of metaphysics are philosophical challenges to which Marion responds in an apologetic manner. *The death of God* leads to an atheism which can be broken down to the point of signaling that it operates with a well-defined concept of the divine, which, in Marion's terms, means that it becomes idolatrous. In this apologetic response, Marion makes reference to the dogma of the unknowability of the divine essence, as well as the apophaticism specific to Eastern tradition. Furthermore, he supports the teaching that the Son of God died on the Cross on Holy Friday only to resurrect on Sunday. To the “death of God” proclaimed by Nietzsche, Marion responds with “the death of God’s death”, as only an idol of the divine could have died, not the real God. Nietzsche’s death of God cancels all values and leads to nihilism, whereas the non-idolatrous God still remains unthought.

To support his arguments, Marion brings up the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, briefly highlighting that the Holy Spirit covers and

unifies the distance between the Father and the Son. We must note that he does not mention *Filioque* at all, choosing to remain silent on this teaching that created a rift between Eastern and Western Christianity; on the other hand, he does not express the Father's monarchy either, which is more common to the Greek Fathers.

The end of metaphysics, the diagnosis given by Heidegger to Western metaphysics, is fully accepted by Marion, whose thesis of exceeding metaphysics will become the purpose of his entire phenomenological and theological endeavour. The end of metaphysics seems to have a direct impact on dogmatics because some postmodern thinkers see dogmas as metaphysics and metaphysical foundations. As we have noted before, Marion inclines towards a position that exceeds rational theology – the only one which could be equivalent to metaphysics – in order to support revealed theology. The dogmatics of the Church has to do with the latter, not with the former, as dogmas are given through the Revelation, not through metaphysical constructions. Their paradoxes step outside of the sphere of onto-theology and point to apophatic experience, to the direct knowledge of God; not through speculative discourse, but through abandon, prayer, and liturgical life.

Influenced by Christian debates, the idol and the icon are concepts that play a prominent part in Marion's phenomenology and theology. From a phenomenological standpoint, they have to do with the paradigm of the saturated phenomenon; from a theological standpoint, they make a difference in the way in which the understanding of God is either metaphysical, or arises from Revelation.

Marion makes a distinction between the idol and the icon in a manner that is, up to a point, in agreement with the biblical and patristic hermeneutics of these concepts; therefore, it is not surprising that among the references he cites we find classic texts from Saint John of Damascus, Saint Theodore the Studite, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, and Saint Dionysius the Areopagite. The context is given by the discussions against iconoclasm and the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, which the French phenomenologist respects entirely.

Furthermore, the theoretical results of the well-known controversy between the iconodules and the iconoclasts prove to be particularly useful for contemporary discussions about atheism, the divine, and exceeding metaphysics. The line that crosses and demarcates these debates is the same as the one between truth and error or between the idolatrous god and the living God of the Church. Marion broadens the understanding of these concepts in order to use them in contemporary discussions about phenomenology. On the one hand, the *idol* hints to self-idolatry, blocks knowledge, cancels all distance and is a full and opaque presence. For instance, insofar as they claim to be exhaustive and do not admit the necessity of distance, our concepts about God are nothing more than idols of the mind. On the other hand, one could argue that the way in which Marion understands the *icon* is in agreement with the way in which it is conceived in the patristic and neopatristic tradition. Moreover, the icon can also have the meaning of idea, passing from an image to a concept; thus, Marion can use this polysemy to propose solutions in the contemporary philosophical debate. As far as dogmatics is concerned, Marion remains within the sphere of Orthodoxy, admitting the usefulness of the icon for Christian faith and even bringing new arguments based on the phenomenological relationship between visibility and invisibility. The icon does not exhaust what it represents; it beholds more than it is looked at, it summons to prayer and it reveals a distance between the type and the prototype which makes the invisible appear as invisible without reducing it to the ranks of an *idol*.

