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Jean-Luc Marion is Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Professor of Catholic Studies and Professor of the Philosophy of Religions and Theology at the University of Chicago and Professeur émérite at the Université Paris-IV (Sorbonne), Department of Philosophy. Marion begins with the understanding that we can no longer imagine the lexicon of contemporary phenomenology without the category of givenness. The author of this fundamental philosophical concept is undoubtedly one of the most famous living French philosophers. His fame has grown in the middle of the powerful torments of contemporary thoughts. He began studying at Ecole Normale Supérieure under Louis Althusser and Jacques Derrida, neighboring May 1968 movements. The other side of his philosophical path was strengthened by the spiritual life of the intellectual Christian center of Montmartre with the enchanting role of *Monseigneur* the rector of Sacré Coeur Maxime Charles who nominated him to run the journal *Résurrection* together with Jean Duchesne (with whom later he created the French edition of *Communio*).

Having parents involved in Catholic intellectual life, in his childhood and youth, he was engaged in Jeunesse Catholique Française. Many years later, when he authored with Alain Bonfand an essay about the comics character Tintin, he sketched his own philosophical adventure of a passage from the ontic to the ethic (*Hergé. Tintin le Terrible ou l'alphabet des richesses*, 1996).

Inspired by Jean Beaufret and faithful to the great French tradition of thought, Marion embarked on Descartes as the subject of his doctorate thesis. He entered cartesian studies in the middle of a dispute between giants—Ferdinand Alquié and Martial Gueroult. His doctorate was published in 1975 with great success; *Sur l'ontologie grise de Descartes* unveiled Descartes' critical reading of Aristotle's *Organon*. He immediately became assistant of Alquié at Sorbonne and was invited to supervise the prestigious Épiméthée collection of Presse Universitaire de France. Six years later, he fulfilled the theological part of his cartesian studies: *Sur la théologie blanche de Descartes* (1981). Both books were recognized as a breakthrough in the strict rationalist, metaphysical reading of Descartes. Descartes was revisited within the Pascalian, Husserlian, and Heideggerian thinking. The only rational appearance of the Cartesian *cogito* became fissured. At thirty-five, Marion became the youngest French professor receiving a post at the University of Poitiers.

Marion struggled with the expression “the death of God,” which he understood as the end of the *discourse on God*. The books *L'idole et la distance* (1977), *Dieu sans l'être* (1982) and *Prolégomènes à la charité* (1986) prepared the ground for *Étant donné* (1997) that Marion considers his first work as a philosopher. “God without Being” calls for a metaphysics, which claims the death of God because its language cannot embrace distance. “When Being is opening, it doesn't enter in evident presence, it doesn't exhaust itself in presence because it defines itself

only by resisting presence.” These words from “L’étant et le phénomène” disclose the depth of the phenomenon. This resistance to presence–distance–must characterize every discourse on God. Marion’s phenomenology paved a new way toward a phenomenality that exceeds intentionality–the saturated phenomenon.

Before *Étant donné*, Marion published *Réduction et donation* (1989), where he liberated phenomenology from naïve ontology and wherein the ontological difference is thought radically, and another reduction is added: the givenness of the unconditional phenomenon. With these two books Marion entered the pantheon of French phenomenology, and, at the same time, he became one of the targets of Dominique Janicaud’s attack allegedly for applying a theological turn to phenomenology (*Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française* 1995). Placed among the best, like Emmanuel Lévinas, Michel Henry, or Jean-Louis Chrétien, Marion turned the invective into a compliment. Still, he never speaks about “Christian philosophy.” He denounced the term repeating after Heidegger that there can be no “Catholic philosophy” to the same extent as there is no “Protestant mathematics.” Marion is one of the very few thinkers who rigidly sustained the separation between philosophy and theology. He achieved his givenness in purely philosophical terms, without theological preconceptions, and, afterward, he accepted with gratitude the multitude of fruits which this concept brings in the realm of theology.

In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Marion developed the concept of givenness through the logic of the icon (*De surcroît. Etudes sur les phénomènes saturés* (2001), *Le visible et le révélé* (2005). The saturated phenomenon reappeared under the figure of love in *Le phénomène érotique* (2003). In *Certitudes négatives* (2010), Marion reflected upon phenomena that appear as events only by contradicting the conditions of one’s experience, imposing a paradox—which is the condition of philosophy. Since Caravaggio’s *Calling of Saint Matthew* (*God without Being*), through Rothko’s abstract icon (*De surcroît*) up to Courbet (*Courbet ou la peinture à l’œil*, 2014) Marion revealed a mastery in the language of arts.

In 2008, he was “immortalized” by becoming a member of the French Academy, taking the seat after the Cardinal Lustiger. Five years earlier, he received from the Academy the Grand prix de philosophie (2003). Laureate of many lifetime achievement awards (such as Karl Jaspers Prize in 2008 and Premio Joseph Ratzinger in 2020), his work is nonetheless still on the rise with the recent publication of the monumental *D’ailleurs, la révélation* (2020). Having gathered all the possible tools to challenge the noticeable narrowness of the theological concept of revelation, Marion speaks about the revelation in terms of excess, multi-dimensional phenomenality, and the elsewhere (*l’ailleurs*). A new hermeneutics must measure distance. “Givenness has found me much more than I discovered it,” says Marion in one of the latest interviews (with Paul-François Paoli, 2021). When the philosopher’s thinking is rigidly rational, paraphrasing Lévinas’ title, God, nevertheless comes to mind.