The Intimate and the Impossible:
Analogy Without Similitude in Jean-Luc Marion



Taylor Knight
The Queen's College
University of Oxford

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Short Abstract

In this dissertation, I argue that the constructive philosophical project of Jean-Luc Marion offers a new way of thinking the analogical relation between God and the human person. I particularly examine his concept of the saturated phenomenon in order to show how we might construct the relation between incommensurable terms (God and the human being) without requiring a similitude to mediate the relation. In short, I construct a concept of relation based on hyperbole, excess, and the superlative, rather than on similarity and the comparative.

I argue that for Marion God's transcendence is understood as what he describes as "impossibility" and that his immanence is understood through Augustine's *interior intimo meo*, the God more intimate to me than I am too myself. I demonstrate that radical immanence is God's transcendence insofar as the event of the impossible precedes the being-possibility correlation of metaphysics. Thus I develop the relation of God and the human being as a coincidence of opposites more than an analogy: the infinite distance of radical alterity becomes a belonging together of the human being with God. As a consequence of this analysis, I develop a new concept of relation, which I call "hyperbolic relation." If similitude always threatens to abolish the alterity of the terms of the relation (as was Barth's objection to the *analogia entis*), in this case, alterity is maintained not by removing relation but by increasing it to the level of hyperbole. Like Marion's God who is "without Being," this analogy is "without similitude," not because of a poverty of presence, but by means of excess. The concept of God that I develop (impossible as intimate and vice versa) will consequently lead to a deepening of the concept of the human person through the transfiguration that saturation precipitates within the concept of relation.

Long Abstract

Western Christian theology, at least since the late middle ages, has developed under the presupposition that in order for there to be a relation between God and the human being, there must be some sort of similitude that links them. Thus the Thomistic doctrine of the analogy of being sees created beings as participating in a God who is understood as Being itself. Thomas Aquinas himself, however, developed an understanding of relation that did not entail any similitude between terms and which structured his mature understanding of the relation between God and the world. Even though the doctrine of the *imago dei* seems to imply a similarity between God and the human being, Jean-Luc Marion has argued that the image (icon), unlike the idol, bears no similarity to its original. Instead bears a relation through another logic than that of similitude. My aim has been to investigate the structure of this relation without similitude.

I argue that Marion's constructive philosophical project offers a new way of thinking the analogical relation between God and the human person. I particularly examine his concept of the saturated phenomenon in order to show how we might construct the relation between incommensurable terms (God and the human being) without requiring a similitude to mediate the relation. I argue that for Marion God's transcendence is understood as what he describes as "impossibility" and that his immanence is understood through Augustine's *interior intimo meo*, the God more intimate to me than I am too myself. I demonstrate that radical immanence *is* God's transcendence insofar as the event of the impossible precedes the being-possibility correlation of metaphysics. Thus I develop the relation of God and the human being as a coincidence of opposites more than an analogy: the infinite distance of radical alterity becomes a belonging together of the human being with God. As a consequence of this analysis, I develop a new concept of relation which I call "hyperbolic relation." If similitude always threatens to abolish the alterity of the terms of the relation (as was Barth's objection to the *analogia entis*), in this case, alterity is maintained not by removing relation but by increasing it to the level of hyperbole. Like Marion's God who is "without Being," this analogy is "without similitude" by means of excess. The concept of God that I develop (impossible *as* intimate and vice versa) will consequently lead to a deepening of the concept of the human person through the transfiguration that saturation precipitates within the concept of relation.

My argument is divided into five chapters each addressing one of the phenomena that Marion counts as saturated. In Chapter I, I address Descartes and *the idol* in order to reveal the genealogy of Marion's phenomenology as a critique of the univocal ontology brought to completion in Cartesian method. I give an overview of Marion's reading of modern philosophy's inversion of the medieval doctrine of analogy. I do this in order to show that despite Marion's occasional polemics against the analogy of being, his entire project—from his early career as a scholar of Descartes to his constructive phenomenology and theology—is aimed first at deconstructing the modern univocal method of knowing and second towards developing a plurivocal rationality that is not reducible to the mind's capacity to measure objects.

Chapter II develops the phenomenality of *the event* according to Thomas Aquinas's understanding of relation. Cartesian rationalism and its inversion of analogy depends on conceptual univocity, whereas for Aquinas, as well as Pascal, it is the radical incommensurability of orders (without any similitude between them) that makes univocity impossible. While Marion uses Pascal's thinking of the three orders of knowledge to "drive Cartesian metaphysics to distraction," he never employs Aquinas's surprisingly similar understanding of the relation of heterogeneous orders. In his reappraisal of Thomas in "Thomas Aquinas and Onto-theo-logy,"

Marion's defense of Aquinas depends entirely upon showing that Thomas's understanding of God's identification with Being in the *analogia nominum* is an entirely apophatic identity, which I link to Thomas's understanding of relation and of being as an accident. For Thomas, the relation of creation is real "in" the creature while only logical "in" God. I argue that Marion's own project of "overcoming metaphysics" through a phenomenology of givenness would be much further strengthened if he developed Thomas's thinking on relation in a phenomenological mode. Marion's controversial reading of, and final defense of Aquinas would benefit from a deeper or more explicit reading of Aquinas on real relation, which in turn deepens the thought of analogy itself. In this way, analogy can pass beyond its weaker sense in traditional Aristotelian ontology towards what I develop here as a third type of relation that comes to light when the terms exceed a relation of adequation or similitude. If Thomas thinks of two possibilities for relation: logical and real, I argue for a third type of relation through saturation: the hyperbolic relation.

In Chapter III, I argue, using Husserl and the saturated phenomenon of *the flesh* that the reduction to givenness is what enables us to think a relation without similitude between the terms of the relation. I examine why phenomenology enables Marion to recover and develop an analogical understanding of knowing. Husserl's "breakthrough" begins to free modern philosophy from the nominalist grip through the correlation of the appearance and the appearing. This is achieved through hierarchically organizing consciousness above the (phenomenal) world, enabling Husserl to still call his philosophy a transcendental idealism. Marion pushes the phenomenological principle to its end arguing that the correlation shows that givenness, not consciousness is the horizon in which phenomena emerge. I examine the ways in which Husserl's version of phenomenology still depends upon the residue of representational theory of perception, which leads him towards construing phenomenology as leading back to the objectivity of phenomena, even though his "breakthrough" in fact overcomes the need for the phenomenon to be received as an object. I show that Marion's reduction to givenness is enabled by a contact theory of perception that frees the phenomenon from the precondition of similitude to the one who receives it. Thus I further develop the concept of hyperbolic relation in light of the flesh and the kind of enfleshed self, *l'adonné*, capable of receiving such excess. Man is infinitely distant from God not through absence or poverty of relation, but through the superlative intensity of the union given as radical affectivity. I demonstrate that if we think relation within an analogue, non-digital space the intimacy of contact between orders does not abolish distance but explodes similitude through the superlative interiority of the other term.

In Chapter IV, I begin an analysis of the logic of *the icon* among a constellation of thinkers, including Husserl, Heidegger, Rahner, Przywara and Lacoste. The relation of the icon to its prototype is, according to Marion, a relation without similitude. I argue that Marion's concept of anamorphosis provides a way to think a relation that is at once not determined in advance and is also intimate to the point of hyperbole such that the relation emerges as a radical freedom. This will entail developments in our doctrine of God as well as in our account of the image.

Chapter V continues with the icon, but now with respect to Marion's reading of Augustine's concepts of *memoria* and of the God *interior intimo meo.* Here I will suggest that hyperbolic relation expresses itself in the human being as a certain kind of telic motivation, a directedness towards alterity rather than towards an essence. The absence of similitude to an essence reveals itself as a maximum of relation to the Other (God) which coincides with a minimum relation of free, nongeneric self-movement. As a consequence I suggested that man has a twofold supernatural end: to receive the impossible (that is, to find one's end in God) and to

enact the impossible in erotic directedness towards the world. Thus, while Nicholas of Cusa deployed the coincidence of opposites as a hermeneutical principle for locating the God who, by necessity, exceeds the world's possibilities, I have developed an ontological coincidence of opposites: the paradoxical way of being for the animal that lives according to the image.

It is through increasing the relation beyond similitude that I have avoided the dialectic between a Barthian alterity and a univocal a priori interiority. I thus argued that Marion's logic of the icon functions according to such a view of "analogy without analogy" and that this is where his distancing of himself from the *analogia entis* leads. In this regard, I have shown that Augustine's theo-anthropo-logical principle (*interior intimo meo*) merges with Nicholas of Cusa's coincidence of opposites and escapes heteronomy (nominalist or essentialist) to the precise degree that it operates within Aquinas's grammar of real relation but beyond Aquinas's explicit development of this grammar. I have thereby radicalized real relation from an adequative similitude to a relation of incommensurable terms: the paradoxical coincidence in which maximal relation *is* minimal relation. Thus my analysis has intervened on the debate concerning analogy in an entirely new way, cutting across the old division between metaphysically construed alterity and ontological participation. Instead I have expressed analogy as the relation of incommensurable terms which safeguards alterity precisely through thinking it as radical immanence.

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INTRODUCTION

"All distances in time and space are shrinking…yet the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance."
-Heidegger, "The Thing"[1]

Context 1: Heidegger

In his lecture, "Identity and Difference," Heidegger examines the Parmenidean fragment: *τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστιν τε καὶ ἔιναι*, which can be translated, "thinking and Being are the same."[2] Heidegger wants to probe the principle of identity, the *τὸ αὐτὸ* (the same) that expresses the "belonging together" (*Zusammengehörigkeit*) of thinking and Being. For Parmenides, Heidegger contends, "Being belongs to an identity" so that "thinking and Being belong together in the Same and by virtue of this Same."[3] What Heidegger will mark as "western metaphysics" begins with a reversal of Parmenides such that "metaphysics represents identity as a fundamental characteristic of Being"—identity is subjected to Being.[4] In metaphysics, Being and thought correlate such that what can be thought can at best correspond, match, or adequate to what is, and the identity of Being with thought, the essential "belonging together," remains hidden. The metaphysical construction of the correlation hides the nature of identity and thus the nature of Being. Metaphysics, for Heidegger, determines Being according to thinking, and thus according to beings that are thought. Being comes to present itself as thought only because it is "previously marked as ground" while thinking "gathers itself toward Being" because it grounds Being as the condition of its manifestation so that "Being manifests as thought."[5] Heidegger argues that the fundamental distinctions of

[1] "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 165.
[2] *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 27.
[3] *Identity and Difference*, 27.
[4] *Identity and Difference*, 39.
[5] "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," in *Identity and Difference*, 57.

metaphysical thought, the difference between Being and beings, between the ground and what is grounded, fails to pay attention to the nature of the original identity of Being and thought.

This analysis of identity is central to his critique of western metaphysics and its onto-theo-logical constitution. For Heidegger, metaphysics, instituted in Plato, is completed in the flat immanence of the technological world picture in which there is no "nearness" (*Nähe*) despite a "frantic abolition of all distances." It is the very difference between Being and beings that, even as it abolishes distance, brings about no nearness and in fact prevents nearness, for it abolishes distance precisely by forgetting the belonging together by which thinking brings Being to light, a bringing to light not achieved by the mere presence of beings or the reduction from beings to Being. As long as the correlation of Being to thinking does not permit an identity, the belonging together, to exceed determination within Being, then "[e]verything gets lumped together into uniform distancelessness."[6] If this analysis is correct, then it is the very structure of western metaphysics that has excluded the possibility of nearness and brought about a "uniform distancelessness," for nearness must be thought or received in some other mode, in the *τὸ αὐτὸ* that precedes and makes sense of the correlation of *ἔιναι* and *νοεῖν*, ontos and noesis, Being and thinking.

It is my intention in this dissertation to explore the possibility of nearness in this space prior to the correlation of Being to thinking, the space of their "belonging together." My investigation centers around the work of Jean-Luc Marion and what he develops in this space opened up by Heidegger, particularly with regards to its theological possibilities. After all, what can be nearer than God? And who more contests the space of technological and objective determination and expectation than a God revealed as the Crucified One? With a few exceptions, Heidegger's terminology will disappear from this study, though its trace will remain in Marion's vocabulary. In place of nearness, I will speak of "the intimate," derived

[6] "The Thing," 164.

from Marion's almost perpetual reference to Augustine's concept of the God *interior intimo meo*, "more intimate to me than I am to myself."[7] Next, Marion's concept of "the impossible" stands in the space of Heidegger's "belonging together" but to some extent contests it (and its determination by the *Ereignis*). In Marion's thought, the concept of the impossible is that which exceeds the correlation of being to possibility (the modality of the noetic).[8] The concept of the impossible is therefore made available by Heidegger's analysis of Parmenides and his broader critique of metaphysics. Like Parmenides' *τὸ αὐτὸ*, the impossible is indifferent to the ousio-ontical difference because it exceeds such difference.

In *God Without Being*, Marion takes Heidegger's reading of metaphysics as his starting point and moves forward to think a God who is not determined by the concept of Being, a God who is beyond the ontological difference between Being and beings and beyond the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics, defined by Heidegger as "the unity of beings as such in the universal and that which is highest."[9] If we map Marion's analysis onto Heidegger's terminology, Marion's God does not arise as the Being of the ontological difference, but in the "belonging together" that exceeds and precedes the correlation of thinking and Being, which itself is already before the ontological difference.

For Marion, the belonging together attests to the priority of the horizon of givenness over the horizon of Being. Not straying too far from Heidegger, Marion's analysis of conceptual idolatry is itself a critique of the metaphysical correlation of being and thought that is consummated in Hegel, for whom "Only the absolute Idea is Being."[10] For Marion, it is the icon that sends a fissure through this absolute correlation of Being to the Idea or concept. The icon ruptures the correlation because it comes from itself alone without determination by thought's potential to think it. Marion's icon enters through the gap opened up by the

[7] "*Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo.*" *Confessions* III, 6, 11.
[8] On the concept of the impossible in recent French philosophy see Gary Gutting, *Thinking the Impossible: French Philosophy Since 1960*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. Chapter 8 and Conclusion.
[9] "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," 61.
[10] *Science of Logic*, Lasson edition, Vol. 11, 484. Quoted by Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 43.

Heideggerian "belonging together" insofar as the belonging together exceeds rather than is determined by that which is correlated. Yet the icon, in exceeding the correlation, ruptures it, and therefore draws into question the nature of the *τὸ αὐτο* as a purely horizontal belonging together of the thinking animal and the Being it appropriates. What is important to draw attention to here is that the icon is a phenomenon no longer received in the form of a "likeness" to Being or an adequation of thought to Being since it enters through the gap that gives their belonging together. The icon is a phenomenon that is not received as a being *of* Being or for whom Being is the condition of its appearance.

Context 2: Analogia Entis

In light of the appearance of the icon in a mode indifferent to the relation of Being to beings, Marion's post-Heideggerian theological project constitutes a decisive challenge to the traditional Thomist doctrine of the analogy of being. If the icon comes before the division between Being and beings, and God comes before everything, especially every division, then God can no longer be identified with Being, for Being is a phenomenon in second place to the *τὸ αὐτο*. If Marion's work is situated within the Heideggerian critique of western metaphysics since Plato, it is also situated within a critique of modern metaphysics as instituted by Duns Scotus' univocity of being, intensified in Descartes, and completed as a totalizing system in Hegel and perhaps even Husserl.[11] While the purpose of my thesis is not to perform an extensive overview of Marion's position on analogy, univocity and the history of modern philosophy, it should be noted that he reads the nihilistic and totalitarian tendencies of modern metaphysics as bound up with the loss of the medieval concept of analogy. Indeed, the loss of analogy is so central to his reading of the history of modern philosophy that it is somewhat surprising how infrequently it has been a theme in readings of his constructive theological and

[11] I will address this aspect of Husserl in Chapter III.

phenomenological projects. No doubt his (qualified) acceptance of Heidegger's critique of western metaphysics as a whole, however, complicates his approach to analogy and makes it problematic to see his project as a recovery of analogy. Further, his acceptance of recent revisionary interpretations of analogy within Thomism gives Marion motivation to further distance himself from the modern Thomist tradition of the *analogia entis*. (There will be more on this in Chapter I.)

If the icon enters through the gap that the primacy of "belonging together" holds open, and is indifferent to the difference of Being and beings, what does it have to do with analogy, that doctrine that precisely wants to talk about the participation of beings in Being? Does it simply render analogy moot? Yes and no. I would argue that the icon is still trying to do the work that analogy aimed to do, that is, to think the belonging together of God and the world, and, more specifically, God and the human person, while avoiding their utter separation, on the one hand, and, on the other, their absolute correlation. No doubt Marion's icon would be doing the work of analogy in a radically altered framework, or precisely from outside the framework of enframing (*Gestell*): in the space of the belonging together and for the sake of nearness.

I would even contend that he is trying to think within the tradition of the *analogia entis*, but is doing so in a post-metaphysical framework. This is not always a radical departure from the mainstream of the Catholic tradition. It does not wholly subscribe to Heidegger's reading of the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics, or at least not of all western thought. Indeed, my investigation shows deep continuities with major thinkers including Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius and Thomas Aquinas. Yet Marion is no longer thinking analogy from the difference between Being and beings and especially does not think the relation in order to ground beings. Rather he is thinking it from a term prior to all existence, all ground, and all duality: that which arises in the space of the intimate and the impossible.

The essential challenge to the *analogia entis* does not consist only in Heidegger's analysis of the primacy of identity, but is further advanced in Michel Henry's critique of philosophy's externalism: that it always puts phenomena at a distance.[12] Even if analogy guarantees relation without assimilation (and indeed an always greater dissimilarity), how much has the traditional doctrine of the analogy of being conceded to a philosophy of exteriority or metaphysical transcendence, thereby conceiving a God before whom we can neither dance nor pray? Can analogy as the relation of Being to beings think the relation in its intrinsic nearness and affectivity, can it give a God who is not merely an a priori condition of my existence, but who is more intimate to me than I am to myself? This is why I would contest that the question of identity insofar as it opens beyond the flat distancelessness of technological immanence does not proceed to a metaphysical transcendence, but to the rupturing of distancelessness through the intimate.

Context 3: Barth

If Marion's criticism of the analogy of being consists in a desire to more sufficiently think God in his essential nearness, then it should go without saying (though it seems to need saying) that his critique is radically opposed to Barth's whose criticism of analogy is precisely the opposite. Barth accuses the proponents of the analogy of being of thinking God as proximate to us and thereby dissolving his radical otherness. Nevertheless Barth's objection to analogy, which is an aspect of his critique of liberalism, is a real objection. If both analogy and liberalism make God a possibility for us, this potential "God within" is equated to subjectivity, the actualization of potentiality. It is however questionable not only whether a real and free God can be thought as the a priori condition of existence, but whether within such a framework authentic human subjectivity does, or even could, emerge. Indeed, Barth's position

[12] *Material Phenomenology*, trans. Scott Davidson, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), especially 43-100.

is the other extreme of the same framework. Neither liberal identification nor Barthian alterity can authentically think divinity or humanity because they presuppose a relation of similitude. It is crucial that Marion's phenomenology concerns intimacy rather than interiority, affect rather than depth. Thus I will argue that he avoids this essentially Kantian structure through a radical immanence that is not opposed to transcendence, but identical to it: the immanent is a saturated immanence, bursting with the "beyond" in the very intimacy of its givenness. The most immanent to myself is the most transcendent. Marion's development of the phenomenality of God and of the gifted (Marion's re-conceptualization of the ego) allows us to think of the God more intimate to me than I am to myself without losing sight of God's radical alterity. In short, the radically immanent is not a possibility for us, but an impossibility for us, impossible in the sense that he precedes the correlation of being to possibility. The "surprise" of God's self-manifestation would not be a Barthian figure of surprise, but would be derived from a nearness that cannot be determined by the conditions of possibility, but simply by its affective presence alone. To speak of God's impossibility for us is not to speak of his remoteness exclusively, but of his remoteness as his intimacy.