Marion's endeavour reveals the same double apologetic dynamic: first, a movement from rational arguments and non-religious examples towards their importance and value for theology; then, a movement from theological truths to his philosophical discourse, in that theology becomes a source of inspiration for philosophy, offering it paradoxes which would otherwise be invisible to the autonomy of reason.

The discussion about God is situated in the context of the death proclaimed by Nietzsche and of Heidegger's thesis regarding the end of metaphysics. Marion responds to both by means of the *idol–icon* distinction and of the apophaticism specific to Eastern tradition, influenced by Saint Dionysius the Areopagite

and Saint Gregory of Nyssa. He criticises any concept of God which claims to be exhaustive, especially the concepts of *causa sui* and *being*, and tries to overcome onto-theology by returning to the God who exceeds the concept of *being* as understood by Greek philosophy and whom he boldly calls “the God without being”. This name designates the superconceptual God of the Revelation, the God of love.

The Holy Trinity is seen as love and communion, a type of love which loves man first without requiring reciprocity as a condition, because God loves even when he is not loved back. Marion underlines the existence of a love “without being”, based on the Cross and on intratrinitarian communion. Love’s liberation from metaphysics, which the French phenomenologist seeks, accepts love as a don, as an abandon which goes all the way to martyrdom (just as Christ abandoned himself to the Father on the Cross), and as pardon. The don replaces the being and love responds to futility in those areas where metaphysical certainty could not. Marion explicitly states that love is based on the Holy Trinity more than we could say that the Trinity is love, that the Father is invisible and shows himself in the Son, and that the Son came to the world to save it through his passions and by assuming human nature; moreover, he sees the Holy Spirit as the love between the Father and the Son, an echo of the Catholic doctrine based on *Filioque*, although Marion does not mention the latter at all. Lastly, Marion’s thought fully assumes the divine unknowability proclaimed by the apophaticism of the Christian East.

When discussing apophatic theology, Marion carefully differentiates theological mysticism from irrational mysticism. The former reveals our inability to receive saturated phenomena, which are offered in excess and for which our rational capacity is not adequate. The influence of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite on Marion’s phenomenological and theological thought is crucial and can be identified in many of his concepts: the icon, the relationship between visible and invisible, the gift, the unknowability of God, the saturated phenomenon, and the exceeding of the concept of being. None of these concepts could be explained adequately if we were to remove Dionysian influence.

Marion is not an agnostic and claims that God can be known. However, similar to Dionysius, he talks about a type of knowing by unknowing, in which predicative language is exceeded and transformed into doxology, praise, and prayer. Furthermore, he refuses to interpret apophaticism as a way of returning to cataphatism, disputing one of Jacques Derrida's conceptions, and favours the existence of a third way beyond intellectual affirmation and negation. In this regard, Marion comes in contact once again with the Patristic tradition of direct knowledge, of a second degree apophaticism. The dogma of the possibility of an apophatic knowledge of God is given the same meaning as in Orthodox theology; in this case, the parallel with Lossky's theology is more than welcome.

However, Marion's translation of the "cause" (*aitia*) of all things in which Saint Dionysius sees God remains questionable: *aitia* is translated as "the Requisit One" because the very notion of cause is compromised by metaphysics. Once more, Marion's radicalism in exceeding metaphysics by exceeding its concepts makes a leap which places him outside of dogmatic understanding: if God is, cataphatically, the cause of all things, this is not reduced to the metaphysical understanding of the concept of cause, because no exhaustivity or conceptual pride can cancel the continuous apophasis correction in the tradition of the Christian East. The Christianisation of Hellenism drastically changed the meanings of these concepts, as well as their function, to the extent to which one can no longer find metaphysics even in traits specific to it, such as "cause" or "being". Apophaticism saves these concepts from idolatry; thus, theologically, metaphysics is exceeded even as they continue to be used, as long as their meanings are understood by preserving their apophatic dimension, making reference to experience and to spiritual life. For instance, to preserve Marion's distinction between predicative and non-predicative language, we could invoke God as the "Cause" in prayer, not in a metaphysical demonstration, which changes the equation entirely.

It is also worth mentioning the relationship between doctrine and apophaticism. Marion does not place enough emphasis on the link between them, *i.e.* on the fact that as a direct experience, apophaticism is based on the dogmas and is not an adogmatic experience, similar to those in pagan religions. A careful reading offers,

however, enough arguments to affirm that Marion does not steer things towards a non-Christian direction: both dogma and the experience of knowing by unknowing can be seen as saturated phenomena, which thus offer the excess of the blinding manifestation of the divine. What is more, dogmas are paradoxes and can be considered *icons* in Marion's understanding of the term, namely that of depicting the invisible as invisible, without destroying its distance and without declaring it absent. In an iconic understanding, dogmas regain the character and the importance that they enjoy in the Church's cataphatic theology and their relationship with apophaticism becomes clearer.

In spite of these observations, Marion's understanding of apophaticism is similar to the Orthodox one – as a form of knowledge which exceeds affirmation and negation, which makes it a third way. In this case, the influence of the Greek Fathers and of Neo-patristic theology is obvious.

Phenomenological in its structure, the analysis to which Marion subjects the Holy Sacraments admits its own shortcoming of not accessing their theological significance. On the one hand, the relationship between visible and invisible, between the material of the Sacraments and the grace of God, is possible due to the Incarnation of the Word, in which the two natures (divine and human) are reunited into a single divine-human person; on the other hand, Marion considers the theoretical models of substance and accidents, cause and effect to be metaphysical and lacking distance, which therefore makes them vulnerable to criticism. Marion proposes a phenomenological understanding of the sacraments without claiming to be capable of surmounting their insurmountable mystery and uses the concept of *givenness*: in the Holy Sacraments, God *gives* himself entirely.

We must note that Marion's statement cannot be fully understood unless we point to St Gregory Palamas' doctrine of uncreated grace and of uncreated energies. If God gives a created grace, then he does not give himself, and the phenomenological solution proposed by Marion remains suspended.

Related to the understanding of the Holy Eucharist, Marion shows that any form of theology and of theological hermeneutics finds its

fulfilment in this mystery; in this respect, the episode of the disciples on the road to Emmaus who only recognised Christ when he broke the bread, during the Eucharistic moment, and not as a result of his biblical hermeneutics. In this regard, Marion directly adheres to several dogmatic teachings, stating that theology finds its liturgical fulfilment in the communion of the Church, that the Church is the body of Christ, that it leaves itself to be incorporated in him whenever it celebrates the Eucharist, and that the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection of Christ are acknowledged as dogmatic teachings.

However, his statement that the bishop is the authentic theologian in debatable up to a point: while it can be interpreted from a confessional perspective, referring indirectly to the importance of the Bishop of Rome, it can also be given another hermeneutics. Marion himself gave a possible answer in this respect, claiming that he was referring to the great theologian-bishops of the Eastern Church: Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, and Saint John Chrysostom; another answer could be the following: the fact that theology finds its validation only through liturgical and doxological celebration remains a trait so widely proclaimed in Orthodox theology that all Marion does, influenced by the Eastern Fathers, is bring an additional argument in favour of this thesis, therefore once again having an apologetic role.

In addition, the absence of ascetic preparation on the part of the receiver of the Holy Eucharist remains problematic in the French phenomenologist's thought. By understanding the Eucharist as a gift and of its receiver as the gifted one [*l'adonné*], Marion does not emphasise this dimension, but he does not exclude it either, as we have shown in the chapter dedicated to the gifted one.

By interpreting the Holy Eucharist from the perspective of phenomenological temporality, Marion intersects with liturgical time and its ecclesiastical understanding, which is why his phenomenological arguments thoughtfully establish themselves into a Eucharistic apology which intersects with liturgical thought.