In short, the concern is not so much whether the traditional doctrine of *analogia entis* can maintain the gap between (fallen) created being and uncreated divinity (as is Barth's central, indeed only, concern), but whether it can authentically think the radical intimacy of God with his creation—whether it intrinsically forgets that intimacy, saying much about the difference without real knowledge of the belonging together. One wonders whether the twentieth century development of the Catholic doctrine of the *analogia entis* would have taken a different, more fruitful direction if it had taken theological liberalism rather than Barth and the Reformed tradition as its metaphysical sparring partner.[13] Nevertheless, Erich Przywara's resuscitation of a doctrine dying under the cold hand of neo-scholasticism remains

[13] For an engagement of Catholic proponents of analogy with Barthian and Reformed theologians see Thomas Joseph White, O.P., ed., *The Analogy of Being: Invention of Antichrist or Wisdom of God*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2011).

inextricably tied up with his clashes with Barth, and Barth therefore remains an inescapable context whenever one tries to speak of analogy.[14]

Argument

Perhaps in our times there is no real nearness, and perhaps philosophy has never thought nearness authentically. But as soon as we begin to receive nearness authentically, we receive an authentic transcendence. My thesis is that Marion offers a new way of thinking analogy because he thinks God's transcendence (impossibility) *as* radical immanence (intimacy) and vice versa. God is, for Marion, "the Impossible" because he is the wholly Other, but his radical, non-spatial alterity means that he is other only as the not-other. While Marion does not use the Cusan term "not-other,"[15] it is an appropriate way to read the (non)alterity of a God that appears in the space of Heideggerian identity—where alterity becomes a belonging together, an identity.

Thinking analogy through saturation and the horizon of givenness will require a new concept of relation that I will begin to develop in the second chapter. I will call this concept, "hyperbolic relation." Hyperbolic relation can conceptualize the relation of analogy more precisely now that the ontological difference does not impose itself beforehand and hide the nature of the relation. If similitude always threatens to abolish the alterity of the terms of the relation (as was Barth's objection), in this case, alterity is maintained not by removing relation but by increasing it to the level of hyperbole. Thus my title "analogy without similitude" turns out to be something of a red herring, insofar as it appeared to signal a certain concession to Barthian theology. Like Marion's God who is "without Being," this analogy is "without

[14] For an introduction to the debate between Przywara and Barth, see John Betz's introduction to the English translation of Przywara's *Analogia Entis*, trans. John Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014). Barth lays out his objections to *analogia entis* in "Fate and Idea in Theology," in *The Way of Karl Barth: Essays and Comments*, ed. H. Martin Rumscheidt (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1986).
[15] From Cusa's treatise, *De li non aliud*. English translation in Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa on God as Not-Other*, (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1979).

similitude" by means of excess. My concept of God (impossible *as* intimate) will consequently lead to a deepening of the concept of man through the transfiguration that it precipitates within the concept of relation.

While I will argue that my thesis concerning transcendence as radical immanence is a direct implication of Marion's thought, the concept of hyperbolic relation is more specifically my own. It is grounded in Marion's concept of the saturated phenomenon, Nicholas of Cusa's coincidence of opposites, and Thomas Aquinas's understanding of real relation, but to some degree goes against what Marion specifically says about saturated phenomenality and against some of his more conservative theological positioning. Nevertheless, I do think it is in overall continuity with his project. My interest in thinking the impossible as the intimate and in the space of analogy—the belonging together of God and man—will take Marion's phenomenology of the impossible in a substantially different direction than John Caputo, who reads the impossible in Marion and Derrida primarily with respect to a logic of prophecy, the advent of the kingdom that overturns all expectation.[16] While my project is not incompatible with Caputo's, my interest is more "ontological" insofar as I am concerned with impossibility as a fundamental aspect of the very structure of human existence: as what is most intimate to us.

I have outlined the three contexts above—Heideggerian identity, the analogy of being, and Barth's critique of analogy—because they will remain in the background as a motive for much of my argument, but will rarely be foregrounded. My aim is to do a close analysis of Marion's project and to explore some constructive possibilities it offers.

[16] See John Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible: On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. John Caputo and Michael Scanlon, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999; and Caputo, "The Poetics of the Impossible and the Kingdom of God," in *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Graham Ward (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

Structure and Method

There are three elements by which this dissertation is structured. The primary one is a linear development of an argument. Each chapter builds upon the previous one. At the beginning I develop a new concept of relation based on Marion's concept of the saturated phenomenon to, finally, suggest where Marion's philosophy leads with regards to the relation of the human person to God and to the world. But because the argument consists in an examination of phenomena, it does not have the linearity of a purely deductive argument, but unfolds through an ever deeper attentiveness to the phenomena. Thus two secondary, nonlinear structural elements come into view. First, each chapter roughly addresses one of the phenomena Marion counts among the privileged cases of saturation. What I argue in each chapter will, however, have implications for each of the other saturated phenomena, especially insofar as they all to a certain extent come to a consummation in the phenomenon of the icon. Second, each chapter deals with Marion's work in relation to a major philosophical figure. Starting with Descartes, I move backwards in time towards Augustine, yet forwards in terms of theological development. Each saturated phenomenon is not paired with the historical figure accidentally, but fits each thinker in some particular way, which is why this structure naturally emerged.

Chapter I addresses Descartes and *the idol* in order to reveal the genealogy of Marion's phenomenology as a critique of the univocal ontology brought to completion in Cartesian method. I give an overview of Marion's reading of modern philosophy's inversion of the medieval doctrine of analogy. I do this in order to show that despite Marion's occasional polemics against the analogy of being, his entire project—from his early career as a scholar of Descartes to his constructive phenomenology and theology—is aimed first at deconstructing the modern univocal method of knowing and second towards developing a plurivocal rationality that is not reducible to the mind's capacity to measure objects. Descartes naturally fits with

the idol insofar as Cartesian metaphysics is the most manifest instance of what Marion calls "conceptual idolatry."

Chapter II develops the phenomenality of *the event* according to Thomas Aquinas's understanding of relation. Cartesian rationalism and its inversion of analogy depend on conceptual univocity, whereas for Aquinas, as well as Pascal, it is the radical incommensurability of orders (without any similitude between them) that makes univocity impossible. While Marion uses Pascal's thinking of the three orders of knowledge to deconstruct the Cartesian system, he never employs Aquinas's surprisingly similar understanding of the relation of heterogeneous orders. In his reappraisal of Thomas in "Thomas Aquinas and Onto-theo-logy," Marion's defense of Aquinas depends entirely upon showing that Thomas's understanding of God's identification with Being in the *analogia nominum* is an apophatic identity, which I link to Thomas's understanding of relation and of being as an accident. For Thomas, the relation of creation is real "in" the creature while only logical "in" God. Marion's own project of "overcoming metaphysics" through a phenomenology of givenness would be much further strengthened if he developed Thomas's thinking on relation in a phenomenological mode. Marion's controversial reading of, and final defense of Aquinas would benefit from a deeper or more explicit reading of Aquinas on real relation, which in turn deepens the thought of analogy itself. In this way, analogy can pass beyond its weaker sense in traditional Aristotelian ontology towards what I develop here as a third type of relation that comes to light when the terms exceed a relation of adequation or similitude. If Thomas thinks of two possibilities for relation: logical and real, I argue for a third type of relation through saturation: the hyperbolic relation. The impossibility of imagining the event as a static or predetermined relation at once corroborates and exceeds Aquinas's understanding of relation.

In Chapter III, I argue, using Husserl and the saturated phenomenon of *the flesh* that the reduction to givenness is what enables us to think a relation without similitude between

the terms of the relation. I examine why phenomenology enables Marion to recover and develop an analogical understanding of knowing. Husserl's "breakthrough" begins to free modern philosophy from the nominalist grip through the correlation of the appearance and the appearing. This is achieved through hierarchically organizing consciousness above the (phenomenal) world, enabling Husserl to still call his philosophy a transcendental idealism. Marion pushes the phenomenological principle to its end arguing that the correlation shows that givenness, not consciousness is the horizon in which phenomena emerge. I examine the ways in which Husserl's version of phenomenology still depends upon the residue of representational theory of perception, which leads him towards construing phenomenology as leading back to the objectivity of phenomena, even though his "breakthrough" in fact overcomes the need for the phenomenon to be received as an object. I show that Marion's reduction to givenness is enabled by a contact theory of perception that frees the phenomenon from the precondition of similitude to the one who receives it. While Husserl is among the first to thematize the flesh, Marion helps to free the flesh from the limits of Husserlian method.

Chapter IV is perhaps the exception to the three structuring elements. Here I begin my analysis of the logic of *the icon* among a constellation of twentieth century thinkers, including Husserl, Heidegger, Rahner, Przywara and Lacoste. These thinkers inhabit the same intellectual space as Marion in a way that the historical interlocutors do not, and thereby allow me to show the importance of Marion's thought to contemporary questions. The relation of the icon to its prototype is, according to Marion, a relation without similitude. I argue that Marion's concept of anamorphosis provides a way to think a relation that is at once not determined in advance and is intimate to the point of hyperbole such that the relation emerges as a radical freedom. This will entail developments in our doctrine of God as well as in our account of the image.

Chapter V continues with the icon, but now with respect to Marion's reading of Augustine's concepts of *memoria* and of the God *interior intimo meo.* Here I will suggest that hyperbolic relation expresses itself in the human being as a certain kind of telic motivation, a directedness towards alterity rather than towards an essence. Augustine no doubt has always been the thinker for whom the icon is a central anthropological principle and to whom Marion alludes often in his early work and addresses explicitly in his more recent book on Augustine's *Confessions.* In the conclusion I will briefly return to the phenomenality of the idol now that we have a more robust theological anthropology in place and a more adequate concept of the relation between the human person and God.

While I aim to attend to the texts of these historical figures as closely as possible, the way in which I employ them is not the same way that an Augustine scholar would read Augustine, or a scholar of Descartes would read Descartes. My reasons for reading Marion within the context of these thinkers is not to evaluate whether his readings of them are the historically correct readings. Rather, I aim to situate him within a history of ideas in a way that frees him and us from this history by binding us to it. We go back to the essential canonical figures of Aquinas and Augustine in order to free ourselves from the problems of representation by engaging those thinkers who thought before the age of the world-picture and for whom "representation" was not even a possibility. We address Descartes and Husserl as the modern philosophers to whom Marion is most indebted and whose thought remains central even as he aims to exceed it. While the project has been situated within an essentially Thomist framework—the question of analogy—it was impossible to address Marion's thought only with respect to Aquinas, of whom Marion says very little directly. And, given that Marion's philosophy is not a repetition of Thomism, it was even more necessary to go elsewhere, even if it is likewise necessary to show that Marion is not anti-Thomist. In short, it was necessary

to take this broad approach in order to show that it is no longer a matter of being "for" or "against" analogy.

Additionally, it is in attending to the aporias of past philosophies and in letting the limits of their systems emerge that saturated phenomena appear in all the clarity of their paradoxicality. By letting these aporias come to light, we are able to develop new concepts. These new concepts emerge in two ways. Sometimes it is by resolving the aporias through something like a paradigm shift that takes place elsewhere than the aporia and through which the contradictory suddenly gains a new coherence. Sometimes it is by increasing the aporia to the point of paradox so that everything around them begins to take a new meaning from the point of view of this paradox. This second possibility is an instance of the paradigm shift which makes the first possibility possible. The first is a paradox in only a weak sense, for it can be dissolved once the right system is put in place to make sense of it. The second is a paradox in the strong sense. Its logic is that which, by definition, precedes any system. Its contradictory nature does not express a non-sense, an incoherence that is already determined as nonsense by a particular system of sense (and which could theoretically fit into another system). This contradiction has its own logic, the logic of paradox. It is the generative paradoxical logic of the originary.[17] Thus it is, for instance, by pushing Aquinas's doctrine of relation to its extreme that a new insight emerges. I am at once reading Aquinas as a proto-phenomenologist and submitting him to a phenomenological method. It is this attention to limits as a place where something new can emerge that makes my method differ from that of a traditional historian of philosophy, whose chief concern is what is already said and who wishes to restate the said as clearly as possible.

[17] While the logic of the paradox will be a theme of the dissertation as a whole, this distinction between a weak and a strong sense of paradox will be examined in more detail in the subsection Chapter IV, §2 entitled "Marion and Rahner on the Incomprehensible."

Note on the Concept "Man"

I continue, like Marion, to employ the gendered concept of "man" to refer at once to the genus of humankind as well as to evoke a fund of meaning much more rich than could be given in a rationalized concept. This persistence in employing an unfashionable word is not based on the naive assumption that "man" is simply a generic, gender-neutral category. One reason for this stubbornness on my part is that I am skeptical of purely rationalized determinations of language. These ideological impositions can be fairly short-sighted, and there are certainly interesting movements in feminism that are less enthusiastic about neutering. The category "human being" is to my ear too technological in the deterministic sense. To wholly convert the concept of "man" into the concept of "the human being" is impossible and the attempt would be problematic for my argument, indeed undermines it insofar as I argue for saturated, excessive phenomena and against the nihilistic logic of determinable conceptualizations. Man is not masterable and neither is his language. Any attempt at mastering him excludes his fecund and unknowable depths and thus excludes the possibility of man himself. The term "man" has a depth of meaning that resonates with every past use of the word, and especially in this case, the psalmist "What is man that you are mindful of him? And the Son of Man that you care for him?" (Ps. 8:4, RSV). Indeed, it may be asked whether we are talking about the same phenomenon when our language no longer resonates with these depths.

While of course I mean to use the term in a way that includes women, I wouldn't pretend that "man" speaks the feminine equally with the masculine. No doubt it contains a differently inflected masculinity from that said in "a man," but man is a masculine word and its power is masculine even if its meaning includes women. Gendered words are more powerful than neutered words because gender is the force that gives desire body (in this case, as language). Consequently, that I use the masculine pronoun "he" with "man" is not an arbitrary way of adhering to convention, but coheres with the masculine force of the word. I do,

however, use the feminine pronoun with similar frequency when I refer to the human person, or to the soul. All of us are a mix of feminine and masculine elements, and so the feminine is also appropriate when referring to humankind. Unfortunately, there is not a feminine word that captures the feminine force of humankind, unless it is "the soul," (*anima*, and *psuche*) or the flesh (*la chair*). I try to use these terms where appropriate.

CHAPTER I

Univocity and the Idol

In this chapter, I show that the increasing univocity from Scotus and Ockham to Descartes not only fissures the medieval synthesis and creates the modern dialectic between autonomy and heteronomy, but also—and more importantly for my thesis—begins to construe relation solely from the basis of similitude, thereby reducing all relations to the comparative logic of the a priori and the mathematical spatialization of being. If the world of knowable entities is now measured by the a priori ego whose absolute limit is the correlation of being to possibility, God is also submitted to the same measure of possibility. It is the logic of similitude that not only determines the univocity of modern philosophy, but also grounds the theologies that allegedly refuse it in the name of God's absolute alterity, an alterity attained at the price of nonrelation and either irrationality (Barth's fideism, Kierkegaard's blind faith, Ockham's inscrutable divine will) or conceptual idolatry (atheistic, e.g., Feuerbach or Nietzsche and theistic, e.g., Descartes, Kant, Spinoza).

John Milbank argues that Heidegger's early neo-scholastic training and subsequent repudiation of such a methodology blinds him to other forms of analogy which in fact would circumvent his critique of western metaphysics.[1] Marion, however, is unwilling to dismiss Heidegger's critique of metaphysics with respect to analogy. Marion is first of all a scholar of the history of philosophy. His reading of the genealogy of Descartes' philosophy suggests that onto-theo-logy is not foreign to the institution of the doctrine of the *analogia entis*, which he stresses does not emerge until after Aquinas *and* Scotus. The revisionist interpretation of analogy to which Marion subscribes argues that Cajetan, in trying to defend Thomas against the Scotists, assumes a Scotist definition of being. For Scotus, the first division of being is

[1] John Milbank, "Only Theology Overcomes Metaphysics," *New Blackfriars* 76 (1995), 331.

that between infinite being and finite being. Thus the essence of the argument against *analogia entis*, a doctrine coming from Cajetan's interpretation of Aquinas, is that it is implicitly univocal insofar as it uses the same term for both God and creation, namely Being.

While the status of the *analogia entis* remains somewhat ambiguous in Marion, it is clear that it is the corruption of the Dionysian and Thomist (that is Thomas's *own* and not that of his devotees) doctrine of analogy such that Descartes accomplishes a fully complete metaphysics"[2] by inverting the *methodos* of the doctrine of the divine names. Milbank therefore sees that Heidegger's thesis that "modernity fulfills metaphysics"' is augmented in Marion to something closer to "modernity invented metaphysics," at least to the extent that onto-theo-logy was made possible only after Scotus, Henry of Ghent, and Ockham.[3] While indeed there is a sense in Marion that "metaphysics" or "ontology" only reaches the status of a discipline after Descartes (with Clauberg and Wolff), it is certainly not the case that he has rejected Heidegger's argument that the metaphysical drive to determine Being according to beings is at least as old as Plato. Marion remains hesitant either to say that premodern philosophy adequately escapes metaphysics or that premodern analogy successfully avoids onto-theo-logy. This chapter will examine Marion's early readings of Descartes in order to show that Cartesian method is an implicit inversion of analogical theology. Thus we will begin to uncover the proper space in which analogy unfolds.

§1. Inverting Analogical Method

Marion's early research into the genealogy of the univocal discourse of modern metaphysics leads Christina Gschwandtner to suggest that Marion's project to "overcome

[2] MP, 5; PM, 6. Quotations from Marion are generally the published translations. I have indicated where I have modified them. The page numbers for the French edition are listed second. Please see the appended bibliography for the list of abbreviations.
[3] Milbank, 329.

metaphysics" works to achieve a phenomenological recovery of authentic analogy.[4] This thesis seems basically correct. I therefore wish to look closely at *Descartes' Metaphysical Prism* where Marion links the onto-theo-logical constitution of Cartesian metaphysics to the inversion of the doctrine of the divine names. Marion argues the pre-Scotus understanding of analogy is equivalent to the doctrine of the divine names.[5] So when he describes Descartes' doctrine of God as "a metaphysical repetition of the theological treatise on the divine names,"[6] the reversal that this metaphysical repetition will achieve is the inversion of analogy. What is inverted? Precisely, the order of cataphasis and apophasis. In the method of Pseudo-Dionysius, which remains normative for Thomas Aquinas, cataphasis or predicative naming of God comes first followed by apophasis, which corrects cataphatic predication through denying the adequacy between the positive concept and God, since God is beyond all predication. By contrast, Cartesian method moves in the opposite direction. Hyperbolic doubt starts with uncertainty and indeterminacy—its negative moment. For Descartes, the external world is dubitable in that the senses do not provide certain knowledge:

> In contrast with theology, which proffers negations of God only after having exhausted the affirmations, here the ego begins by saying of God that he is named *nescio quis* [I know not what], a *je ne sais qui* [sic]: negative philosophy, in which one must acknowledge the echo, no doubt barely conscious, of the negating moment in the divine names.[7]

Since Descartes commences with indeterminacy "instead of reaching it after affirmations have been denied," Marion remarks that "one has the feeling that affirmations can be established further along, that there is no negation or indetermination that will not be alleviated—thus opening the metaphysical discourse on the essence of God to the threat of idolatry."[8] Indeed the positive moment will come after the negative as we move from negative vagueness to

[4] Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Reading Jean-Luc Marion: Exceeding Metaphysics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 116.
[5] TB, 139.
[6] MP, 210; PM, 221.
[7] MP, 214; PM, 225.
[8] MP, 214; PM, 226.

positive "clear and distinct ideas" and thus to idolatrous concepts of God. These concepts are idolatrous precisely because of the structure by which they are predicated positively and as ground.