In Marion's case, the discussion about the gift is animated by the same purpose of exceeding metaphysics. This time, the discourse regarding the gift is meant to protect the phenomenological purity of

givenness from accusations that it [givenness] could be reduced to metaphysics or to theology. In order to avoid the situation in which the gift becomes an object of economic exchange, Marion seeks to accomplish a radical reduction of the gift to givenness, which entails bracketing the giver, the givee, or the gift. As a result of any of these reductions, the transformation of the gift in an exchange becomes impossible; therefore, the gift remains in itself. Marion gives the following examples: (a) Christ the Judge who, as a giver, retreats, (b) Abraham, who sacrifices Isaac, the gift of God, thus sacrificing himself, and (c) Christ once again, in his encounter with the Samaritan woman. Let us observe that in this case, through the examples of phenomena that it gives, theology becomes an argument for a phenomenological perspective. However, this favour is returned towards theology in an apologetic manner, whose prestige grows as a result of this exchange of ideas.

Our observation pertaining to Marion's understanding of the phenomenological purity of the gift is that whenever the exchange does not actually take place due to the lack of perfection of its model, the gift still realises itself as a gift; moreover, from a theological standpoint, the gift is not completely lost in the exchange, remaining a gift. The degrees to which the perfection of the exchange is not achieved attest to the fact that the model of the gift can insinuate itself in any exchange, just as the model of the exchange could have insinuated itself in any gift. Although Marion believes that the model of the gift as a transcendent exchange cannot be validated in revealed theology, we believe that it can be theologically valid without annihilating the greatness of the gift as a gift; this is because the exchange takes place in the sphere of the *invisibility* of faith. The exchange *can* be valid only for those who believe, as man sells his possessions to have treasure in heaven (Mt. 19, 21); however, for those who do not believe, it is about nothing more than a loss in which the exchange itself does not take place. This should constitute the phenomenological validity of the reduced gift. As the gifts he received from God (the gift of life, the gift of salvation) overwhelm man's response, what man gives back to God is so essentially insignificant that it appears as already reduced, leaving the gift whole. Therefore, from a theological standpoint, the gift can preserve its quality even

when the exchange would seem to insinuate itself: either it is a lost gift for those who do not believe, since God does not exist and everything that they sacrifice for him or receive from him is a succession of reduced gifts, without a givee and a giver; or, for those who believe, man's response remains in an insignificance so colossal that the greatness of God will never be repaid no matter how many gifts the exchange model may inspire us to bring, not even the one of our own lives (as in the case of martyrdom). Our conclusion is that the gift remains as such even in the presence of the exchange, as the former overwhelms the latter.

In this discussion about the phenomenology of the gift, several dogmatic themes are also involved, one of them being the Eucharist as a gift. Once again, Marion displays an understanding which does not transgress the Tradition of the Church, a Tradition in which the Eucharist is also referred to as "the Holy Gifts". We also encounter Christological references according to which Christ is sent to the world *ontically* as a gift of the Father and, at the same time, he is also sent *phenomenally* because he reveals the Father. The author stresses the consubstantiality and the equality of the Son with the Father, the messiahship of Christ, as well as his *kenosis*. Moreover, acknowledging God as a giver has consequences on acknowledging the significance of the gifts given to man by his love. The apologetic dimension is reversed in this case, because theology is not supported by phenomenological arguments; on the contrary, it is brought as an example for validating the purity of the gift. What this does is increase its visibility in the nihilist theatre of contemporary society; even from a position of *ancilla*, theology appears, as we have already shown, in a favourable light.

The saturated phenomenon is considered to be one of the most original ideas of Jean-Luc Marion and represents the fulfilment of his phenomenological intentions of exceeding metaphysics. The saturated phenomenon is the phenomenon given in excess by intuition, which exceeds Kantian categories and anything *a priori* offered as astonishment, lack of moderation, unpredictability, or stupefaction. Unpredictable by its quantity, unbearable by its quality, absolute by its relation, and unable to be looked at by modality – this

is how the saturated phenomenon is described. This means that the knowing man no longer experiences knowledge, but a counter-experience, in which he no longer applies the categories of his intellect to the phenomena which appear to him; on the contrary, he leaves the phenomena manifest themselves as they are given to him. Marion's favourite examples of saturated phenomena are organised into four categories: the historical event, the idol (work of art), flesh, and the icon. They contain such a large number of saturated phenomena that Marion talks about the "banality of saturation". In a later topic, Marion divides phenomena into two classes, those related to events and those related to objects, saturated phenomena belonging to the former. We can only analyse religious phenomena adequately if we recognize their saturation, including both theophanies and the Revelation.

The analysis of the saturated phenomenon has to do with the purest and the most radical phenomenology of givenness, which is why theology is less present here. Marion sometimes uses as examples phenomena from the sphere of theology, which can only be explained non-metaphysically with the help of the concept of the saturated phenomenon. One could argue that the saturated phenomenon finds its inspiration in theology, which offers it plenty of saturated phenomena, the most important of these being Christian Revelation itself. Among these, the dogmas of the Church understood as paradoxes are saturated phenomena, as is the Revelation in its entirety. Marion insists that Christ is also a saturated phenomenon *par excellence*: blinding and difficult to receive, Christ came among his own, but they did not recognise him and did not receive him, as the Gospel says, because he brought something pertaining to saturation, i.e. the excess of Revelation. The same happens with faith, which does not lack intuitions, but they are offered in excess and cannot be easily understood (as was the case of the disciples which did not recognise Christ on the road to Emmaus). Therefore, for Marion, the Revelation is saturation to the second degree, because it saturates all horizons.

Starting from the saturated phenomenon, we can provide a new interpretation to Christian life experience. If theology favours religious life and experience, then the concepts are left behind in this ad-

venture that implies a new way of life brought to the world through the Incarnation of Christ. The paradigm of the saturated phenomenon can thus explain why the excess of life is more powerful than our knowledge and why living our faith offers us so much that the words describing it are incapable and insignificant compared to its ineffable. The saturated phenomenon comes as a phenomenological confirmation of those things that all believers knew from experience: that through Christian life they are offered something pertaining to the sublime, to the blinding, to the excess, to the love, and to the gift of God.

Because it integrates the saturated phenomenon, Marion's phenomenological thought can analyse Christian Revelation, albeit without claiming to be exhaustive in its understanding and without the ambition of saying more than theology itself. Marion's thesis is that *phenomenology can only analyse the phenomenon of the Revelation in its possibility, as actuality remains to theology*. This does not mean that Marion does not recognize the Revelation manifested historically through Christ; he simply does not impose on it conditions of possibility which are derived from the subject and which confine it. Through the historical manifestation of the Revelation we must admit a completely new phenomenality, which phenomenology has no justification to leave unnoticed. However, it can only analyse it in what regards its *possibility*.

From a phenomenological standpoint, the Revelation is a saturation of saturation, a paradox of the paradox, a saturated phenomenon in relation to all four groups of the Kantian categories: Christ is invisible according to quantity, unbearable according to quality, absolute according to relation, and which cannot be looked at according to modality. Marion gives biblical arguments for all these assertions and concludes that the Revelation can be considered only *possible* if it is examined phenomenologically from the point of view of saturation, as theology is the only one who can analyse its *meanings and actuality*.

In this case as well, Marion practises an implicit form of apologetics, both through the fact that he discusses and provides arguments in favour of the Christian Revelation – even if only in what concerns its possibility –, and because the Revelation appears as a phenomenon in which the saturation and the paradox duplicate

each other. Without distinguishing between the natural and the supernatural revelation, Marion seems to talk more about the latter, making an exegesis of certain biblical fragments and introducing the phenomenon of revelation (in lowercase) in his phenomenological analyses. Christian Revelation appears in a new light, in which explanations are given not to *what* it is, but to *how* it appeared in this world. Marion's discussion has no intention of overturning or of imposing to theology questionable truths about the Revelation; on the contrary, he seeks to impose the possibility of Revelation through the simple rigor of the phenomenology of givenness. We must admit that such a dynamic attests an indisputable apologetic character.