It will be important later on that Cartesian method as a knowledge of objects operates as a philosophical method that inverts the method of negative theology. Here we will examine Descartes' doctrine of God where the negative method of Denys is inverted for the sake of achieving a radical positivity, like the "clear and distinct ideas" of what counts for Descartes as a known. Just as in his philosophical method, in Descartes' theology indeterminacy is what makes available positive doctrines: omnipotence and God as substance. Though the Church Fathers objected to the use of substance applied to God, inasmuch as it implied a permanent substrate with accidents,[9] substance undergoes a "radical modification" in Descartes and seventeenth century philosophy more generally.[10] It becomes *subsistence per se* with no reference to attributes.[11] It can be univocally applied to God and to any extended or thinking finite thing. Marion argues that Thomas Aquinas, like Augustine and Anselm, resists identifying God as substance since God "does not have any ontic determination because he is defined only as the pure act of Being (*actus essendi*), in which *esse* takes the place of all *essentia*, thus excluding *substantia* all the more."[12] Aquinas admits God as substance only insofar as it can be read synonymously with the divine *esse* itself: "God is subsisting esse itself."[13] Here again, Marion summons "the tradition" of the doctrine of the divine names against Descartes' novel doctrine.

While one objection of Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas disappears when the definition of substance shifts to permit subsistence per se, still "not every objection disappears if

[9] E.g., Augustine: "neither changeable nor simple things are called substances." De Trin. VII, 5, 10.
[10] MP, 224; PM, 236.
[11] MP, 223-224; PM, 235-236.
[12] MP, 221; PM, 233.
[13] Summa Theologica 1a, q.4, a.2, c.

perseity does not just qualify God alone, but also defines other substances."[14] This revision of the concept of substance "creates a formidable aporia: the univocity, at least the near-univocity, of the henceforth indifferent notion of substance."[15] Descartes himself is not unaware of the threat of univocity: "Hence the term 'substance' does not apply univocally, as they say in the Schools, to God and to other things...there is no distinctly intelligible meaning of the term which is common to God and his creatures."[16] Yet although Descartes seems to call attention to the "drift towards univocity" in Suarez, Marion remarks that "it is not enough to see a danger in order to avoid it. Though challenging all univocal application of substance to God and other beings, Descartes never succeeds in conceptualizing these two different senses with distinct terms. He maintains the same concept and merely juxtaposes two contradictory uses of it."[17] If the definition of God as substance becomes acceptable insofar as substance no longer implies accidents, it becomes problematic insofar as the common term for God and created substance no longer maintains the gap between created and uncreated. We should note here the importance, for Marion, of using "two…distinct terms" for God and other "substances" rather than using the same term analogically predicated. I will return to this in the next chapter.

The two juxtaposed uses of substance are as follows. First, a thing that has no need of anything else in order to exist is called a substance. In this definition, God alone is substance, as Being per se. Second is the *ratio substantiae* common to extension and the ego: things that need only the concurrence of God in order to exist: this second definition is justified by a univocity between the God who subsists per se and those things which are the cause of their own accidents. While Descartes will finally insist that infinite-substance is the only fully constituted substance, this definition, we must remember, is derived from indetermination and

[14] MP, 224; PM, 236.
[15] MP, 224; PM, 236.
[16] *Principia Philosophiae*, I, §51; quoted in MP, 224; PM, 236.
[17] MP, 225; PM, 237.

the subsequent absolute limit of its a priori horizon. Indetermination secures an inevitable univocity in its upward movement from the ego's a priori subsistence to God's aseitic subsistence: "only the infinite permits attributing substantiality to God; only this substantiality permits passing beyond the inevitable indetermination, and therefore entering upon 'alia quaedam adhuc via.'"[18] Starting out from the negativity of dubitability, one arrives only at the positivity of the a priori: "God will be defined according to substantiality and causality, or not at all."[19] If indetermination of perception leads to the first determination of God—infinity—the second infinite-substance is deduced from the first because the infinite is more positively predicated than the finite. The infinite precedes the finite as its "a priori horizon."[20] To quote Descartes directly: "My perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself" and "In reality the infinite perfection of God is prior to our imperfection."[21] Despite the apparent orthodox position of these statements, the priority of the infinite is, for Descartes, not only logical and epistemological, but "the priority of an a priori. The infinite precedes the finite in that it makes experience and the objects of this experience possible."[22] This apriorism, rather than safeguarding distance and analogy, implies a slippage into univocity. The infinite no longer precedes the finite in a transcendence that always exceeds the method. Its precedence is that of "the transcendental condition for the possibility of the finite."[23] While infinite-substance escapes the method as *immensitas*, God only escapes insofar as he remains its condition. He is outside only as the a priori *of* the measurable: the subject or supreme power that puts into play the *mathesis universalis*. The negation that is in-finity leads on to the positive knowledge of the method.

[18] MP, 228; PM, 240.
[19] MP, 220; PM, 231.
[20] MP, 228; PM, 241.
[21] *Meditations* (AT VII, 45, 28-9=31) and *Conversation with Burman* (AT V, 153, 30-1 = PW III, 338). Quoted MP, 228-229; MP, 241.
[22] MP, 229; PM, 241.
[23] MP, 229; PM, 241.

Descartes' second definition of God (infinite-substance) therefore, "precisely because it is anchored in the infinite as such...allows infinity to be declined from the point of view of the finite."[24] In this case, there is neither freedom of God from the created nor freedom of the created from God. Substantiality, though it escapes nominal univocity so long as infinite-substance is the only true substance, counts as *real* univocity because it allows adequate naming and commensurable being derived from the infinite. The infinite as the a priori of the finite is thought as the "incomprehensible to the finite."[25] Thus finitude leads to adequate naming: "When I consider that I have doubts, or that I am a thing that is incomplete and dependent, then there arises in me a clear and distinct idea of a being who is independent and complete, that is, an idea of God."[26] Where analogy offers a final apophasis and rejects a priori knowledge of God, the Cartesian method leads towards univocity because it moves from uncertainty—the human divorced from all sensibility or affection—to certainty and an adequate predicative naming. To put it another way, the ascent from positivity to negativity, from natural light to a superluminous darkness reveals itself not as the ascent of man, but as the descent of God and the assumption of man into God. The Cartesian ascent from solipsistic indeterminacy to positive adequate naming functions only as ascent without descent and so never reaches God. If, in this case, God would descend at all, he does so only to confuse their language and to render their discourse incoherent. Cartesian positive affirmation is only permissible via the a priori which moves univocally from the human to the divine.

Marion identifies the Cartesian negations—infinity, incomprehensibility, and immensity—as positive doctrines that escape the measure of the method. Immensity: what cannot be measured. Since Descartes' equates knowledge with certain measure, these negative definitions parallel the first moment of the Cartesian method. The negations are instances of the

[24] MP, 234; PM, 246.
[25] MP, 232; PM, 244.
[26] *Meditations*, (53, 9-12=37). Quoted MP 232; PM, 245.

indeterminacy brought about by hyperbolic doubt. The affirmations—omnipotence and substance—take the place of the theological superlatives, the third way beyond affirmation and negation, the way of eminence. In other words, when the order is inverted, the negative Cartesian moment (first stage: indeterminacy) takes the place of the positive Dionysian one (first stage: affirmation). The positive Cartesian second stage skips over the Dionysian second stage, negation, to replace the third Dionysian stage, eminence. The Cartesian superlatives, however, are no longer *beyond* affirmation and negation but are "by means of affirmation and, in the end, in the mode of affirmation."[27] Marion shows the structure mimics the dynamic of analogy, but the inversion of the order renders the enterprise incoherent where eminence "no longer constitutes a third moment, autonomous if not equivalent to the first; rather it simply crowns the other two ways, without really surmounting them." The positive negations and superlative affirmations "run the risk of being juxtaposed, indeed of contradicting each other," since there is no third term by which they could be thought together as aspects of the same phenomenon.[28]

I will briefly summarize how Marion sees Descartes' positive and superlative definitions of God as juxtaposed and contradictory. Marion reads Descartes' positive negations as Scotist and his superlative affirmations as Ockhamist. Scotus privileges the infinite because he sees it as the most perfect concept of God. It is a concept applied exclusively to God and it overdetermines all his other attributes. But this privilege of the infinite is based on the assumption that the aim of theology is to comprehend God and therefore that conceptualization is the way to make him known:

> With this presupposition, both Scotus and Descartes break with Saint Thomas, who, all the while acknowledging infinity in God, subordinates it to *esse*, to the detriment of the epistemological privilege of conceptualization: "Since therefore the divine being is not a being received in anything [other than itself], but He is His own subsisting being..., it is clear that God Himself is infinite and perfect." Here the infinite is de-

[27] MP, 235; PM, 247.
[28] MP, 235; PM, 247.

> duced from subsisting *esse*, and therefore remains an attribute that is secondary from the perspective of subsisting beingness.[29]

We see here that the Scotist negative moment, infinity, is actually positive: a concept by which the finite predicates God as such where the attributes on their own fall short. The idea of the infinite as supreme name opens a theology whose concepts capture the divine being. By contrast, Marion's quotation from the Angelic Doctor shows that St. Thomas' privileging of *esse* in God—which "is not a being received in anything"[30]—ensures the absolute freedom of God's being from adequate comprehension by the human mind and goes so far as to reject the possibility that the human mind can ever aim at it intentionally. Thomas never aims to name God adequately, so he does not need to move from the position of hyperbolic doubt to a priori knowledge of God: from a negative definition (understood positively) to an affirmative one (superlative but conceptually adequate), passing from one concept to another and finally to the onto-theo-logy of *causa*: God as *causa sui*.

> Saint Thomas thinks divine perfection on the basis of the *esse* of the divine being, while Descartes first thinks the divine perfection in order to then, eventually, qualify God with the name *ens*. Saint Thomas never stopped until he had led perfection (as well as all the other attributes) back to the more fundamental determination of the *actus purus essendi*, while Descartes, who in no way privileged the divine *esse*, reaches God directly through the thought of the supreme perfection.[31]

Descartes moves from indetermination to positive adequate concepts. Thomas understands infinity and perfection not as concepts adequate to God but negative attributes deduced from his hyperbolic being.

While Descartes' doctrine of God as infinite is derived from Scotus, it is Ockham's influence that leads Descartes to place the positive definitions omnipotence and substance above the negative definitions. Ockham argued that all negative perfections are inferior to and less perfect than positive ones.[32] The first (Scotist) definition, infinity, which escapes the

[29] MP, 248; PM, 261. Quotation from Aquinas, Sum. Theol., 1a, q. 7, a.1.
[30] Sum. Theol., Ia, 7, 1, resp.
[31] MP, 252-3; PM, 266.
[32] MP, 255-56; PM, 268-70.

method as its starting point in indetermination, establishes the second (Ockhamist) definition, substance, which becomes an object of the method. That which is within the method, comprehensible to mind, is privileged in Descartes over that which always eludes and escapes method and *mathesis*.

The crowning name above all names according to Descartes' method, is the *causa sui*. Despite the first definition [A]—God as infinite and incomprehensible—this third determination [C] is justified, even demanded by what Descartes thinks is a "dictat of reason": "if anything exists we may always ask why it exists; that is, we may inquire into its efficient cause, or, if it does not have one, we may demand why it does not need one."[33] Against incomprehensibility, Descartes concludes: "The inexhaustible power of God is the cause or reason for his not needing a cause."[34] Where the incomprehensibility of infinity was "the sign of another rationality,"[35] a higher reason and "another order" in the terms of Thomas or Pascal (see Chapter II), *causa sui* collapses the power of God into the rationality commensurate with the human gaze:

> [I]n determination [A], as in previous medieval metaphysics, God transcends all causality, because he exerts it and thereby remains free in the face of that which cannot be presented as the principle of reason; by contrast, in determination [C], which in fact is decisive for the development of all subsequent metaphysics, the principle of reason transcends God because it is raised to the point of proving and legitimating his very existence and can thereby suggest in advance a definitive formulation of God. The contradiction between [A] and [C] thus does not merely mark a new tension in the Cartesian revival of the thematic of the divine names. More importantly, it decides the future direction of the history of metaphysics.[36]

Marion concludes that the onto-theo-logy of *cogitatio* corresponds with [B]—the positive perfections, which are adequately thought because, deduced from a priori knowledge. The onto-theo-logy of *causa* corresponds to [C], where God grounds knowledge because he is the first cause that causes itself. But [A], infinity, escapes onto-theo-logy: "if the idea of infinity

[33] *Meditations*, 108, 18-22=78.
[34] *Meditations*, 236, 9-10=165.
[35] MP, 231; PM, 243.
[36] MP, 269; PM 284.

does not find shelter in any of the Cartesian figures of onto-theo-logy, it must inevitably be concluded that it does not arise from the Cartesian constitution of metaphysics."[37] Infinity as such is not taken up by future metaphysics because "it authorizes only the irreparable and inconfusable distinction between God and creatures... This distinction is of no use to the elaboration of a science, since it ends up in the incomprehension of the infinite by the finite, and at the strict delimitation of the sciences practiced by the finite understanding."[38] Here Marion sees Descartes as a prophet, and as a great thinker who reveals his greatness in that he surpasses beforehand the history of his own influence, in this case, the legacy of Cartesian metaphysics:

> [T]he divine name drawn from the idea of infinity does not assume a place in any figure of post-Cartesian onto-theo-logy. Therefore it ought to be understood as a nonmetaphysical utterance of Descartes' thought about God, belonging more to the previous theology of the divine names than to the subsequent onto-theo-logies, where the conceptual idol excludes God from the horizon of metaphysics by pretending to sequester him within onto-theo-logical functions.[39]

Descartes, for Marion, offers a way forward, a way of overcoming metaphysics through the infinite: the ego "can transgress onto-theo-logy metaphysics when it is temporalized by means of possibility," but only if "God is spoken with the most divine name, infinity" such that the second onto-theology (*causa*) contradicts the first (*cogitatio*).[40] What Marion sees in this contradiction is ultimately not that Descartes lacked "conceptual power or conceptual rigor,"[41] but rather, that he "dared face up to the contradiction that is necessarily imposed on the finite by the infinite advancing upon it."[42] In other words, to think the infinite leads to contradiction of possibility. Even within the Cartesian corpus is the path out of onto-theology, which thinks God all too lucidly. This way out is the paradox—the contradiction that alone renders the infinite in the finite.

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[37] MP, 273; PM, 288.
[38] MP, 273; PM, 289.
[39] MP, 275; PM, 291.
[40] MP. 275; PM, 291.
[41] MP, 276; PM, 292.
[42] MP, 276; PM, 292.

§2. The Frame of the Visible: Can the Clarity of the Concept Bedazzle?

The reduction of knowledge to a priori possibility has the seemingly paradoxical consequence that while the known is wholly determined by the mind, this knowledge is not interior. A priori truths are not interior because they are not affective, that is, do not affect the ego. They are determined in advance by the limits of what the ego can know. This "in advance" character means that they do not need to affect the ego in order to be known by it. The ego remains unaffected because the truths are logical truths, existing first in possibility, which is the modality of the noetic. In the sensible world, there are no possible things, only actual things. Possibility is determined by the principle of non-contradiction, and there can only be contradiction *in conceptu*, that is, in the mind.[43] The intrinsic sensibility of the known (in Kant) will still not permit the ego to be affected, for the ego is the transcendental principle by which their objectivity and sensibility is grounded. The transcendental ego is not itself sensed. This raises a critical question with regards to Marion's phenomenology of conceptual idolatry. In light of their non-affectivity, how do "clear and distinct" (a priori) ideas nevertheless attract, and do so not only minimally, but in such a way as to bedazzle, blinding us to even the possibility of the advent of the invisible, blinding us with a clarity without transparency, a visible without either a "beyond" or a "more"?

The Cartesian univocity realized in the juxtaposition of negative and positive moments operates not only with respect to the doctrine of God, but also for phenomena in general. Indeterminacy followed by clear and distinct ideas determines the Cartesian method as an inversion of the doctrine of the analogical approach of Pseudo-Dionysius and the medieval tradition at least up to Aquinas. The central characteristic of Descartes' univocal framework, the reduction to the *mathesis universalis*, shows that there is no "way out" in such a method

[43] Descartes, "Letter to Arnauld of 29 July 1648," in AT 5, pp. 223, 229. Marion discusses this at IM, 30; and TB, 296–303.

that commences from indeterminacy and passes on to what appears positively—the visible now appearing only as clear and distinct ideas. The visible becomes an absolute horizon, preventing the possibility of authentic invisibility from ever appearing.

For Marion, this is the definition of conceptual idolatry. The concept is determined by the measure of the human gaze and bedazzles the gaze with its pure visibility:

> The concept consigns to a sign what at first the mind grasps with it (*concipere, capere*); but such a grasp is measured not so much by the amplitude of the divine as by the scope of a *capacitas*, which can fix the divine in a specific concept only at the moment when a conception of the divine fills it, hence appeases, stops, and freezes it. When a philosophical thought expresses a concept of what it then names "God," this concept functions exactly as an idol.[44]

The concept is phenomenologically an idol. It saturates the gaze with a visibility without reserve, having no unseen aspects or sides. The idol "consists only in the fact that it can be seen, that one cannot but see it. And see it so visibly that the very fact of seeing it suffices to know it."[45] In the idol, the pure visible floods vision to the point of blocking the invisible from ever appearing from itself. Even more, the idol (the seen) becomes more real than the original. In a painting, which Marion uses as one example of an idol—a pure visibility in which "seeing it suffices to know it"—the resemblance differs from the original by "stealing admiration from it."[46] "Phenomenologically, it becomes the original, and the ontic original has no more status than a sketch, an outline, or even a reproduction by anticipation."[47] Marion has in mind modern modes of painting where the viewer stands before it as a spectator that subjects it to his gaze. This point of view contrasts that taken in front of the religious icon, which gazes on you, puts you into question, and before which you can only kneel and pray.

I would want to compare Marion's phenomenology of the painting as idol to Johannes Hoff's take on the verisimilitude brought about by Leon Battista Alberti's linear perspective

[44] GWB, 16; DSE, 26.
[45] GWB, 9; DSE, 18.
[46] IE, 58; DS, 70.
[47] IE, 58-59; DS, 70.

and mathematical understanding of space.[48] The illusion of linear perspective is that space can be adequately mapped upon a flat plan from the "point zero" of the artist's or spectator's gaze. It is through such a perspective that, in Marion's analysis, the appresented disappears. Though the illusion of real space is achieved, the desire to see the other side of a painted mountain, or behind a certain tree simply does not exist as it does in perception of real life things.[49] This lack of "beyond" and of desire to see beyond shows that the painting does not present invisibility as such, but presents what it shows as entirely visible, such that the gaze is satisfied, indeed saturated, by the visible.

If the religious icon manifests an invisible gaze, the presentation of invisibility disappears with linear perspective. This leads to the possibilities such as Cubism, which, Marion points out, crushes the appresented into the frame of the visible. Cubism demonstrates that the invisible is also reducible to the visible and is never really invis*a*ble, which, for Marion means unable to be aimed at. "The façade confronts [*fait face*], but it closes itself all the more, for if everything is visible there, the seen must necessarily be seen on the plane, reduced to flatness [*platitude*], and therefore the façade closes off access to the intimate."[50] The closure of access to the intimate is precisely an instance of the mathematical spatialization manifested in both linear perspective and Cartesian objectivity. The gaze masters and determines even the invisible, but this univocalizing power reduces the known to a platitude without depth. While it can adequately reduce the appresented (the other [*autre*] *of* the visible can be reduced to visibility), the objective gaze simply excludes the other [*autrui*] in the visible, any personal and non-spatial alterity. Now, the side [*face*] and the face [*visage*] cannot and must not enter

[48] See Johannes Hoff, *The Analogical Turn: Rethinking Modernity with Nicholas of Cusa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 84-87.
[49] IE, 62-63; DS, 75-76.
[50] IE, 77; DS, 93.

into the visibility of the painting, into the frame of the seen.[51] What remains is only the concept itself.