Metaphysics would not be completely exceeded if the modern subject remained unmodified. Marion first admits what is undefinable in man, appealing to the anthropology of the Holy Fathers, according to which man's unknowability is owed to the unknowability of God, whose image is man himself. Thus, man appears as a saturated phenomenon, which any humanist ideology only brutalizes by claiming to understand it. The flesh is also a saturated phenomenon, which prompts Marion to tackle the resurrection of the body in accordance with Christian teachings. Marion preserves the dogma of man's mystery and the teaching that man is an *imago Dei*, while also supporting the necessity of likeness with his statement that man can only be defined by God.

Descartes' metaphysical subject, Husserl's transcendental subject, and Heidegger's *Dasein* are followed by *the gifted one*. Marion proposes this concept to underline that in the case of saturated phenomena, no kind of *a priori* is still in place; on the contrary, the given one receives himself from what he experiences and receives his individuality from relation. This scheme has much to do with the experience of prayer – man prays, but actually receives himself in doing so, as he is immeasurably exceeded by the One to which his prayers are addressed.

The most serious issue raised about this matter has to do with the conditions of possibility for religious experience: if the given one receives himself from the saturated phenomenon in the absence of any form of *a priori*, then nothing is left of man's entire preparation to become worthy or capable of an encounter with God. Marion

responds negatively to this criticism, responding on multiple occasions with remarks which lead to the same conclusion: the given one is receptive, not passive, and in this receptivity lies the positive or negative answer that he is free to give to the calling of God. Marion rejects any kind of Kantian *a priori* situated at the level of the intellect of the knowing subject – because this intellect can only uncover objects, whereas God is not an object –, but does not refuse anterior givenness: dogmas are given, even as paradoxes, thus as saturated phenomena, the Revelation is also given, and so on. Even hermeneutics finds its place, because any saturated phenomenon requires an infinity of interpretations in order to be explained after its overwhelming appearance.

We ended this chapter by giving a theological interpretation through which we affirmed that *preparation and askesis are necessary*, without them being in the forefront of man's meeting with God: even when performing them, those who believe are convinced that their experience is not their own, but belongs completely to the grace of God. Only an antinomy can describe the extent of the meeting between the abundance of the gift of God on the one hand and the belief in one's nothingness and the insignificance of ascetic exercises on the other. Compared to the abundance of God's grace, human virtues, although important, are nothing.

In Marion's thought, the phenomenological analysis of love starts from the same passion of overcoming metaphysics. If, for Descartes, the subject needed the certainty of his existence, which he gained as a result of the method of doubt, this certainty proves to be insufficient for Marion and cannot deal with the futility raised by the question "What difference does it make?". What is important now is whether or not I am loved, not whether or not I exist, because only love offers *assurance* against futility, unlike the Cartesian *certification* of one's own existence. The theoretical outline of love goes beyond the impasse of hatred towards oneself and towards others, only to reach the progress made by he who loves first without expecting reciprocity, thus practising erotic reduction. When there is also reciprocity and the bodies meet, one receives one's body from the other (which he does not possess!), even though the erotisation of bodies also proves to be finite. Love does not necessarily

imply sexuality, as demonstrated by friendship, the love of parents for their children, and the love of God. Fidelity and vow need a third participant which is usually the child, but especially God. God is the One who loves perfectly with the same love which implies erotic reduction; in this regard, Marion overcame the differences between *eros* and *agape* and intersected with the thought of several Church Fathers.

If thought of in accordance to its own logic, as paradoxical as it may seem, love can give what metaphysics could not, namely an assurance against futility. Marion's phenomenological meditations on love are once again similar to those of theology, revealing the apologetic capability of philosophical discourse and the possibility of talking about the loving God without suspending the meanings of the love that we already practise, regardless if we understand it or not. Biblical references are also present, as theology proves that it can offer models to phenomenological meditations, which implies, as if it had not been stressed enough, a dynamic of the apology.