It is easy to see the bedazzling power of the visible in paintings. It is less obvious that "clear and distinct ideas" would function in this way. After all, would not the more common sense criticism consist in the fact that clear and distinct ideas are phenomenally poor, deprived of the richness and complexity of life for the sake of a certain knowledge about what persists in presence, namely the most general, repeatable and verifiable features of an object? Would not the very clarity of the concept reveal itself as a window through which ever more might be perceived? Marion's analysis suggests that the clarity of the concept, despite its poverty, bedazzles the gaze with a certain excess. Where does this excess come from if the concept is so poor? It comes from the gaze itself. The concept does not function like a window, but like a mirror.[52]

The idol does not consist in a certain set of beings or genre of being, but "indicates a manner of being for beings."[53] Conceptual idolatry is less determined by the clarity and poverty of the concept as by the manner in which the gaze perceives in order to arrive at clear and distinct ideas. The gaze is bedazzled by the mazes of the purely analytic intention without any intuitive excess. It only intuits its own intention, caught in a bedazzling narcissistic mirror. As in linear perspective, the gaze itself becomes determinative of space as a mathematics and thus determines the concepts it knows. The gaze determines what is and what is not. Yet it cannot see beyond its own limits precisely because of the lucidity of the concepts it creates. The poverty of the concepts is itself bedazzling precisely because it is so easily mastered and the soul swells with the pride of its own mastery. It thereby creates a narcissistic feedback loop. The clear and distinct concept of God functions as an idol precisely because it

[51] IE, 78; DS, 94.
[52] GWB, 11-17; DSE, 20-27.
[53] GWB, 7; DSE, 15.

exhausts its negative moment (indeterminacy) with a positive determination without reserve, a pure visible:

> When the gaze freezes, its aim settles (in the sense that when a wine settles it attains maturity), and hence the not-aimed at disappears. If the idolatrous gaze exercises no criticism of its idol, this is because it no longer has the means to do so: its aim culminates in a position that the idol immediately occupies, and where every aim is exhausted.[54]

A priori knowledge is indeed certain knowledge, but, because of the method, it has a bedazzling effect without fecundity. The idol can be rich, even radiant, but because the gaze swallows up the invisible, the idol lacks potency. Thus the *eidos*, the form — that is, precisely what is possible and determined by the a priori — saturates the transcendental gaze that determines it.

Marion's account of conceptual idolatry is linked to Heidegger's account of enframing (*Gestell*). There is an essential unity between the univocal determinations of the idolatrous gaze and the enframing gaze which sees the world as "standing reserve" (*Bestand*). Gestell is that which reduces the world to a pure visibility, to resources that can be mastered, used or stockpiled. Like the painting that offers itself as a pure visibility, where even the appresented is crushed into the limits of the frame, so technology enframes the world as resource. We know what the world is because its use is fully available to us. The frame blocks anything else from appearing in the visible. We are thus not even able to see that which is not "challenged-forth" by *Gestell*, that is, what is seen as resource, crushed into the frame of technology. The belief that the use of a thing exhausts its meaning is the definition of conceptual idolatry.

Heidegger's critique of metaphysics, and of the analogy of being remains decisive precisely because Marion aims to think the infinite as *received*, that is, the infinite as the reception of the incommensurable, which would by definition rupture the space of finite

[54] GWB, 13; DSE, 22.

determination, the frame of the painting, the "availability" of resources, the positivity of the a priori and its clear and distinct ideas.

§3. Cartesian Onto-theo-logy

The conclusion of Descartes' doctrine of God is that God's grounding of creation is "*per analogiam*" human grounding of knowledge.[55] Whereas for Thomas the unilateral direction of creation prevents any likeness that moves from the human to the divine, Descartes' inversion of analogy lets him ascend to "God." The reversal of analogy is complete. God's action is understood according to human action. Without the incommensurability of the higher order to the lower, there is no longer any affectivity in truth, only correctness and error.

Marion's analysis the Cartesian doctrine of God first shows that, in reversing the analogical order, Descartes renders the definitions of God incoherent and merely "juxtaposes" apophatic and cataphatic definitions. Second, and more importantly, Marion shows Descartes to surpass the reified—static and spatialized—structure of this inverted "God" (before which one can neither dance nor pray) through the very contradiction of the apophatic and cataphatic definitions. This surpassing of the method, by means of the contradiction of the infinite, would gives a doctrine of analogy less concerned with understanding God as cause or establishing the stability of an ego than with the essential absence of cause and instability of the ever off-balance spiritual praxis and ascent. Entailing a different structure of relation, this sort of analogy also entails a reconfigured anthropology based in encounter with things as they give themselves rather than as determined in advance by the most general categories (that of being, especially). It could be that phenomenology, in its attempt to overcome the errors of the nominalist and univocal thinking of modern philosophy, re-enables *theo*-logical thinking as a spiritual practice and an analogical participation in God that does not obliterate the incommensurable distance between God and his image.

[55] TB, 428.

In *God Without Being* Marion places in opposition a top-down God's eye point of view (iconic gaze) and a bottom-up egological approach (idolatrous gaze). As a strict opposition this tends to oversimplify the Cartesian turn. Yet there is indeed a problem with a purely bottom-up philosophy insofar as it starts with indefiniteness and moves towards objective certainty. If the a priori is determinative in the egological approach as its final moment, then the ego has no real access to that which is beyond itself. All that it receives is basically within its control because whatever it cannot determine objectively is excluded as the indefinite. Not only does the ego in this model only access an idolatrous concept of God, but such an ego has no possibility of real growth through its knowledge: its way of knowing is utterly disconnected from its way of being. This version of the bottom-up approach, however, is intrinsically tied up with the movement from indefiniteness to objectivity that makes of the object the absolute horizon of knowledge, thereby converting it into a narcissistic mirror. The *theo*-logical approach offers, by contrast, the possibility of the expansion of the soul, that is, the possibility of the impossible: receiving that which is beyond what is categorically available. If *theo*-logy risks a fideistic anti-rational interpretation, it becomes clear that the problem resides in the either/or—the making of a firm distinction between a philosophical method and a *theo*-logical one. Much of the following will work to deconstruct such a firm opposition.

§4. Possibility as Necessity

The Cartesian reduction to a univocal *ordo rationis* enables Christian Wolff to define philosophy as the science of the possible.[56] In this view, possibility is equivalent to what the mind can know by an a priori logic derived from the principle of non-contradiction. By this reduction of being to what the mind can know according to non-contradiction, being now consists of the things that do exist and the things that possibly exist. Existing things are a

[56] Christian Wolff, *German Logic*, (London: L. Hawes, W. Clarke, and R. Collins, 1770), §1. Marion refers to Wolff's definition at IM, 30.

subset of possible things. Being is determined as what is possible and thus is reduced to the single univocal order of the mind. As a consequence, what is possible is not merely possible, but necessary. The unity of possibility and necessity gives a precise definition to worldly presence, confirmed by Kant: "That which in its connection with the actual is determined in accordance with universal conditions of experience is (that is, exists as) necessary."[57] It is in fact necessity that determines possibility which in turn determines being in the strict adequation of being to possibility. That possibility *is* determines it as necessary, a strictly logical possibility grounded in the principle of non-contradiction. This definition fits precisely the phenomenality of the idol insofar as it puts in place an absolute horizon determined by the mind's logic: the conditions of possibility of experience.

According to non-contradiction any possible being is a necessary being. By a purely analytic method, one might approach the question of God by saying that if God is a possible being, he is consequently a necessary being. By non-contradiction, one could say that it is impossible for God to be impossible. If God does not contradict the laws of nature, then he necessarily exists. God is the necessary being par excellence: that which is not contingent being and the principle from which all contingent things have their existence. Necessity derived from non-contradiction arrives at an apology for the existence of God and thus preeminently arrives at a God that has (necessary) existence as his primary feature. This God does not contradict what the mind has determined to be possible. Such a definition of God as a necessary being operates exactly according to the constraints of the being-possibility correlation offered by Kantian epistemology. His necessity is determined by possibility, a being among beings.

In contrast to the correlation of possibility to necessity grounded in the principle of non-contradiction, Marion's doctrine of God finds its inspiration in Nicholas of Cusa who

[57] *Critique of Pure Reason*, A218, B266.

argues that for God "impossibility is necessity."[58] Cusa wants to show that it is precisely the principle of non-contradiction that God's presence in the world surpasses. God is the one found in the coincidence of contradictories, that is, in what is impossible according to the limits of finitude (for which Kant's formula remains decisive). Thus, the concept of "necessity" in *possibility as necessity* and the concept of "necessity" in *impossibility as necessity* is nearly equivocally applied in the two cases.

Phenomenology, Marion argues, reverses the metaphysical (Aristotelian) priority of actuality (*energia*) over possibility (*dunamis*) through the radical priority of the given over any a priori determination. But if possibility (non-contradiction) is expanded to the impossible (absolute possibility), then it is only the event of the impossible that evinces *Actus purus*. Cusa maintains Thomas's "ontological realism," but speaks of God as absolute possibility in a way that has little to do with the a priori philosophies of Descartes, Wolff, and Kant. In this way, Cusa foreshadows the shift from metaphysics to phenomenology. Cusa's approach is phenomenological insofar as, in order to find God, he argues that one must look for God in the things that are impossible for us.[59] It is only in impossible phenomena that God appears as God because the impossible gives itself from itself, rather than being determined by non-contradiction and the conditions of the possibility of experience.

Cusa's *Posse ipsum* does not coincide with a Kantian definition of existence (sensibility) or with a Kantian principle (intelligibility):

> Possibility itself (*Posse ipsum*), therefore, is called "light" by certain saints, not the sensible, rational, or intelligible light but rather the light of all that can emit light. For nothing can possibly be brighter, clearer, or more beautiful than Possibility itself.[60]

For Cusa and Marion, God is not non-contradiction, nor an instance of a necessary possibility. God is received only in the coincidence of contraries, that is, in paradox. In order to find God,

[58] *De visione Dei*, 9, 37. English translation in *Selected Spiritual Writings,* trans. H. Lawrence Bond, (New York: Paulist Press, 1997).
[59] For more details see IM.
[60] *De apice theoriae*, 8, (translation slightly modified). See Hoff, 21.

we cannot look for what is possible or probable, that is, what might be the case because logically deducible, submitting him to the conditions of the possibility of (sensible) experience. The "necessity" that coincides with impossibility has nothing to do with "what might be the case." The Kantian position is an adequative logic: God's possibility adequately establishes God's necessity. But the Cusan coincidence of opposites leads to God as the impossible par excellence, the one who contradicts logical necessity. The world of necessity that conforms to the being-possibility correlation is that which not only is not God, but also is that which closes in on itself in order to exclude him. In other words, it acts as an idolatrous horizon. Here we discover the deeper truth in the superficially dualistic intimation that the world is evil precisely as *necessary* and that only what is free is good. Only the free radiates God's creative activity. Here also we see the meaning of Heidegger's claim that science does not think. It merely conforms to what is necessary. When identity is thought as a category of being, the correlation of possibility to being determines the necessary. It lacks a preceding generative principle.

Through Cusa, we can interpret Marion in a non-nominalist vein. First, in posing God as "Possibility itself" Cusa is not opposing, but rather developing, Aquinas's concept of God as *Actus purus*. For Aquinas understood that the actuality of the world could not be comprehended as the actualization of hypothetical possibilities. Some primary actuality must precede all potencies and determinable possibilities: "*De potentia autem non potest aliquid reduci in actum, nisi per aliquid ens in actu*."[61] Thomas's principle implies that not only God, but even the future, is strictly speaking not a possibility. Act comes before being possible. Thus the *principium* is without why: God or what is not yet existent, i.e. the future. Insofar as the world is suspended between potency and actuality, it is dependent upon the pure act of God. When Cusa converts *Actus purus* into *Posse ipsum*, he wants to emphasize that the actuality of God

[61] Sum. Theol., I, q. 2, a. 3.

is not the existential realization of any conceivable possibility. Hoff writes, "The creative power of the 'possibility itself' preempts rational speculations about probabilities and possibilities up to the point where 'impossibility coincides with necessity (*impossibilitas coincidet cum necessitate*)."[62] Possibility itself is that without which nothing is possible.

Hoff argues that Cusa's definition of God as 'possibility itself' allowed him to develop "a more rigorous account of the primacy of God's actuality over logical possibilities than Aristotelian accounts permitted."[63] This can be seen in my analysis above. God's necessity coincided with God's possibility strictly from the rule of non-contradiction and thus from the conditions of possibility. Under an interpretation within non-contradiction, *actus purus* can be converted into the non-sensible transcendental I as it is in Kant.[64] Yet if "possibility itself" is a more precise way to speak of *Actus purus*, to talk of God as something like "Impossibility itself" is yet again a more precise way to speak of the self-givenness of Pure Act. It removes some of the ambiguity of "Possibility itself" through the negative prefix that signifies its hyperbolic status beyond any actual being or possible being, that is, beyond non-contradiction itself. Impossibility says that God does not need to fit the rules of logical possibility: impossible because it comes before the possible and makes both the possible and the actual possible.

The Impossible is precisely how we would receive Pure Act. It is thus the definition that arises from phenomenological attentiveness to God's activity in the world. To speak of God as the impossible is not atheistic, nor does it concern an apology for God based on phenomenology's intrinsic openness to any possible given and leading to the rather weak claim for a God who *might* be (impossible to exclude God's possibility) or who therefore *must* be (not impossible, therefore possible, therefore necessary according to the Wolffian logic based on non-contradiction). It has nothing to do with an apology for God's (necessary) existence, but entails another kind of necessity altogether: that which is necessarily received

[62] Hoff, 180. *De visione Dei*, 9, 37.
[63] Hoff, 193.
[64] *Critique of Pure Reason*, B157.

only at the coincidence of opposites and not within the comparative logic of non-contradiction. Thus impossibility is that which exceeds our proportional knowledge and exceeds it by necessity: "impossibility is necessity in your sight, O Lord."[65] If God is the cause of the actuality of physical reality, the correlation of being-possibility is below any relation to God who exceeds the "necessity" derived from possibility: "the pure actuality of God transcends the physical reality of our world inasmuch as it transcends our capacity for rational inferences with regard to determinable possibilities and probabilities" (Hoff).[66]

God's "impossibility" is precisely that which "speaks against" the law of non-contradiction. Consequently an analytic move from God as a possible being to God as necessary being would identify another God, at best the Being of beings and not the God for whom impossibility is necessity, the God who creates *ex nihilo*. Necessity grounded in non-contradiction is onto-theological necessity, governed decisively by the correlation of being to possibility. It is necessary that any God worthy of the name would contradict this necessity. This concept of impossibility as that which exceeds the idolatrous horizon will be developed further as we proceed.

[65] *De visione Dei*, 9, 37.
[66] Hoff, 179.

CHAPTER II

Real Relation and the Event

While Marion's reading of Aquinas on analogy has been a well-worn point of contention,[1] we can find our way out of such a morass by framing the question not in terms of the existence of an analogy, but in terms of a more fundamental questioning of the structure of relation. After all, is it not possible that analogy is not the only means or indeed the preferable means of circumventing the univocity/equivocity dilemma of modernity? The issue of whether or not the *analogia entis* entails that a third term, the idea of being, rules over the difference between God and the human person will probably never come to resolution within the framework that such a debate is situated. But what I would want to suggest is that relation does not require a common concept, and therefore, participation in the life of God does not require anything common between that which participates and that in which it participates. Such a thesis is hardly ground-breaking, yet the structure of such a relation has rarely if ever been understood. In order to understand the ontological structure of creation—particularly created human being—we should not start from Thomas's doctrine of analogy, but from his doctrine of relation. In this chapter, I will argue that Marion's thinking of givenness according to a relation of incommensurable orders depends on a supposition similar to Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of real relation.

That there can be a real relation of incommensurable terms for Thomas allows me to wield his concept of real relation against the *analogia entis* as traditionally understood. I will

[1] The response of the Thomists to Marion's reading of Aquinas in *God Without Being* was often quite critical. For the response in France, see the bibliography listed in GWB 199-200, n. 5. In English, the list includes Kenneth Schmitz, "The God of Love," *The Thomist* 57 (1993); Brian Shanley, "Saint Thomas, Onto-theology, and Marion," *The Thomist* 60.4 (1996). David Burrell, "Reflections on 'Negative Theology' in the Light of a Recent Venture to Speak of 'God Without Being'" in *Postmodernism and Christian Philosophy,* ed. R. T. Ciapalo (Mishawaka, IN: American Maritain Association, 1997). Michael B. Ewbank, "Of Idols, Icons, and Aquinas's *Esse*: Reflections on Jean- Luc Marion." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 42.2 (2002).

demonstrate that not only does Marion's phenomenology of givenness follow the grammar of Thomas's doctrine of real relation, but that givenness radicalizes real relation. In short, instead of a likeness that produces an ever greater difference (Przywara's structure), Marion starts with absolutely heterogeneous yet related terms. What I will suggest is that even Aquinas, in his mature understanding of the relation of creation as an *analogia attributionis* enables an analogy without analogy, a surpassing of analogical predication by pushing its ontological implications to the extreme, excluding any commensurability between the terms without in the least excluding relation.

While my argument launches from an interpretation of Aquinas, the final position that I show to be a surpassing of analogy is facilitated by the work in which Marion does not engage Thomas directly but which is nevertheless a radical development in continuity with Thomas's thought: first, the passages in which Marion employs Pascal's three orders of knowledge to overcome Cartesian metaphysics and, second, his description of the evental nature of the saturated phenomenon in which there is never any categorical adequation between the knower and the known. I will thus move quickly from Thomas's teaching on relation to an explanation of how Marion's saturated phenomenon should be understood by means of this doctrine of relation, and finally to a constructive synthesis by which we extend analogical thinking beyond itself towards a participation without similitude, which I will define as hyperbolic relation.

§1. The Univocal Determination of Analogy

In order to understand how Marion's thought surpasses analogy through a continuity with Aquinas, we need to establish our starting point in Thomas's doctrine of analogy and in his grammar of real relation. There are two main types of analogy in Aquinas: analogy of proportion (*analogia proportionalis*) and analogy of attribution (*analogia attributionis*).

Analogy of proportion is that between two pairs of terms: A is to B as C is to D. This is also known as mathematical analogy. The relation between the two pairs is not a direct participation for it is a proportion within one pair that is equal to the proportion within the other pair. For example, four is to two as ten is to five is the proportion of the double. Four is the double of two and ten is the double of five. But two has no direct relation to five. In analogy of attribution, by contrast, all analogates are related to a primary instance. To use Aristotle's example, a "healthy" medicine, "healthy" climate, and "healthy" food are said in analogical ways because all refer back to the health of the man for whom they are healthy.[2] The word healthy has no meaning for these substantives outside of their relation to the primary instance, the proper functioning of the body. A good chair, a good book, a good field, a good man all are said to have their goodness by participation in "the Good."

Bernard Montagnes argues that, in his mature work, Thomas posits an analogy of attribution for the analogy between God and the world and rejects the analogy of proportion that he had favored in his middle work, *De Veritate*.[3] In the *De Veritate*, Aquinas had rejected the analogy of attribution which he had developed in the *Sentences* because it abolished the infinite distance between the creature and God in that it posited a formal and efficient similitude between them. Instead Thomas thought that the extrinsic, indirect relation of analogy of proportion would secure God's transcendence against any ontic participation in the divine. In his mature work, Thomas would reject this view because, while there is no intrinsic relation between the pairs, the proportion itself is univocal. For example, "the double" is univocally applied to both four is to two and ten is to five. Montagnes writes of analogy of proportion:

> In short, it is sufficient that a concept be one even proportionately for it to enjoy the logical properties of universality and priority, so that it is more general, broader, and higher than its inferiors. The analogous concept, inasmuch as it has unity even though this unity is neither perfect nor simple, governs the analogates and circumscribes them as a more general term. Thus, the idea of being is more common than that of sub-

[2] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* iv, 2, 1003a33–35.
[3] *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being According to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. E.M. Macierowski, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004).

> stance or accident; it circumscribes the diverse beings and they are included in it; it surpasses them and extends beyond them....By means of this logical property, the analogous concept joins up with the univocal concept, since the logical superiority of a concept is a direct consequence of its unity.[4]

Analogy of proportion depends upon not only a nominal concept that encompasses and transcends the terms of the analogy and sets up a measure by which the terms can reciprocally measure each other. Analogy of proportion excludes an ontic similitude through attribution at the price of a noetic univocity.

Thomas returns to analogy of attribution without analogy of proportion when he begins to rethink participation as that between act and potency, which enables him to throw out all participation *by similitude* without getting rid of participation as such.[5] Thus, according to Montagnes' reading, Aquinas's mature position on the analogy between God and the world is that of an analogy of attribution without similitude.

Montagnes argues that Thomists have accepted the unity of the idea of being implied in the analogy of proportion ever since Cajetan's interpretation of Thomas. Cajetan does not see analogy of attribution as intrinsic, but logical and extrinsic according to the analogy of proportion.[6] Following Montagnes directly and explicitly, Marion emphasizes that *analogia entis* has an implicit univocal framework: "It is even more necessary to underline that, coming from Duns Scotus unto Suárez by means of Cajetan, the inflation of this doctrine [*analogia entis*] has had no other aim than to submit it to the growing empire of the univocal and intelligible concept of *ens*."[7] According to the similitude of a common concept, the unity of the idea of being creates the tyranny of the logic of mind over the given:

> Cajetan transfers analogy from ontology to logic, since the property of encompassing its inferiors…pertains only to our representation. The all-encompassing supreme in-

[4] Montagnes, 131.
[5] Montagnes, 40-43. For the argument that analogy by likeness is only a feature of Thomas's early work, also see Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World,* trans. A. Poignant (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1952), 345.
[6] Montagnes, 127-28.
[7] GWB, 212; RT, 43.

> stance within which all beings are unified and under which they all are like each other is none other than the idea of being. The unity of being is that of a concept.[8]

Montagnes' reading is by no means uncontroversial. Published in 1963, it shifted the landscape of how to read Aquinas on analogy. Montagnes' interpretation contrasts strongly with the Thomist tradition coming from Cajetan. While Cajetan sought to synthesize the analogy of proportion of Thomas's middle work with that of his later preference for analogy of attribution, for Montagnes, the later supercedes the former: Thomas does not want to synthesize the two analogies, Montagnes argues, but intends to replace his older false view with a true one.[9] Marion sides with Montagnes' reading in his somewhat conciliatory essay "Thomas Aquinas and Onto-theo-logy." Here Marion exonerates Thomas of any accusation of onto-theo-logy through arguing with Montagnes against Cajetan's synthesizing interpretation of Thomas on analogy.[10] Montagnes argues that Thomas's mature position on analogy dispenses with any similitude between the analogates. This allows us to separate the relation of creation from analogical predication even if it lets us keep analogy for the doctrine of the divine names. No longer requiring any similitude, the relation of creation consists not of analogous, but of incommensurable terms. Here, incommensurability does not imply any Barthian gulf because it always gives itself as a relation. Thus we should turn to Thomas's teaching on relation, rather than to his teaching on analogy in order to more fully comprehend the paradox of the relation without similitude.

Scotus posits the univocity of being upon the supposition that the concept we call "being" must necessarily govern *between* the various concrete beings of the created order and being itself. The concept of being thereby provides a *similitudo* between them in that the

[8] Montagnes, 132.
[9] It should be noted that Erich Przywara maintains the Cajetanian interpretation of synthesizing both analogies, and ultimately favors the *proportionalitas* of the *De Veritate* as that which secures "ever greater difference." See *Analogia Entis*, §6 and §8, and Betz's introduction, 72-74.
[10] Marion cites Montagnes at GWB, 274n30; RT, 45n32. Marion notes his reliance on Montagnes as early as TB (88n24), for which reason we should not be too quick to think that he did not have a deep understanding of Thomas by the time of his first edition of DSE.

concept or *idea* of being is common to all, common even to the infinite Being we name God. This conceptual "between" from which Scotus deduces univocity does not come from no where. It derives from a particular understanding of relation. This concept that mediates "between" is precisely what is lacking, or at least not determinative, in Thomas's understanding of relation as such and therefore implies no final conceptual unity within the most fundamental relation: that of the created to the Uncreated Creator. For Thomas, relations do not exist *between* things, but occur *in* things (*in re ipsa*). The relation cannot be abstracted from its concrete existence. Any "between" is a purely conceptual and noetic way of seeing a relation abstracted from its real existence *in* things. Because relations are *in* the things related, not only are they concrete qualifications of a substance, but they do not presume or presuppose a likeness to the other term that defines them as relations. It is important to grasp Thomas's doctrine of real relation, because I will show that it is the grammatical foundation that allows Thomas to eventually develop an analogy of attribution without formal or efficient similitude. I can then employ it to eventually think, with and beyond Marion, an analogy without analogy.

The relations we are concerned with are mixed relations, where the kind of relation differs in each term because the orders of the terms differ. Thomas says: "Sometimes a relation is real in one extreme, while in the other extreme it is only 'of reason'; and this happens whenever two extremes are not of one order.[11] The relation of creation is such a relation: "Relations signified by names which are applied to God temporally [such as Creator] are only 'of reason' [*secundum rationem*] in God; but the opposite relations in creatures are real [*secundum rem*]."[12] So the relation Creator-creature appears as a real relation within the human being, but within God this relation is not real, but is a relation "of reason." Thomas's example of an intraworldly mixed relation is the relation between the knower and the known

[11] Sum. theol., 1, q. 13, a. 7, corp. I use the English Dominican translations with some modifications.
[12] Sum. theol., 1, q. 13, a. 7, ad 4.

in the act of perception. The relation of known object and knower is a real relation in the knowing subject—it concretely qualifies the knower. She takes on its form without its matter. In scholastic terms, she becomes the thing "intentionally," i.e., according to her intentional gaze. But the relation is only "logical" ("of reason") in the known. If one gazes upon a tree, one's mind in a sense becomes dendriform. The tree itself, however, is unaffected. The relation in the tree, that is, in the known object, is therefore simply "of reason" though it is real in the knower. The known in its material reality is unaffected by this relation, yet logically it is related because its form gives shape to the knower as knower of this thing.

The mixed relation in the perceptual act is in some ways similar to the relation of man to God. For Thomas, God's simplicity means that he cannot be affected by temporal, created reality, so his relation to creation is only logically applied to him. We must understand creation (composition) as coming from him (simplicity). Real relation implies affectivity, thus excludes simplicity in that it *is* composition. "Creator" is not real in God because real means concretely affecting, which, for Aquinas, can only take place in the time-space composite. God, who is impassible in himself is not concretely qualified by his relation to his creatures.[13] He has no accidents, no concrete qualifications. Creation therefore cannot imply that God has anything in common with creatures because creation never qualifies him. Yet this does not exclude relation. Thomas allows us to think the relation of heterogeneous orders through his understanding of real relation as "in" things, which does not require a similitude "between" them. While the ontological order does not bind the terms together as a master logic that would reduce God either to a changeable being or to the indifference of the being of beings,

[13] Augustine writes, "With God, nothing is said according to accident (*secundum accidens*), because there is nothing changeable with him. And yet not everything that is said of him is said substance-wise. Some things are said with reference to something else (*ad aliquid*), like the Father with reference to Son and Son with reference to Father; and this is not an accident because the one is always Father and the other always Son.…Therefore, although being Father is different from being Son, there is no difference of substance, because these names are not said according to substance but according to relation (*relativum*), yet this relation is not an accident because it is not changeable." *De trinitate*, 5, 5, 6 (trans. mod.).

God as a wholly heterogeneous term is nevertheless intimately related to creation. The "of reason" of his relation does not prohibit an intimacy to what he affects.

Thomas's understanding of relations as "in" things is a direct consequence of his Aristotelian understanding of relation as a category, and therefore as an accident.[14] The relation of creation is exemplary. Creation for Aquinas is not in the genus of change because creation *ex nihilo* has nothing to do with moving from one state to another.[15] Creation is rather "the very dependence of the created *esse* upon the principle from which it is produced. And so, [creation] is in the genus of relation."[16] Since relation is always an accident insofar as it is a category, the relation of creation is not a relation in created essence, but is rather an accident of created *esse*. As Gilles Emery puts it, for Thomas, real relation "concretely qualifies the substance which carries it, in the same way that an accident does." Relation as an accident, Emery continues, "radically distinguishes Thomas' teaching from the later nominalism which reduces relation to a mental comparison."[17]

For Thomas, *esse* is always an *esse-ad* (being-towards), as David Burrell stresses.[18] This being-towards, which is the relation of creation, "comes upon" an individual substance, which is absolute and not itself related to God (or to anything else). Only because the created being is a composition of its created *esse-ad* and absolute substance is it related to God. While the essence is never relational, but is absolute,[19] the *esse* of the creature is not to be understood as coming from the essence, but from God:

> Although the first cause that is God does not enter into the essence of creatures, yet being (*esse*) which is in creatures cannot be understood except as derived from the di-

[14] *Categories*, 7, 6a37-8b24.
[15] I owe much of the following clarification between Thomas and his adversaries to Gilles Emery's article, "La relation de création," *Nova et Vetera,* 88/1, (2013). Also of use is the chapter on relation in his excellent study *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 78-95.
[16] *Summa contra Gentiles*, II, 18.
[17] *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas*, 86.
[18] See David Burrell, "The Act of Creation and its Theological Consequences," in *Creation and the God of Abraham*, eds. David B. Burrell, et al., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 44-45.
[19] See III, §3 for more on this.

> vine being (*esse*): even as a proper effect cannot be understood save as produced by its proper cause.[20]

The relation to the Creator is not part of the essence of things, but is a *proper accident*.[21] Since the proper accident is defined as something without which the essence would not be what it is, creation as a proper accident must understand being to be participated: "From the fact that a thing is a being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another."[22] Being itself is an accident that comes upon the creature.

The fact that substance is unrelated to God is a surprising conclusion for a relation without which the creature would cease to be, but it follows directly from incommensurability that the orders must be absolute with respect to one another. For Thomas, real relation "cannot exist without something absolute."[23] This quotation is in the context of explaining the absolute distinction of the Trinitarian persons. Yet it clearly refers to how Thomas thinks of relations in general. Thomas continues:

> In whatever is relative there must be understood that which is said of itself (*ad se*) and, additionally, that which is said referring to another (*ad aliud*). Thus is something said absolutely of "servant" and, additionally, something is said referring "to the master." Therefore, that relation by which the Father and the Son are distinguished must have something absolute on which it is founded. Now, then, either that absolute is one only, or there are two absolutes. If it is one only, a twofold relation cannot be founded upon it, unless, of course, it be a relation of identity which can produce no distinction—as when one says that the same is the same as the same. Therefore, if the relation be such that it calls for a distinction, there must be a prior understanding of a distinction of absolutes. Accordingly, it does not seem possible that the Persons of the Father and the Son are distinguished by relations only.

The example of the relation of servant to master would of course more easily fits that of creature to Creator (than of Father to Son). The servant is not entirely defined as "the one who serves the master," for in order for there to be a "one who" there must be one absolutely distinct from and thereby free of the master. Thus, the substance, on the one hand, is free and

[20] *De potentia*, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1.
[21] The concept of "proper accident" comes from Porphyry's elaboration of five different kinds of accident in his commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories.*
[22] *Sum. theol*., 1, q. 44, a. 1, ad 1.
[23] *Contra Gentiles* IV, 10, 10.

absolute and, on the other, has *esse* not from itself but only as participated in other. I will return to this surprising thesis shortly, in order to show how it relates to Marion's analysis of the event.

Bonaventure, Henry of Ghent, and Duns Scotus would dismantle the doctrine of real relation by arguing that the relation of creation is not accidental but "of essence," thereby making Thomas's teaching eccentric in the university at his time, despite its authoritative backing in Aristotle, Porphyry, and Avicenna who taught the accidentality of being. Bonaventure has Thomas as his target when, wanting a closer relation of the creature to God, he posits the human being as *essentially* dependent on God as Creator: "the relation of the creature to the Creator is not an accident, but is essential."[24] Or Henry of Ghent: "The being of a creature is a true real relation...by which the essence of the creature is related to the Creator in a certain dependence."[25] Although Duns Scotus maintained that relations are indeed accidents, he made an exception for relations on which the creature depends essentially. In the case of the creature's relation to God, Scotus critiques Henry and argues that the relation is not an accident because it is a transcendental relation identical with the creature itself. The relation is essential because the creature could not be except through its relation to God.[26] As I suggested already, it is this teaching that leads to the univocity of being: "the relations of the creature to God are transcendental, because of which they are not in the genus of relation."[27] Essence has priority over relation. It follows that if the essence is related, even in a transcendental mode, such an essence is by definition not absolute, and so the relation is not real.

The accidentality of being and the incommensurability of orders go together. This is clear in both Scotus and Aquinas. The absolute nature of the human essence marks its incommensurability to that which appears to it. The tendency towards collapsing the distinction

[24] In Hexaëmeron Collatio IV, 8. Also, In I Sent., dist. 30, dubium 4. The quotations here are my own translations.
[25] *Summa,* 35, q. 8.
[26] *Ordinatio* II, dist. 1, q. 4-5, nº 260, nº 278.
[27] *Lectura in II Sent*., dist. 1, q. 4-5, nº 261.

between God and world is only overcome through thinking the relation of two terms of heterogeneous orders in which the relation is real in one extreme while only of reason in the other. This heterogeneity and incommensurability prohibits the relation from existing "between," that is, purely conceptually. It prohibits the univocity of the "idea of being." The thesis that relation requires a similitudinous "between" begins to assume its decisive role as an epistemological condition only in Duns Scotus and is synthesized into analogy by means of Cajetan, where it seeps into the subsequent Thomist tradition, becoming all the more insidious as it remains an unthought background, never brought forward for questioning.[28]

As Marion notes, Thomas reverses the traditional primacy of the Good, and replaces it with the primacy of Being. But he does so with an apophatic intention: to free divine *esse* from the intelligibility of metaphysics and "to dig the chasm that separates the two understandings of *esse* [divine *esse* and created *esse*] (and not to bridge it)."[29] Marion sees that, for Aquinas like Pseudo-Dionysius, analogy aims to show that God is not circumscribed by any intelligibility, especially that of being. The noetic primacy of *ens* prevents any access to God via being because God is only posited as "Being" insofar as participated being can only be understood as coming from him. In Marion's reading of Aquinas, any adequation between God and Being is negated because Thomas establishes the unilateral direction of causality as a logic of creation *ex nihilo*. Marion argues that the primacy of the concept of *ens* is "strictly noetic, without claiming to impose itself as a primacy in general."[30] Being as accidental gives an inhering order to creation which is knowable as *in being*, but does not allow this knowability to be applied also to God. Far from giving an ontic or noetic access to God, this noetic primacy blocks all access to God via *ontos* or *noesis*. What undergirds a turn to *analogia*

[28] In an essay on Descartes, Marion cites a passage from Suarez as a source of Descartes' doctrine on substance, which shows that Suarez also takes the more religious understanding of the human being's essential relation to God: "The essence of created substance is so imperfect, that it always requires the addition of a different species…the existence of created nature is such that it is essentially dependent on God and on its being effected." Suarez, *Disputationes metaphysicae* 34, s. 3. N. 14. See CQ2, 84-89; QC2, 91-99.
[29] GWB, 212; RT, 43. The parenthetical remark, "and not to bridge it," is the translator's addition.
[30] GWB, 211; RT, 42. Trans. mod.

attributionis in Thomas's late work is, I would argue, the possibility of a relation between incommensurable orders.

While *ens* has the shape of *coming-from-God*, God as the Principle from which *ens* comes must be thought only as the structural openness of our created *ratio* and does not identify God himself. In other words, "God as the Principle of Being" is not God. Rather, reason is so structured that it feels itself related to God, and points to him:

> For in good theology, the primacy of *esse* implies especially that it to be understood, more than any other name, starting from God, and not that God can be conceived adequately starting from *esse*. To think *esse* starting from God, but not in inverse order (in the way of *metaphysica* and even Heidegger) allows Thomas Aquinas to free the divine *esse* from its—tangentially univocal—comprehension starting from what philosophy understands by Being, beings, Being of beings, in short, to mark the distance—"the infinite distance from the creature to God."[31]

Analogia entis as an *analogia nominum* points to the noetic structure of discursive, embodied knowing, which *prevents* (and does not give) any ontic access to God. Noetic analogy (and the primacy of being within noesis) ensures a real incommensurability. It is the structure of composition that points towards a unity to which it is related but over which it has no noetic mastery. Having nothing in common with created *esse*, God "gets freed too from metaphysical intelligibility, even to the point of appearing from that perspective as nothing less than unknown."[32]

For Aquinas, being cannot be abstracted from its concrete manifestations. The importance of real relation and the "real unity of being" over the "unity of the idea of being" cannot be overstated. While for Thomas the mind can only know a thing insofar as it conceives the thing, the knower does not need to precede the known with a pre-conception or representation, as the unity of the idea of being precedes any concrete manifestations of being. Rather the knower receives the known as a concept or form (intentional object) without

[31] GWB, 228-29; RT, 58. Trans. mod. No doubt with Marion's larger project in mind, the translator misattributes this quotation to Pascal and indeed mistranslates it as "infinitely infinite distance," placing "from the creature to God" outside of the quotation. It is in fact a quotation from Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 2, a. 11, ad 4: "infinita distantia creaturae ad Deum."
[32] GWB, 212; RT, 43. Trans. mod.

identifying its beingness with the concept. In Marion's terms, the given (known) is in excess of the receiver (knower) insofar as it is not reduced to an a priori possibility of the knower, a possibility that is "already there," already encompassed by the mind's rationality as a possibility of the univocal *mathesis universalis*. Real relation implies incommensurability of orders, without which we could not avoid the conclusion that the mind can encompass being, and that the "idea of being" precedes real beings such that existence coincides with being known by the mind.

The inseparability of beings from their concrete reality depends on the grammar of real relation, which in no way implies from the start any beingness. Relations, in other words, sometimes precede beings, and relations are given by an other than the being in which they reside. What is prior to being thought is neither noetic nor ontic, but comes according to its own horizon. This real unity of being cannot make sense except insofar as its incommensurability to the non-ontic orders is maintained. Rather than building a neat and predictable system based on the univocal rationality of the *mathesis universalis*, real relation prohibits the tidy completion of such a project. It lets the phenomenon come from itself, for which reason it is always, at least in theory, open to non-ontic and unpredictable manifestations, even what Marion classifies as phenomena without being. The self-giving of one term really "in" another can go so far as to alter the whole of that which receives it.

In sum, Marion argues in defense of Aquinas that his definition of God escapes the intelligibility of metaphysics precisely through the noetic primacy of being, which in turn ensures the real incommensurability of the terms related. While we have seen that Marion's argument primarily rests on an apophatic approach to being, I have brought the notion of real relation into the debate on analogy because real relation allows the thought of an order wholly other than created beingness to enter into created *esse* without *esse* foreseeing it and without ever bridging the infinite gap between the terms. If Marion's reading of Aquinas suggests that

the analogy of being results in an idolatrous conception of God as Being, it also implies that true analogy is the very means by which onto-theology is to be avoided. This could only be the case, however, if what we mean by being is not predicative and conceptual, but is disclosive of a participation in an other than being. The primacy of being in knowing (Aquinas) gives way to the primacy of the given beyond both noesis and ontos (Marion). Givenness ultimately disrupts any adequation of noesis and ontos and any self-sufficiency of the noetic.

§2. The Problem of Transcendence

Marion's recent work on impossibility and the unconditioned brings further clarity to his earlier dissatisfaction with the analogy of being. Marion begins his lecture, "The Impossible for Man—God," by showing that the two meanings of transcendence in philosophy never actually succeed in getting "beyond." The first meaning of transcendence is its phenomenological definition: that which surpasses the immanence of consciousness. Intentional consciousness, for Husserl, aims at something. The object of an intentional aim is said to be transcendent because it is other than the consciousness that aims at it: "The thing transcends consciousness in that it stands outside of consciousness, even though it never stands without it."[33] For Marion, insofar as the intended object still cannot stand without consciousness, "consciousness never overcomes itself" because it "never goes beyond the entitative object" *of* consciousness.[34] (We will look at this more in the next chapter.) In a way not unsimilar to Husserlian method, Heidegger's reduction of Being "in its totality, to Being itself" means that a Heideggerian transcendence "will never reach beyond Being. On the contrary, erected henceforth as the 'transcendent pure and simple,' Being will by right be the term of every intentional aiming and every advance of every possible transcendence."[35]

[33] IM, 17.
[34] IM, 18.
[35] IM, 18.