In his book on Augustine (*Au lieu de soi*), Marion returns to theology, equipped this time with the concepts gained through the vast phenomenological construction. Augustine is obviously read from a post-metaphysical perspective, in the understanding put forward by the phenomenology of givenness: confession appears as a *reduction*; we can also find erotic reduction, in which God loves in advance; the communion of the ecclesiastical body is emphasised; the believed is presented as the gifted one; lastly, the teaching of faith is presented as a saturated phenomenon. Marion does not tackle Augustine's deviations from Orthodoxy, for instance; however, he interprets that because man cannot *want will*, he needs the gift of God – an interpretation which exceeds Augustinian predestination. Several dogmatic themes are involved, to which Marion adheres as a believer: creation *ex nihilo*, the love of God, the creation of man, participation to the life and communion of the Holy Trinity, man's freedom, and especially the teaching that man receives his own definition only from God.

Some have objected that Marion's return to the theology of Augustine, together with his abandonment of the ideas of Saint

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Gregory of Nyssa and Saint Dionysios the Areopagite, would mean that the possibilities of interdisciplinary discourse between theology and phenomenology were closed. While we do not believe this criticism to be true, it reveals what becomes relevant from a theological standpoint: the truths of faith to which Marion returns after his phenomenological detour prove their pertinence, as well as their importance. For Marion, phenomenology and theology remain separated, but the truths of faith keep their dogmatic power, which stems from the Revelation. Even expressed in the language of phenomenology, dogmatic themes remain formulas of faith situated in the sphere of the theology of the gift and exceed the phenomenology of givenness which, although they imply, they exceed theologically by virtue of the same relationship between theology and phenomenology that Marion did not change over the course of the years.

After having noted the main themes in his thought, analysing their relationship with the themes related to Christian teachings, we can conclude that, *from a theological standpoint*, Marion's works present us *a new form of apologetics*, which we could call "*post-metaphysical apologetics*". The French phenomenologist uses it to try to respond to the latest contemporary philosophical challenges – among which we can mention the end of metaphysics and post-modern nihilism – and does so using the language of those who issue the challenges, i.e. the philosophical language. Marion resorts to philosophical argumentation to avoid the easy pitfall of violent theological criticism in the name of a revealed truth which can no longer be challenged. In this case, Marion intends to transform the *kerygma* into arguments, as he once wrote, and indeed uses rational arguments, *remaining within the sphere of the Church's faith*, towards which he displays *genuine fidelity*.

By analysing some of his writings, we noticed that this new form of apologetics has a double movement – from philosophy towards theology and vice versa. In the first situation, Marion uses rational and phenomenological arguments to support truths of faith. This is the case of those writings which have been called "theological".

However, we also noticed a movement in the opposite direction, one in which theology is a source of material for phenomenology,

offering it phenomena which would not be otherwise discussed. This leads both to the expansion of the field of phenomenology and to an increased importance of theology, since it can play a heuristic, and not a hermeneutic role in contemporary philosophical debates. As a man with excellent knowledge of both contemporary philosophy and theology, referring on numerous occasions to the Greek and Latin Fathers, Marion preserves the distinction between the two domains and insists that revealed theology must receive the torch from phenomenology, as the latter, even when it tackles religious phenomena such as the Revelation, can only advance in the field of *possibility*, not in that of *actuality*.