This phenomenological determination of transcendence and its incapacity to move beyond the horizon of Being is, for Marion, inherited from Scotus, who provides the second, and indeed primary, philosophical concept of transcendence: that of metaphysics where "the first division of being divides being into finite and infinite, thereby ruling on the distinction between God and creature."[36] *Esse* transcends the difference between finite and infinite and determines all of the transcendentals that are applied to God. Marion admits that if one increases "the density of divine transcendence to the point of "*ipsum esse* (following Thomas Aquinas)" one escapes "the confines of the concept of entity (following Duns Scotus, and later Suárez)."[37] But *ipsum esse* is at best a second order apophasis, a negative way of naming God, a way of uttering his absolute otherness. It "does not suffice to set [God's transcendence] free, since it remains coiled within the chasm of essence and *esse* and therefore definitively within the horizon of being."[38] In short, *ipsum esse* never allows us to transcend the horizon of entity.

No concept of transcendence which philosophy has offered ever truly transcends the order of the mind where the unity of the concept of being defines and rules over all other concepts. Transcendence within philosophy, whether metaphysical or phenomenological, is always possible to experience if, and precisely as far as, it meets the a priori conditions for the possibility of experience. Since the a priori conditions rule over its appearance, whatever this transcendence is, it is not truly "beyond." It arises within the phenomenal world and according to its preconditions. Transcendence is constrained within an immanent horizon.

In "The Question of the Unconditioned," Marion shows the way in which philosophy assumes that the phenomenon, even when it appears from itself "nevertheless does not appear as self, as itself."[39] In Aristotle the individuality of the thing is its essence. The reduction to

[36] IM, 18.
[37] IM, 18.
[38] IM, 19.
[39] QU, 2.

the object, established by Descartes, is a radicalization of the Aristotelian reduction of the appearing *as* essence to an essence understood precisely as what can be ordered and measured. The "appearing as it is" is always immediately reduced to the horizon of essences that "seize and determine things as what they are and could be, according to a priori limits and establishment."[40] Marion explains that for the eidetic reduction a thing's genre is its essence. The thing is thus only led back to "the regional science that encompasses it," therefore to an a priori condition (the genre) without which it could not appear since it only appears precisely *as* this very essence. The second reduction, the reduction to being, depends on the first reduction to essence because beings only and always appear as first classified according to genre or essence: "Being only appears by a doubled *as such*, actually redoubling the first *as* of the eidetic reduction, as a grounded act that presupposes grounding acts."[41] Being always marks out the a priori of the as: appearing *as* a being in Being.

How are we to understand this "as"? On the one hand, it is true that we always perceive a thing as a thing, seeing is always *seeing as*, the thing perceived is immediately imbued with meaning and form and not afterwards constituted by the mind.[42] The phenomenon must appear directly *as a meaningful phenomenon* and within certain genres of meaning not just as raw sensory data that is re-presented afterwards and constructed by the mind into meaningful information. On the other hand, such a view could seem problematic insofar as it is not clear how it is possible to experience something new if the *as* of perceiving sees immediately as a *kind* of thing *like* other things (a thing seen *as* its genre). In *seeing as*, would it necessarily be the case that a priori categories always precede and thus determine the phenomenon? This becomes particularly problematic in the case of God for whom we cannot predetermine the

[40] QU, 2.
[41] QU, 3.
[42] See, for instance: Stephen Mulhall, *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects*, (London: Routledge, 1990). Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).

conditions of his appearing without impinging upon his freedom, thus upon his Godhead and who does not have a genre.

But we have gone far enough into this investigation to immediately see that the way out of this aporia is not through determining how experiencing something new is ever an intrinsic possibility for creatures who always see *as*, but through more radically thinking the phenomenality of an occurring impossibility. Further, the deconstruction of representationalism within Wittgenstein and Heidegger's doctrines of *seeing as*—which first teaches us that the perceived never needs to be an intrinsic possibility of a constituting, solipsistic mind (whose solipsism demands that the known is already possible for it)—will, second, lead towards impossibility on the other side of the *as*: the givenness of the thing from itself is only imprinted on the mind as a *kind* of thing because first of all, it gives itself without ever passing through possibility, at least in some cases, and thus without ever passing through the noetic, but landing there, within noesis, only after the fact, but passing first through and *as* the reverberations of the body. This radical a posteriori of noetic possibility is not representational, but is the mirror image of representation: given as actual before ever becoming possible, and given before ever existing.

Marion argues that for any figure of transcendence, in order to be truly "beyond," it must exceed the conditions of experience imposed upon phenomenality by metaphysical method. Yet if it is to be known at all, we must be able to receive it. The really transcendent cannot come according to the modes admitted by philosophy. Marion is arguing that we ought to think God's breaking into our world not according to transcendence in the immanent but under the figure of the impossible: that which exceeds the conditions of possibility of experience, namely, the categories. Marion bolsters his argument by turning to Nicholas of Cusa who says: "It follows that, since nothing is impossible to God, it is necessary that we would

look across the things which are impossible in this world toward him for whom the impossible is a necessity."[43] Marion continues:

> As long as we stick with the battlefield of possibility *for us*, without wondering about the impossibility it reveals implicitly, we camp out in the territory where it can only be a matter of our finitude, of us, hence in no way of God. God only becomes a meaningful question from the moment at which our exodus transgresses the limits between the possible and the impossible *for us*, since the true *quoad nos*, the decisive "regarding us" confronts us with what does not belong to us, what remains essentially foreign to us, with the unthinkable for any *as such*—the impossible as the closest unknown[44]

One reason possibility is purely noetic is that two possibilities can mutually exclude each other in actuality. When one is actualized, the other cannot be. This is the case, for example, when choosing between diverging paths. If I choose to walk down the left path and do so, I cannot simultaneously be on the other path. Once one possible option is actualized, the other possibility is no longer possible. There is no conflict existing in the act because the non-actualized possibility is now impossible.

I want to show that the "impossible for us" does not refer to the mere impossibility of actualizing both contradictory possibilities. Such an impossible resides fully within the noetic and defines its non-possibility by means of the principle of non-contradiction and thus by possibility itself. Such an impossible is impossible only conditionally: impossible only because what contradicts it happens to be the case. There are two noetic senses of the impossible based on non-contradiction: first, a thing is impossible if it contradicts another possibility that was made actual, and second, a thing is impossible if it contradicts an intrinsic law of the ontic order such that it could on principle never be made actual. Both are weak senses of impossibility determined by possibility beforehand as its negative moment. This kind of impossible (as non-contradiction) therefore never truly transcends the realm of being and noesis. It says only that two noetic contradictories cannot both be actualized in being. Being remains the determining term and permits no transcendence.

[43] QU, 17. Dialogus de Possest, in Nicholaus von Kues Werke, ed. Paul Wilpert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), 2, 66.
[44] QU, 17.

Following Cusa, Marion's impossible exceeds the noetic-ontic realm (the world) because the impossible is never even possible. The impossible contradicts the possible, but does so in a non-noetic way, a way not determined by possibility. Thus, God's all-possibility does not mean that he can do contradictory possibilities arbitrarily. It means rather that God is neither constrained to the categorical possibilities of the noetic nor to the actualities of the ontic. Even if, for God, possibility exceeds actuality (Heidegger), the "possible for God" is not determined according to the possible for us. As long as the possible for God escapes any analogy to the possible for us, God's all-possibility cannot be reduced to an arbitrary omnipotence conceived according to the noetic possible for us. Whenever God's omnipotence is imagined according to noetic possibility (as in Ockham), it renders *possibility for us* entirely phantasmal in the face of God's arbitrary all-possibility.

If the ontic is the realm of the actual and the noetic is the realm of possibility, the relation between these two could only define impossibility according to the principle of non-contradiction. The "all-possibility" of God must neither render noetic possibility for us meaningless nor can it be constrained by the principle of non-contradiction. It precedes the possibility of contradiction by exceeding it. It would not be an intelligible claim to say that the actualization of the all-possible/impossible of God contradicts the logic of the possible in the way that a contradictory possibility is impossible. Therefore a third order beyond ontos and noesis is required: charity as the realm of the impossible for us, which is God's all-possibility. How does charity give the [im-]possible not as an externally imposed will that would be either submitted to non-contradiction, and thus lack power or rendering non-contradiction meaningless by arbitrarily contradicting it as a possibly malign divinity? It is of course charity's own logic that frees us from the possibility of a malign omnipotence and that at the same time lets God be God.

In order to understand God as the impossible *for us*, we must deepen our understanding of the way the orders—ontos, noesis, charity—relate to each other. I will argue that one can only receive the impossible according to Aquinas's grammar of real relation while noetic impossibility involves a merely nominal relation. This doctrine of "real relation" is the key to a non-nominalist (hence non-noetic) interpretation of impossibility. Nothing is impossible for God not because he contradicts what is possible in this world, but because there are no contradictories except in this world as it already is or already possibly is. The impossible indwells us as a dynamic force and an interior more intimate to us than our possibilities, a contact with God without God ever becoming a possibility for us: "the impossible as the closest unknown."[45] Thus for Marion we can exceed the a priori limits of the object through saturated phenomena which are unconditioned and bring about a real transcendence:

> the excess of intuition here ruins the transcendental possibility, by restoring the itself of the thing that appears or can appear through its own initiative and following its proper dimension, exceeding our expectation and our precomprehension, that is to say, our *a priori*…The move to the impossible *for us* happens in certain instances at the very heart of the possible *for us*, just as the move to the infinite remains an intrinsic possibility for the finite.[46]

Aquinas knew that possibilities are not knowable as things. Things are only known in act.[47] Therefore Aquinas's understanding is not ultimately incompatible with Marion's idea that saturated phenomena pass from impossibility to actuality without ever becoming possible. It remains to show how impossibility could fit within a Thomist grammar, thereby leading us beyond the pseudo-transcendences of philosophy. So I will sketch the grammar of the impossible in us according to one of Marion's saturated phenomena, the event, which, as an impossible phenomenon, stretches the very grammar of real relation towards impossibility.

[45] QU, 17.
[46] QU, 21.
[47] *Sum. Theol.*, I, q. 87, art. 1. And, *Sum. Theol.* I, q. 87, art. 1.

§3. Real Relation and the Incommensurability of Orders

One of the central theses of Marion's work is to show that Pascal's three orders of knowing overcome Cartesian onto-theo-logy, which can be traced back to Cajetan and Scotus. While Marion's exoneration of Thomas from onto-theo-logy takes Thomas in a fairly apophatic direction, Pascal's overcoming of onto-theo-logy provides Marion with a more positive doctrine through the excess of the order of charity over the order of being. Here I aim to demonstrate that Pascal and Aquinas can be brought together in a fruitful way if we leave behind the doctrine of analogy and turn instead to the doctrine of real relation. Marion does not refer to Thomas's doctrine of real relation that I just analyzed. Yet I am arguing that a correct understanding of relation, rather than the deployment of analogy, is the key to escape the Scotist univocity on which the transcendental position of modern metaphysics depended. We can link Thomas's understanding of relation to Marion's Pascalian project to overcome Cartesian univocity. A common critique leveled against Marion is that his understanding of infinite distance leads inevitably to equivocity between the self and other.[48] In this way he is lumped in with a general critique of postmodernism. But I hope that my engagement of his reading of Pascal in light of Thomas's understanding of real relation will demonstrate why Pascalian "infinite distance" is always given in relation and that equivocity is only a category applicable to finite distances. No longer needing to safeguard against equivocity by means of similarity, infinite distance not only abolished similitude, but stands in its place as the signifier of relation. Thomas's concept of real relation as "in" things, where the higher penetrates the lower, helps us to think this infinite distance without imagining it as equivocity and nonrelation.

As a substance, the human being is incommensurable to whatever it receives even its own existence, which it receives from elsewhere. This incommensurability of the self to itself,

[48] Graham Ward, "The Theological Project of Jean- Luc Marion," in *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*, ed. Phillip Blond, (London: Routledge, 1998); Joeri Schrijvers, "Ontotheological Turnings? Marion, Lacoste and Levinas on the Decentering of Modern Subjectivity," *Modern Theology* 22 (2006).

described in the *esse-ad*'s distance from the essence, is in a sense a contentless "event," a pure disruption at the origin of the self, which is particular to being human: the inability to attain or access our own nature where all the other animals do not have a problem being what they are. This "pure incommensurability" that expresses the human essence as substance does allow for a positive content to which the human being is incommensurable, yet intimately related. I will describe this pure incommensurability more precisely while also insisting on incommensurability as what gives a relation. Thereby, the relation of incommensurable orders is no longer pure and formal, but gives the substance a content incommensurable to its form. Through Marion's explication of Pascal's orders, we will see that, while the event of the *esse-ad* may be a pure disruption without content, the event of the higher order of charity on the lower orders of being (body-mind) would fill the lower with a content: the being's self perfected in charity.

At the end of *Descartes' Metaphysical Prism*, Marion argues that Pascal's three orders provide a method to "overcome Cartesian metaphysics." Where Descartes aimed to systematize the three objects of special metaphysics (God, the soul, the world) under the single univocal order of the *mathesis universalis*, Pascal's orders each have their own logic incommensurable to the others. Pascal's orders—body, mind, charity—correspond to the three objects of special metaphysics, but their logics, contrary to Descartes, do not form a system. There is no univocal intelligibility between them. Thus Marion will find his thematic of the impossibility of saturated and erotic phenomena authorized by Pascal, whom he quotes for one of the epigraphs of *God Without Being*: "From all bodies and all minds we could not draw one movement of true charity, that is impossible, and of another, supernatural order."[49] Or: "The infinite distance between body and mind symbolizes the infinitely more infinite distance

[49] *Pensées,* §308.

between mind and charity, for charity is supernatural."[50] These orders are incommensurable. Infinite distance signifies a hierarchy where the lower cannot see the higher, but the gaze of the higher falls upon the lower. The realm of the first is that of physics: extension in time and space. This is, for Pascal, the realm ruled by kings, governments, and sportsmen—all those concerned with the body and worldly powers. The realm of the second order, the mind, is that of metaphysics and science. Those who reign here are those whose world is that of thought—philosophers and scientists. The third order is that of charity, ruled by saints, poets, and, preeminently, Jesus Christ. For Pascal, we know God according to the rationality of the third order, that is, the rationality of love.

It is the hierarchy of the terms that keeps distance from merely enacting a flat binary logic or extrinsic dualism. Those who occupy only the first realm cannot see the second, but those in the second occupy both, see both, and of course communicate through the first, language being a corporeal, not merely discursive medium. The second therefore in some way can reorganize the first, language being a central example (though I am not aware of either Pascal or Marion using it). What does it mean that the first cannot see the second? Certainly, the dwellers in the first realm can feel the effects of the powers of those in the second. However, the actual knowledge of philosophers and scientists remain opaque to them unless they cross into the higher by gaining its specific scientific or philosophic knowledge. The first realm cannot of itself "see" the second.

Marion argues that the absolute distinction of the separate logics of the three orders renders impossible the reduction to the single *ordo rationis* of the Cartesian metaphysical system. The infinite distance between the orders pulls apart the three objects of special metaphysics: "far from constituting a system, in which the existence of each refers to that of the others by the lines of efficient causality or logical implication, here, in their revival by

[50] *Pensées*, §308.

Pascal, a 'distance' separates them definitively.'"[51] This radical heterogeneity "excludes even the least univocal parameter or concept" precisely by reducing the Cartesian concept of the infinite to an "endlessly multiplied index of the incommensurability between the shattered elements of what can no longer be named a cosmos; from concept, [the infinite] finds itself lowered to the rank of a metaphor used to undo other concepts."[52] In other words, infinite distance ensures the impossibility of a conceptual binding between orders. The infinite itself is now used by Pascal in the weak sense as a predicate of separation rather than a predicate determined by the concept of Being which rules over the distinction between infinite and finite. No longer bound to a higher unity, the infinite destroys any conceptual relation between the orders.

The meaning of the term "order" in Pascal is first "an organized arrangement of demonstrations and discourse," that is a rationality.[53] "The heart has its order" which, Pascal suggests, gives coherence to Scripture, and even justifies its nonsystematic character—system being a characteristic only of the second order, that of evidence organized by mind.[54] The heart's order "breaks the equivalence between order as arrangement of a series and the production of evidence, an equivalence that sums up the entire Cartesian method."[55] It is no longer the case with Pascal that order is equivalent to the constituting faculty of the mind. He resists the representionalism of Descartes even if he does not oppose it with a "realist" Thomism. Second, order also means a class for Pascal. He distinguishes between thought and extension as different orders. Thus insofar as the mind ("the agent of this rationality, which is organized exclusively toward evidence") has to admit "another order," "Pascal demolishes the universal privilege that Descartes accorded to 'common sense' and the *bona mens*."[56] What is

[51] MP 308; PM, 327.
[52] MP 306; PM, 325.
[53] MP 310; PM, 329.
[54] MP 310; PM, 329.
[55] MP 310; PM, 330.
[56] MP 311; PM, 330-31.

most important here is that the other orders, precisely by maintaining their own rationality, escape the mind's constitutive representational function. Though today, unlike the early modern period, we don't think of the mind as "organized exclusively towards evidence," any introduction of a more nuanced psychology and attention to affect and deep mind would not contradict Pascal's distinction between the orders. Other than the order of evidence, which is adequation to the a priori, the mind cannot constitute any other mental function in and of itself, but depends for its functioning on another order. This is the case, for instance, even in Wittgenstein's theory of knowing, in which concepts are inseparable from the life we live with them, and so are not derived from the intrinsic possibilities of the mind. Strictly speaking, any affect precedes the mind's intrinsic possibilities and is given to it, incited by what affects it. So long as the mind does not constitute the known (via the Cartesian *a priori*, or the Kantian synthesizing function) but is in some way disrupted by it, we may thematize different orders than the a priori as "impossible" for the mind's order even if only made actual via an interaction with the mind.

Thomas and Pascal are surprisingly compatible in their understanding of relation of different orders. Thomas's concept of real relations as "in" things helps us to understand Pascal on "infinitely infinite distance" without imagining it as equivocity. Both understand the relation between orders such that the relation affects the lower order, but not the higher. Even for Pascal we can apply the Thomist grammar: the relation is real in the lower, but only "of reason" in the higher. For both Aquinas and Pascal, these orders are not only incommensurable, but also hierarchical, giving a relation through the hierarchy, by which means it escapes any *measura*. The higher, unseen by the lower, comes upon it unexpectedly. Charity has a certain indifference to the order of being: indifferent because undetermined and unaffected by being. While incommensurability ensures against a *conceptual relation*, the hierarchy ensures a *real relation*: the higher transfiguring and ordering the lower. Distance functions to disrupt

conceptual relation because it disables the crossing of the gap that separates the orders: infinitely distant, yet related. Distance can therefore only reside "in" each order, in the lower as a real relation to the higher with which it has no commensurability because each term is immeasurable for the other. Distance accomplishes what real relation accomplishes in Aquinas: a relation without a mediating concept, a contact without blurring absolute difference.

Where Pascal's orders leave metaphysics destitute by driving it to distraction (through the infinite distance that always escapes its system), we can begin to see that even Thomas's understanding of real relation means that beings are intrinsically porous to the other than being, therefore permitting a Pascalian "infinite distance" to give itself *as* a real relation. Charity as the otherwise than being affects and organizes being according to its own erotic logic, neither as extrinsically imposed, nor as a noetic and intrinsic possibility of being that merely needs to be actualized. Thus we pass beyond analogy by means of a more radical real relation, the advent of the impossible. Demanding no commensurability, the real is an indwelling of what is impossible for beings.[57] This seems to be the point that *analogia entis* has missed from Cajetan to Przywara. Relation does not require commensurability or similarity. In the next chapter I will examine the philosophical framework that made theologians think that they needed a common concept to avoid equivocity and thus required a theory of analogy to escape the encroaching univocity. For now I would argue that understanding real relation in light of Pascal expands our understanding of relation as such which now can itself cope with the possibility of a pre-ontological term, that is, what is not subject to the idea of being.

[57] Cusa, in *De apice theoriae*, offers another way of thinking about this relation of the mind to the absolute possibility of God: "When the mind in its own posse sees that Posse itself cannot be grasped because of its eminence, the mind then sees with a sight beyond its capacity, just as a child sees that a stone's size is greater than the child's strength's capacity could carry. The posse of the mind to see, therefore, surpasses the posse to comprehend." 10, (Engl. trans. 297).

§4. The Event: Saturation as a Real Relation

I have thus far shown that real relation does not require any commensurability between the terms that are related, and that consequently the real relation, at least in theory, can come as the impossible made actual in the receiver, according to the hierarchy of the orders. It is the direct transference from the impossible to the actual that marks the coming-from-itself of the phenomenon. Marion describes the saturated phenomenon as "the impossible becoming actual" in opposition to representationalism and to challenge the Kantian limits imposed on phenomenality in which every phenomenon has to submit to the conditions for the possibility of experience, thereby reducing phenomenality to objectity. The impossible is defined as that which does not submit to these conditions but which is received nonetheless. In other words, it is a non-noetic impossibility. In this way, the impossibility of charity should be seen more as its creative power than its extrinsic imposition, passively received.

> Radical possibility would start with the impossible and, without passing through conceptualization of a non-contradictory possible for finite representation, would impose it within effectivity... In contrast to possibility as de-*fined* by metaphysics, radical possibility would not transform possible things into effective things, but *impossible* things into effective things, directly. It would effectively bring about [im-]possibilities hitherto unthinkable.[58]

This non-noetic impossibility (radical possibility) is in continuity with Marion's interpretation of Pascal. The direct transference from impossible to effective happens because it comes from a higher rationality—that of charity—which is not of a univocal order with the *possible for us*, as life itself, even *our life* itself, is something that exceeds us, is not determined by us, and therefore comes as an event that disrupts the possible. For Marion, the relation of incommensurable, unsimilar terms is understood as an indwelling of charity, in that which is not charitable. The higher order of Pascal must come without condition because it is not measurable by the order of the lower. Any condition precedes, measures, and predicts the phenomenon that comes and thereby reduces it to the order to which it comes, that of the

[58] IM, 31.

mind. Since by definition it does not submit to transcendental conditions, we can only know it as the impossible becoming actual. How then can we know such a paradoxical phenomenon? How can we, limited, finite beings, see it *as* unconditioned? What I will argue is that Marion's concept of givenness—sketched here under the figure of the event and developed with respect to real relation—secures the incommensurability and non-univocity of related terms in infinite distance and excludes the correlate that binds the related terms as a copula and according to a conceptual, possible, and purely noetic unity.

In order to escape the univocity of the order of the mind and its a priori (understood according to metaphysical intrinsic possibility), this direct transference of impossible to actual must occur. No transcendental positing would be permitted in order to escape univocity and to ensure that the phenomenon comes from itself and is not pre-determined by the a priori possibilities of the transcendental subject. We have already seen how the transcendental condition of possibility, Being, is apophatically denied any adequation to God, and marks instead the shape of human reason as differing from and lacking access to the origin. This is the first step towards seeing the phenomenon as coming from itself. It is no longer bound to the "to be" in order to show itself, and thus no longer bound to correspond to the mind. The transcendental concept of Being always binds the known to the mind that knows, but the noetic primacy of Being means that the self-giving of the phenomenon precedes its being, especially in the case of God who *is not* according to *esse commune*. While the noetic primacy of *ens,* on which the *analogia entis* is founded, turns out to prevent access to God via Being, I will show that Thomas's understanding of real relation opens the possibility of thinking events or phenomena that reveal themselves prior to Being and even without Being. Further, such a phenomenology is best defended by understanding events as real relations (in the one who receives them). If events do not give themselves in real relations, we end up with another version of univocity, simply replacing the collapse of infinite distance into substance with the

collapse into the flux of the event. We must therefore describe how an event would come which transfers directly from impossibility to actuality, that is, how it would reveal itself before becoming possible.

Claude Romano's account of the event illuminates Marion's and I will employ it to strengthen my argument.[59] My own development of the evential,[60] thought according to Thomas's understanding of real relation, will challenge Romano's argument that an evential hermeneutics ought to do away with the Aristotelian doctrine of being and with the corollary teaching on substances and accidents. Instead I will argue that substantiality as non-relational—that is, as absolute—would alone secure incommensurability and non-univocity. I will use some hints left by Marion to defend my position.

Both Marion and Romano see that the event comes as a disruption that absolutely reconfigures the world of the receiver. The event therefore occurs from beyond the world and outside of time because it happens *to* the world and its temporality. The event in this sense does not refer to an intrahistorical chain of causality, beings affecting other beings. It concerns rather those events that are properly called historical. These are momentous events because they alter the whole of lived reality, even the underlying, originary framework that gives reality. The structure of receiving world-altering events is not unique to the *theo*-logical event. The reception of the impossible is not an exception to our usual ways of knowing and experiencing, but is normative. Thus it is useful to describe its structure with non-theological examples.

Events can occur both at the level of world events (the French Revolution, World War I) or personal events (a life altering accident, falling in love). Romano uses as an example of the event Kafka's depiction of his own experience of falling in love:

> What is happening is incredible [Ungeheurlishes: literally: immense, terrifying]—my world is collapsing, my world is rebuilding itself . . . I'm not lamenting the falling

[59] Claude Romano, *Event and World*, trans. Shane MacKinley, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009).
[60] Romano uses the neologism "evential" to describe that which pertains to events in this sense.

> apart, it was already in a state of collapse, what I'm lamenting is the rebuilding, I lament my waning strength, I lament being born, I lament the light of the sun.[61]

Love, as much as it can be wanted, hoped for and dreamt about, cannot be manufactured and its experience is unpredictable and not reproducible because it happens *to me* and is nothing other than the very encounters that it constitutes. Any fantasies or premonitions beforehand do not at all predict it or prepare me for the affective encounter itself. In its light the whole world looks different and my experiences gain their meaning from it. The event is irreplaceable because it does not happen in the world, a product of certain efficient causes or intrinsic possibilities. It happens in-and-beyond the world: one world collapses and another is rebuilt. It disrupts a world rather than taking place within one. The main point of its transcending the intraworldly chain of causality is that it arises as an *origin* in excess of its status as *effect*. Its ability to give a new field of meanings exceeds its status as a meaningful term within a previous linguistic field. The event cannot be determined and classified like an object.

Marion describes birth as a privileged phenomenon and exemplary instance of the event since "my whole life is solely occupied, for an essential part, with reconstituting it, attributing to it a meaning and responding to its silent appeal."[62] But even though it is only a birth for me, it cannot be seen by me directly, both because 1) it happens to me before I am able to see it and receive it, and 2) it precedes from an indefinite series of events. Marion argues that it is a phenomenon that gives itself, yet does not show itself:

> in the very absence of any direct monstration, it happens as a never-present event [*elle advient comme événement jamais présent*], always past, but never surpassed for all that—in fact always to come [*á venir*]. My birth does not phenomenalize itself, but as a pure event, unforeseeable, irreparable, exceeding all cause and rendering possible the impossible (that is to say, my life always new), surpassing all expectation, all promise, and all prediction."[63]

[61] Franz Kafka, Letter to Milena, 12 June 1920, in *Letters to Milena*, trans. Philip Boehm (New York: Schocken Books, 1990), 43. Quoted in Romano, 47.
[62] IE, 42; DS, 49.
[63] IE, 42-3; DS, 50.

Romano describes it in this way: “Birth, as an impersonal event that cannot be taken over, radically transcends my thrownness and therefore also my own potentiality-for-Being; it is not an inherited possibility that I would be able to take over, but that by which I inherit myself and all my possibilities, consequently situated *prior to* these.”[64] Marion picks up on Romano’s subsequent account of the "original delay” in which birth is only received in time and by which we move from the pre-personal to the personal: “Selfhood advenes to itself only with this original delay after the origin—a delay that is inscribed in the very meaning of origin such that this origin never coincides with itself and is accessible only after the fact, according to a necessary retrospection. Consequently, selfhood can only grasp itself starting from this impersonal event and, rather than opening to this event, it is originally anticipated and exceeded by it.”[65] Instead of a projection, which shapes possibility according to what is already available to me, “events only really befall me if they open to the impossible, to what I was neither seeking nor projecting but which, coming about peradventure, can alone give my projections the meaning that is theirs.”[66] Because it is prior to the potentiality-for-Being, the “impossible” is not the negation of possibility, but that which comes before the possible, which even “*bursts forth before being possible*."[67]

The event is exemplary of saturated phenomena. In the saturated phenomenon, Marion describes phenomena that exceed the a priori limits set on phenomenality by modernity's objectifying method. Several characteristics of the event qualify it as saturated. First, it is unrepeatable (contrary to the repeatably verifiable objects that science knows). Second, there is a surplus of effects and of *fait accompli* over every system of causes. The facticity of the event therefore bears more reality than any possible causes, contrary to the Cartesian system of sufficient reasons in which there is necessarily a phenomenal diminishment in the move-

[64] Romano, 73.
[65] Romano, 76.
[66] Romano, 86.
[67] Romano, 88.

ment from cause to effect. Third, the event is impossible "with regards to any system of anteriorly indexed causes."[68] The event marks its incommensurability to the receiver by its disruption of the world in its totality. It disrupts the whole world because it escapes causality and possibility and is impossible to predict it. The sign of the event is that the impossible becomes actual, thereby altering the whole.

Traditional ontology thinks of history as a series of events. Accordingly, these intrahistorical events are temporal, imagined as caused by beings interacting with one another, producing changes in each other. Contrary to intrahistorical events, the evential is not a change nor does it entail change. It reconfigures the whole of time and gives meaning to it. To use Thomas's classifications, the event is in the genus of relation rather than the genus of change. The point is not that events happen without reason or cause in the sense of being absurd or random or in the case of theology imposed by an arbitrary omnipotent will. Rather, the event itself has a phenomenal reality far in excess of its causes such that the causes must be understood in some way as effects of the effect. The event is an origin of meaning. It is only after the event that we can try to assign causes to it. The event is not an effect of meanings as is the case for interworldly events. Proper events occur not to a being but to a world. An event disrupts, and reorganizes the totality of possibilities within a world such that the impossible for one world becomes possible in the next. The event happens *to* history rather than within history. It disrupts one world and from it a new world originates and assigns its meanings. It therefore happens beyond time. It dislocates and re-temporalizes. The event's impossibility is founded not in irrationality, but in radical and founding affect. If the absurdity, randomness, and arbitrariness of givens according to modern method is founded in a nominalist genealogy—a logical definition of relation (the conceptual "between") and a noetically determined concept of possibility and impossibility—the impossibility of this advent is, to the

[68] IE 36; DS, 43.

contrary, best described as a real relation "in" that which receives it and thereby necessarily evades any accusation of being nominalist.

We can see then that the event is heterogeneous to the world and to the one who receives it not because it operates upon it extrinsically, but because it is its origin which gives itself without showing itself in being. There is a radical incommensurability between that which comes and the one to whom it comes. Unlike the incommensurability marked by the transcendental position of the ego in Cartesian philosophy—setting itself outside for the sake of certainty and with the result that incommensurability means nonaffective solipsism[69]—the incommensurability between the event and the one to whom it comes is signified precisely by the disruption of the ego which precludes the ego's transcendental status. Distance does not result in solipsism, for the self is immediately implicated by the event that affects it all the way down precisely because of its infinite distance.

In transcendental idealism, it is impossible for the subject to receive such events because the mind must constitute the known: the mind takes the place of the origin and blocks the self-giving of the originary event that affects the receiver in saturated phenomena. In Thomist realism, there must be some adequation between the knower and the known. The philosopher's task is to seek out sufficient causes for what she perceives. Strictly speaking, Thomas's understanding of real relation not only escapes the transcendentalism of idealism, but is in actuality not bound to the adequation to beings that constitutes so-called realism. Real relation is not based on any commensurability nor does it necessarily manifest as formal adequation. It does not require that the mind measures or needs the capacity to measure what it receives in order to receive it, for it is open to the reception of what is without measure. In order to understand how we receive an excess as excessive—and therefore without sufficient reasons—I will sketch a new understanding of the "in" of real relation with regards to the

[69] For solipsism and its limits in Descartes see Marion's essay "The Originary Otherness of the Ego" in CQ2, 3-29; QC, 3-47. And for solipsism of apperception when applied to the transcendental ego (Kant), see BG 252-4; ED, 348-51.

reception of the event. I have already shown that Marion's event is not a change because it does not take place in time. A happening reaches the status of event if it happens to us in such a way that it becomes an origin, arising in giving a relation that exceeds change and its efficient causality. The originary status of the event signifies that it is something to which we are related in such a way that without it we would not have the world that we have. Through it, I see everything, but never *see* the event itself, because, strictly speaking, there is nothing to see, only its effects. Yet though I cannot see the event itself, it nevertheless gives itself. It gives itself without showing itself. Here then, even its causes arise as the effects of its self-giving without self-showing. The absolute *disrupting-reconfiguring* must be our starting point for understanding the "in" which here must be viewed as an "in" identical to a "beyond," and which identical unity alone frees us from a transcendental correlate that would re-inscribe the event into Being.

§5. The "In-and-Beyond" of the Event

I will now show that Marion's understanding of the unconditioned givenness of saturated phenomena must be interpreted as a real relation in the receiver. We must understand it as such for two reasons. First, its heterogeneity to the receiver (i.e., its unconditionality and lack of submission to possibility) prohibits the "between" of representational mediation. Second, it concretely affects the receiver prior to any internal change in her. I will show that we must understand this real relation as a pure disruption of the self and its world, which can consequently be described and analyzed as both "in" the receiver (concretely affecting) and "beyond" (because never absorbed into the receiver as interiority pure and simple but always maintaining distance). In order to recognize the direct transfer from the impossible to the actual, the event must come as an "in-and-beyond" that disrupts the one to whom it comes. It would be "real" because "in" but not "in" according to the a priori conditions for the possibil-

ity of experience—not an "in" that can be circumscribed by the mind as an intrinsic possibility. This "in" must be identical to a "beyond" which is not the "beyond" of the object (according to metaphysical transcendence) because it is identical to the "in." This "in-and-beyond" is *nothing other than* the disruption itself. Only as such could it give that which comes from an order radically heterogeneous to the order of mind. It shows itself as a disruption and reconfiguration of the whole: the gift of an origin. Here I am revising Przywara's formula for the analogy of being—*Sosein in-über Dasein*. Przywara, however, is talking about the in-and-beyond dynamic between an a priori and a posteriori metaphysics. The interiority I am discussing is not an *a priori* essence, which would be the possible par excellence. I am speaking of an immemorial interiority, an interiority prior to the *a priori* and at the limits of human knowledge.[70] Przywara does not identify the "in" with the "beyond," which is what I aim to do and is why I must employ this phrase as a single preposition—the "in" coincides in this case with the "beyond."

What I have sketched so far of the relation of incommensurable orders means that a phenomenon does not have to first meet the conditions for the possibility of experience in order to count as a given. It could come as an event according to the saturated phenomenon: arriving unexpectedly and as the impossible. Only conceptual relation does not surprise, does not astonish the receiver and leave her bedazzled by the blaze of brightness of what comes to her. I will aim to describe the event's givenness as exemplary of saturated phenomena. While Marion's own description is certainly that of a disruptive phenomenon that comes as the impossible, unexpected and unpredictable, I want to show it comes according to this "in-and-beyond" grammar which I see as linking the event to real relation and which consequently reorients the entire debate concerning *analogia entis*: infinite distance *as* intimate relation.

[70] Jean-Louis Chretien writes, "There is an immemorial only for us and by us. This dimension radically separates the thought of recollection from that of the *a priori.*"*The Unforgettable and the Unhoped For*, trans. Jeffrey Bloechl, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 12.

The relation given in the event is without a "between" because it is impossible and infinitely "beyond": heterogeneous to the one to whom it comes. The beyond is signaled in the impossible becoming actual directly, freeing it from intrinsic possibility. It disrupts a world and cannot be reduced to a part of the whole that it disrupts, otherwise it would not be a true disruption, but an internal change. It is "in" because this "beyond" transfigures everything, an "in" so deep that the whole self is implicated, so all-pervasive that it gives everything. Unlike the analogy of proportion, which conceptually binds the "interior" concept to a more general external term, this "in" signifies a real relation because it concretely affects the substance. Yet it concretely affects (is "in" the substance) only insofar as it is *not* measurable by the substance, but is infinitely "beyond" it. It is the real relation par excellence and radicalized because it alters *everything* and therefore does not abolish infinite distance, but gives it. In other words, it gives its "beyond" by the depth of its "in." It is "in" as "beyond" and "beyond" as "in." No longer requiring an *a priori* or *a posteriori*, the only requirement is infinite distance between the orders, which manifests as the deepest intimacy. In contrast to the realist knowledge of the world in which the knower intentionally becomes the object (real relation in the act of perceiving), the disruptive nature of the event implies that it is not a knowing of a pre-existing object at least not a knowing of it *as pre-existing*. The arrival of the event creates something new in what is received from before all time.

We now return to the accidentality of relations. Accidents, as real relations that exceed the substance, express a certain in-and-beyond character. The accident gives itself to the substance as a disruption of that substance by what exceeds it infinitely. Since the accident disrupts rather than names a property of the substance, nothing prevents accidents from being "impossible" phenomena: given rather than possessed or seen. For a relation to be "in" according to real relation does not require the thing to be an intrinsic possibility, as it is when

it is thought to be "of essence." At the same time the relation is not an extrinsically imposed given because receiving it affects the whole self and is even given as the origin of the self.

The atemporality of the event means that it is "beyond" the world and the self. Beyond the vicissitudes of change, the event is a relation. In that its atemporality is given in the quality of its *relation*, such an atemporality obviously avoids any transcendental positioning. This "beyond" time and world does not imply that it is not "in" time and world. Its beyondness is marked as beyond insofar as it gives a world, by altering a world in totality. It is "in" because it effects a semantic transformation that transfigures the whole world. It is not an affectivity of raw sensory perception, raw sense data, which the ego constructs into a meaningful piece of knowledge. It gives itself as origin of meaning. That is, it affects as meaningful, giving birth to a whole new semantic field, which is to say, a world. It therefore does not express the actualization of one of the self's previously available and possible modes, but inserts itself as a new mode that didn't exist previously. That is, rather than a *change*—from possible to actual, from noesis to ontos—it gives a new *relation*—a new origin around which meaning develops though it is never able to access the origin itself because of its excess over the field of meaning. The origin is unaffected by the noetic-ontic field that it gives, which is why no change takes place and why we can describe it according to Thomas's grammar of relation.

Since real relations exist "in" things rather than between things, its grammatical structure allows for what is absolutely incommensurable to nevertheless be received, and its "in" would therefore be understood as "in-and-beyond." No longer subject to the nominal relations of univocity in Descartes and Kant which always implies a commensurability and a "between," the event must be understood as a real relation without "between." Consequently, the very concept of real relation is deepened. This real relation is no longer analogous to the real apprehension of a transcendental object. Real relation can now structure the reception of the

event that disrupts being, the reception of an order wholly other than being with its own horizon and received without ever bridging the infinite gap between orders. Being is conceived as participated according to the model of its pre-ontological evential coming. The grammatical structure of real relation permits the pre-ontological, pre-noetic givenness that disrupts the ontological order from outside of time and history, outside of mind and being, yet without making the transition from the immanent to the transcendent, for there is no conceptual similitude according to this relation by which to move from beings to being as the transcendent correlate, the ideational "between" that binds beings together in a conceptual unity. The event is a real affect that exceeds such a conceptual unity. Real relation keeps open an access to that of which we cannot (yet) speak, that of which we can speak only after we have received it, that which gives itself from itself.

Requiring no correspondence between the knower and the known, real relation means one can receive nonbeings such as events. Also, one could receive beings whose beingness is totally equivocal with the beingness of the receiver. They relate not through a common term or an adequation, but through the penetration of the one in the other. Such a possibility is implied in the doctrine of real relation since it never supposes a common term mediating the relation and does not require one. Because the givenness of an event is signified in its absolute disrupting and reconfiguring—its giving itself as origin not as effect—it is not a given from a being or the givenness of (transcendental) being. Since the event does not entail the reception of an object "out there," its givenness precedes any beingness. It can signify rather a given without being.