The dogmatic themes in Marion's thought prove that the French phenomenologist does not attempt to rethink them in a critical way; in fact, he takes them as gifts of the Revelation and as saturated phenomena, acting as a Christian believer. While this attitude is subject to serious criticism from both secular and religious philosophy, which accuse that it were, from a theological standpoint, a dogmatic limitation—a perspective which we adopted in our own research—, it is more than welcome. If we were to present a brief overview of these dogmatic themes, we would have to conclude that Jean-Luc Marion: discusses the dogma of the Holy Trinity in the context of his discussion about love, preserving the teaching of the One God in Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; understands the main teachings of faith in accordance with the Tradition of the Church: the intratrinitarian relationship, the plan of salvation through the Incarnation, the Passions, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Christ, supernatural Revelation, cataphatic and apophatic knowledge, the importance of the Holy Sacraments and of the Holy Eucharist for the integration of the faithful into Christ's mystical Body and into the communion of the Church, the importance of Holy Friday for Christian faith, and its distinctiveness from Nietzsche's death of God; uses the conceptual pair of idol – icon, which he borrows from the iconodule tradition of the Church and develops it phenomenologically, arguing in favour of a theology of the icon; proclaims apophatic theology as a third way, beyond intellectual affirmations and negations about God, respecting his unknowability and iconic distance, influenced

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by Greek Patristics; speaks of gift and *kenosis*, of man as an image of God, and about the uniqueness of love. We encounter elements of triadology, Christology, pnevmatology, ecclesiology, soteriology, and theological gnoseology, in which the dogmas and the teachings of the Church are carefully respected.

There are still a few observations which we must point out. From the point of view of Orthodox theology, we may signal that Marion does not mention *Filioque*, the Catholic teaching about the proceeding of the Holy Spirit *from the Son as well*, not even when he talks about the Spirit as being the love between the Father and the Son. Moreover, he avoids Augustinian predestination, choosing to talk instead about freedom and about the possibility of creating the self starting from God, who is within us. Although influenced by the Fathers of the Christian East in the first millennium, Marion does not resort to those from the second millennium and avoids using the doctrine of uncreated energies, expressed by Saint Gregory Palamas. Always active in Marion's thought, the intention of exceeding metaphysics sometimes makes him distance himself from the theological meanings of the terms he sees as inadequate. This is the case of the concept of *being*, which Marion simply gives up, even though theology borrowed it and changed its meaning so much that it could use it to explain the dogma of the Holy Trinity. While he agrees with the dogma itself, Marion refuses the term of being and its metaphysical understanding, boldly affirming "the God without being". He applies the same treatment to the concepts of *cause* and *person*, which, when understood within the sphere of metaphysics, and not of the dogmas of Christian faith, lose their usefulness and are either replaced or met with silence.

In spite of these observations, Marion remains a thinker for which theology and phenomenology intersect in a more than positive manner. Exceeding the deviations of contemporary atheist thought by supporting faith and finding inspiration in it, Marion is one of the most fascinating phenomenologists of our times through his contribution in opening new perspectives in the dialogue between phenomenology and theology. Relevant for exceeding Husserl's and Heidegger's phenomenologies through the perspective opened by the phenomenology of givenness and proposing concepts such as

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the saturated phenomenon, counter-experience, the icon, the gift, the revelation, the erotic reduction and the gifted one, Jean-Luc Marion also performs a masterful post-metaphysical apology in which dogmatic themes find their place naturally. He proves once again that, after an anti-religious modernity and a nihilist post-modernism, *to believe* and *to think* are two verbs which can still co-exist, though up to a certain point, beyond which only theology can attribute meanings.

Translated by PAUL CENUŞE

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Reprezentant de seamă al „turnurii teologice a fenomenologiei franceze”, Jean-Luc Marion rămâne unul dintre cei mai fascinanți gânditori ai timpului nostru, prin originalitatea fenomenologiei donației și prin deschiderea unor noi direcții de dialog cu teologia.

Din punct de vedere teologic, el practică o apologie postmetafizică, în care temele credinței creștine se regăsesc cu naturalețe alături de concepte fenomenologice precum icoana, fenomenul saturat, contra-experiența, darul, revelația, reducția erotică și adonatul.

Separând riguros teologia și filosofia, el dovedește încă o dată că, după o modernitate antireligioasă și într-o postmodernitate nihilistă, *a crede* și *a gândi* pot merge încă împreună, chiar dacă numai până la un punct, dincolo de care gândirea filosofică lasă cuvântul teologiei revelate, singura în măsură să rostească adecvat în istorie chemarea Dumnezeului celui viu.



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