What I wanted to emphasize by relating the impossibility of the event to the accidentality of being is this: that which concretely affects a substance like an accident does not have to give some entity or be given by some entity (according to a chain of efficient causality). It can be a pure affection, pure disruption without giving anything other than itself (the event).

Does Thomas ever extend his thinking in this way? The answer to this question is far from clear, but the grammar of real relation would allow it. By now it should be evident that the kind of real relation I am sketching under the figure of the event is a special kind of real relation, one that does not fit into the model of intentional being: the adequation of the knower to the known which is a real relation in the knower and logical in the known. Incommensurability of orders implies the absence of an adequative relation not by means of the poverty of relation (logical relation) or even relation's absence, but by means of excess. Incommensurability implies an excessive and accidental relation: the event itself is an accident affecting a substance, which can only be "beyond" (incommensurable) insofar as it is "in" (concretely affecting the whole).

§6. The Accident and Saturation

Finally, we have to address the most obvious objection to this thesis: doesn't what I have argued actually undercut the Aristotelian grammar of substance and accidents where accidents are predicates of and caused by substances? If so, isn't my thesis and Marion's phenomenology not really attuned with Thomas at all? Indeed, such a position pitting Aristotle against the phenomenon of the event has already been argued and developed at length in Romano's *Event and World.* Romano, as we have already seen, offers a similar understanding of the event to that of Marion but wants to see his phenomenology of events as absolutely opposed to Aristotle's ontology.[71] He contrasts Aristotle's understanding of being as copula to stoicism's verbal understanding of being. Aristotle understands the "is" to link the subject to some property that "is" in it, expressing an attribute of the being of the subject. Being links subjects to truths about them. In Stoicism, Romano argues, discourse is not "saying something about something" but "completing a predicate (*katēgorēma*) by means of an inflection (*ptōsis*)

[71] Romano, 3-10.

expressed by a nominative case. Unlike an Aristotelian attribute, this predicate, or incomplete *lekton*, does not signify a particular ontic property but an *event*."[72] The difference between Stoicism and Aristotle can be summed up in the semantic shift from 1) "the tree is green"—in which the "is" links the greenness to the tree as a truth about the tree—to 2) "the tree greens"—in which greening is an event that happens to the tree and happens to the one who encounters the tree. Stoicism allows Romano to think the event not as "a property occurring to a subject, or as an accident (*sumbebēkos*) affecting a subject or beingness (*ousia*)." Events are rather incorporeal nonbeings (*mē onta*). It is "ungraspable in the frame of beings," and "irreducible to the *Being* of beings." This establishes a "radical heterogeneity between subject and predicate."[73]

While, importantly, this frees the event from being thought only in terms of the ontological difference[74] and is mostly welcome to Marion's phenomenology, Marion is not so ready to dismiss accidentality and substantiality. Where Romano excludes the Aristotelian teaching on substance and accidents for the sake of the evential, Marion aims rather to think accidentality in its most saturated mode: as evential, that is, as the "incident." The accident consequently exceeds any limitation by the horizon of the subject it qualifies, for it is no longer merely one of the subject's aspects and therefore less phenomenally rich than the subject itself.

Like Thomas, Marion's position hinges on the accidentality of being itself, not merely the accidentality of the predicates being might link to a subject. Marion's position therefore opposes the Scotist position on the essential nature of the relation of creation, especially of the human *esse*, which makes being "of essence" and thereby not an accident. Marion's interpretation of Aristotle, especially Aristotelianism in Aquinas, will elude Romano's critique via a heterogeneity between subject and predicate that is only maintained through the substance-

[72] Romano, 6.
[73] Romano, 7.
[74] See his critique of Heidegger in §3, esp. 18-19.

accident grammar by which being itself is an accident heterogeneous to the substance. In *Being Given*, Marion takes the doctrine of the accidentality of being in Aristotle and Thomas to confirm his thesis that being does not even derive itself from the essence or substance of the thing, but shows itself from itself and therefore gives itself without causality, unexpectedly to the receiver.[75] Noting first the Aristotelian lineage of the argument for the accidentality of being, he subsequently quotes Thomas on creation: "Creation, taken passively, is thus a certain accident in nature."[76] Marion argues against the understanding of accidents as effects or ontic properties of a substance. Instead, being as an accident affects the individual substance from the outside. Since "Everything that does not belong to the concept of an essence or quiddity comes to it from outside" (Thomas) and "Being is other than essence" (Thomas), Marion argues that *esse* comes upon the substance from the outside.[77] Marion concludes that there is a "prior absence of Being considered essentially" such that it opens to "the possibility of an appearing without Being," a non-ontic phenomenon.[78] The substance itself is "without Being": "The coming upon [*l'advenue*] of Being implies nothing less than this prior absence of Being considered essentially."[79] Or, said another way, if being is an accident, and one of many possible accidents that come upon the substance, then there could be accidents other than being and that come upon the substance otherwise and without the mediation of being.

Romano's analysis of the event is important insofar as he shows that the event does not come within the world of beings and therefore is free from the merely predicative sense of the event. But I do not think his account relies upon a rejection of Aristotle in favor of stoic teaching. In fact, the weakness of his account lies in his allegiance to stoicism, where a more radical thinking of Aristotelian grammar would at once maintain the freedom of the event from being as copula, and, at the same time, would resist the collapse of the world into a pure

[75] BG, 155; ED, 218-19.
[76] *Sentences*, II, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2 ad 4. Quoted in BG, 155; ED, 219.
[77] *De ente et essentia*, 4, 5. Quoted at BG, 155.
[78] BG, 155; ED, 220.
[79] BG, 155; ED, 220.

eventuality. In contrast to Romano, who discards accidentality and substantiality for the sake of the evential coming-from-itself, Marion thinks the event *as* the accident, or rather he thinks accidentality according to the event and saturation — accidentality as an excess over the substance. Further, because relation is itself a category for Aristotle, it is hardly clear that the event has to be subordinated to beings in a "metaphysical grammar." We have seen already that even the relation of being to substance in composite things means that the accident of being resists subordination to the substance, so no event needs to be mediated by being. Substance is doing something else. Not binding the accident as one of its subordinates, the substance receives the accident "otherwise" and from a radical "elsewhere." And it is only the substance as nonrelational that keeps the heterogeneity of the orders, thus preventing the "advenant," the one capable of receiving events, from being dissolved into the event she receives.

Thomas's understanding of the relation of creation highlights the coming-upon character of accidents. It "happens *to*" rather than is "possessed by" a substance. Marion's analysis of givenness suggests that it is the perversion of a dative into a genitive that turns "metaphysical grammar" into a univocal system in a hording self-appropriation of being. The event is not the accident *of* a substance, but an accident *to* the substance. As a dative rather than genitive, it does not generate from the substance, but is given to it from elsewhere. Being comes to the substance. It is not first *of* the substance.

Insofar as creation is the originary accident, we should understand all other accidents from here, just as Marion and Romano show that birth (individual creation) is the event par excellence, not to be understood as a change, but as the pre-temporal, pre-personal event of the givenness of a self.[80] Taking creation as the event *par excellence*, where its evential character is understood as the way in which accidentality "comes upon" the substance while

[80] On the account of birth as the event par excellence see Marion IE 41-44. Romano, 69-82.

the substance remains absolute, we can see that substantiality is there to ensure incommensurability and the real, dative nature of the given even though, as absolute it is not affected by any relation, even that of creation. And it is only the substance as nonrelational that keeps the heterogeneity of the orders and thus prevents the conflation of the two terms of the relation. The accident is beyond the substance by means of its own excess, so that it is not caused or produced by the substance and thereby reduced to the horizon of the substance (that of essence). Nor does the accident affect the substance, even though it alters the whole so that the substance is not subsumed into the horizon of the accident (that of existence). The substance must be seen as absolute, not in itself disrupted by the accident. We have seen that the phenomenal structure of events is given according to a relation of incommensurable orders such that the relation of creation as an event that happens to a substance, already understood by Aquinas as a real relation, is now also understood as a disruption of the whole, even though the substance remains unaffected. An originary disruption and original loss by which the substance is shaped toward God, but at an infinite distance, a distance so great that the substance remains absolute. The substance remains absolute never due to impoverished phenomenality of the accident, but because of its excess and the consequent excess of the relation. The divine action, certainly not extrinsically imposing a given *change*, gives rather a relation, that is consequently signified by a total (re)configuration of the interworldly possibilities or the givenness of a world, so total as to exceed change. Any internal changes start from the gift as an origin, particularly as an originary relation.

Here is where we arrive decisively at the place where we cannot do without the paradox of the "in-and-beyond." The disruption that is the accidental relation has to disrupt some *thing*, namely, the self and its world. Otherwise it remains a *change* within a substance, and not the gift of an origin. Paradoxically, then we need to maintain the fact that the thing is not *essentially* related, but is in itself absolute. Something distinct from the event of creation

has to be there to receive it. As we have seen above, real relation "cannot exist without something absolute."[81] If it is disruptable—if it is not absolute—it is not incommensurable to the order of the one who gives. If it is commensurable to what disrupts, it cannot really be disrupted by an atemporal event, a real relation, but is only subject to change (temporal events). Such a disruption would simply be the self-imposition of a being on another being. Radical incommensurability requires an absolute, non-disruptable substance in order to come as the authentic "in-and-beyond" of a disruption in which the originary is received. Am I therefore simply dealing with a contradiction—a disrupted absolute—and therefore a refutation of my argument? The solution to this aporia lies in what we have already described in the "in-and-beyond" that characterizes the unconditioned givenness of the higher order, which does not demolish its distance from the lower. The "in" of disruptive, accidental real relation always also signifies the "beyond" which, in signifying nothing other than the disruption itself, does not destroy infinite distance, but gives it. In real relation, infinite distance is never even traversed, so the absolute nature of each order with respect to the other is not abolished. Thus the "absolute substance" operates as a placeholder for incommensurability of orders, a negative certainty of infinite distance without a positive content. It guarantees the freedom of each order to come from itself in its own fully saturated phenomenality. We can go so far as to say that it is actually the saturated quality of the phenomenon that says the absolute and it is the indestructibility of infinite distance that guarantees the absolute nature of the substance.

Without the substance we forfeit incommensurability of orders by which the understanding of *existence* as relation to God collapses into an *essential* relation to God. The accidentality of being therefore does not signify a commensurability between the substance and the accident, but rather an incommensurability and the coming-from-itself of the accident, which is displayed in the excess because of which the accident cannot be taken into hand. So,

[81] *Contra Gentiles*, IV, 10, 10.

theologically, only infinite equivocity between the essence of God and the essence of man gives a distance so infinite that it actuates a real relation of man to God where God can be both radically "in" my inmost and higher than my highest. For this reason I have argued that Romano's reading of the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accidents is misguided. The accident as a real relation is never subsumed into the horizon of the substance in the way that it is for the Scotist or nominalist schools. Without the Aristotelian formulation, without some absolute yet receptive substances to receive it, an evential hermeneutics is exposed to a univocity that merely transfers from the univocity of being to the univocal and fatalistic flux of events, from Parmenides to Heraclitus.

§7. Distinguishing Relation from Similitude

I now want to clarify the distinction between relation and similitude. This distinction is essential to how I am making sense of the saturated phenomenality of the (accidental) relation of creation. We saw in Chapter I that the idol does not merely reflect its original as something shadowy of the real. The idol takes more reality than the original. It is thus something more than what it would be if it were wholly determined by relation. Marion gestures towards a distinction between relation and similitude when he writes that resemblance "does not designate a relation…but rather one of the terms of the relation—the 'resemblance,' which differs from the 'original.'"[82] Further, since the "resemblance" has a surplus of reality beyond the original and thus beyond what the relation could determine, we can conclude that the likeness is not a mere imprint of the original. There is no likeness "between" the terms. The relation, insofar as it resides in one of the terms, does not reside there as an imprint.

The point I would like to emphasis is that relation has to do with prepositions, not comparatives, with locations rather than similarities. There can be a relation of a certain book

[82] IE, 58; DS, 70.

to a certain elephant. The relation is said through the preposition. The book is *beside* the elephant or it is *under* the elephant, *behind* the elephant or even *in* the elephant if the elephant has eaten the book. The relation in this case does not imply that the terms are at all similar. It means only that they share an identical spatial system, or in the case of temporal relations—before, after, etc.—an identical temporal system. This also applies to temporal relations: before, after, etc.) In this example, there is no similarity but only an identical system of coordinates that makes the preposition a meaningful indicator for locating the book with respect to the elephant. That the book is next to the elephant obviously does not imply that the book is like the elephant. The example of the book and the elephant has to do with logical relations where the relation remains external to both terms but bound by a common framework. Neither term is concretely affected by the relation. The elephant may not even know that the book is next to him. He keeps on doing what he would do whether the book is there or not. If the book transformed itself into a lion, that would be another matter.

For real relations the question of "likeness" becomes more difficult. The elephant may be "like" the lion, according to a Thomist account, insofar as the lion's presence is real in him. It is present as a fear or at least as an alertness (the elephant may not be too bothered if he knows he can win any ensuing battle, but he is nevertheless alert). Likewise, to perceive a tree is to become dendriform, as I discussed in II, §1. The form of the tree concretely affects the perceiver and becomes one with her. But it is important to keep in mind that the relation does not constitute itself as the likeness. Relation as such is not identical to similitude, as in the case of the elephant and the book. We should attend more closely to the prepositional structure of real relations. In the case of real relations the relation has to do particularly with the preposition "in." As real, the "in" gives a similitude. The "in" of the book in the elephant is not a real "in," at least not with regards to its spatial interiority. Insofar as it causes indigestion, it becomes a real "in," not spatially, but affectively. For real relations, the similitude is

not the same as the relation itself, but comes after the "in" and is caused by the "in" which is the affect. The similitude is dependent upon the affective "in." If there is no affective "in," there is no similitude.

Now I want to ask: what happens when the "in" of a real relation ruptures the mathematical space in which we make sense of both logical spatial relations and the real relations of objective perception? That is, what happens when the "in" reveals itself identically as a "beyond" as in the case of the event? Though the relation remains, given by the "in," it is not necessarily the case that it carries with it the similitude parasitic upon the "in" of intraworldly real relations. In short, when the "in" identically signifies a "beyond," hasn't it definitively abandoned a logic governed by similitude? Since the grammar of relation is prepositional, it does not have an intrinsically comparative grammar. It is in fact originarily indifferent to any similarity that may arise between the terms, for as I just pointed out, the similitude comes *after* the originary "in." Even with knowledge of God, let alone relation to him, we are not dealing with comparative knowledge. Cusa says that we cannot know the first principle by the comparative rationality of finite reason "because it is self-evident that there is no comparative relation of the infinite to the finite" (*infiniti ad finitum proportionem non esse*).[83] Indeed, in the case of relation to God, we will no longer be dealing with a comparative, but with a superlative, for it is not the case that his unity stands aloof in its freedom (where transcendence would be non-relation). Rather it is the superlative, hyperbolic nature of the "in" that ruptures the possibility of any comparison by rupturing the mathematical space of spatiotemporal relations. Superlative interiority, *interior intimo meo*, is so maximally interior that it breaks open beyond any comparative to a nonsimilitude: *superior summo meo*.

Marion's concept of transcendence according to the phenomenality of the impossible, I am arguing, has to do with superlatives that deconstruct mathematical spatialization and its

[83] *De docta ignorantia*, I, c. 3 n. 9.

comparative grammar. The "in" becomes so superlatively "in" that it identically signifies a "beyond." In the case of the relation of God and the human person, we are not speaking of a maximal similitude that increases difference (as Przywara would have it), but a maximal relation that explodes similarity. Thus I have outlined three possible modes of relation: 1) logical relations without any comparative element (applicable for any preposition); 2) real relations that contain a comparative that is expressed in the concrete affectivity and adequation of the "in"; 3) radical real relations that explode the comparative by means of the superlative affectivity of this exceptional type of "in." These radical real relations are what I will call hyperbolic relations.

What is most known, literally superlatively known, is not known in the three-dimensional space of objects or its comparative analysis. It is known through a superlative interiority that no longer has anything to do with the formal adequation of objective knowing. The superlative "in" no longer refers to a place in the space of this world, as if my entrails or my neural activity were the location of this interiority. If an "image and likeness" will nonetheless be affirmed, it is not analogous to the adequative, formal likeness of the ego to its perceived object, comparing one thing to another. We will return to the economy of the image later and what sort of similarity this might entail. For now it is enough to have shown that similitude should not be thought at the same time as relation and certainly not from the origin of relation. Similitude always involves a temporal delay from the origin. In the case of relation to God, the paradoxical depth of the originarily prepositional and dative interiority shatters similitude.

In some sense, what I have done is to submit the concept of relation itself to the method of negative theology in order to conceive of a third, hyperbolic concept of relation. If in the place of the *via eminentiae* normal real relations expressed a similitude in at least one of the related terms, hyperbolic relations do not express themselves in a similitude, even if they are

still concretely affecting, like a real relation. Thus I would argue that hyperbolic relation protects God's transcendence in a different way than analogy did. If analogy safeguarded God's freedom through the "ever greater difference" of a comparative grammar, the superlative grammar of hyperbolic relation protects God's freedom through the coincidence of opposites and the contact-in-distance of incommensurable orders. Beyond spatial comparative logic, maximum relation coincides with minimum relation.

Conclusion

While Thomists and Aristotelians have met Marion's analysis of the event with skepticism, I am arguing that it depends on the Thomistic conception of real relation and can even be deduced from Thomas's own thinking. It does not threaten Thomism per se, but challenges the underlying univocity of a purely analogical predication. Neither Aristotle nor Thomas thought analogy as incommensurability of orders because they only used analogy as a way of predicating concepts. Thus neither led their own thinking back to the hyperbole beyond the apophasis of the conceptual unity of being. But Aquinas left open the very grammar of being towards this hyperbole, insofar as being is received according to the structure of real relation (as an accident) in order to transgress it hyperbolically. This grammatical openness was only definitively closed for modernity under the determination of the univocal framework of the *mathesis universalis*, which, as an inverted negative theology, closed off access to all indeterminable phenomena. Real relation never excludes what is beyond the horizon of that which receives the relation because, unlike a priori relation, the receiver never needs to measure the given in order to receive it. Its very "reality" means that relation comes from "beyond" it to the precise degree that it is "in" it. Far from outlining an exception, I have outlined a central if paradoxical mode of the advent of a real relation. I have not offered a deconstruction of Thomas's thinking, but have radically stretched it out, extending his doctrine of real relation

back towards what is "without Being" precisely because it gives itself and does so superlatively. Incommensurability and relation have perhaps never been thought with such precision and clarity until Marion, so that only now we can begin to see how "infinitely infinite distance" can *mean* participation rather than exemplifying its formal problem. The "in-and-beyond" of the event offers a real transcendence, one that at once escapes the implicit univocity in philosophical notions of transcendence while at the same time not fleeing as an elusive transcendence that is opposed to immanence. This transcendence is transcendent precisely *as* radical immanence. It is known as transcendent precisely insofar as it affects—transcendent because it stretches out what already is and brings about the impossible: an intimate impossibility.

CHAPTER III

Givenness, Nonsimilitude, and the Flesh

In this chapter I will show that it is characteristic of the saturated phenomenon to give itself without similitude to the one who receives it. Where, according to a realist account of perception, there is a formal similitude of knower and known, saturation leads beyond similarity by means of infinite distance and the superlative "in." Thus the phenomenon, insofar as it gives itself from itself, gives from a horizon without any similitude to the receiver in which it appears. This superlative givenness without similitude is signified through radical and originary affection. I will show that, on the one had, relation without similitude is a direct consequence of the reduction to givenness and thus not a result of nominalist presuppositions; yet, on the other hand, the reduction to givenness does not, despite appearances, assert a realism of the object nor imply that the given phenomenon is an effect of either a (noumenal) substance or a (transcendent) giver. The holding together of givenness and nonsimilitude escapes the dialectic characteristic of modern thought between the realist reduction to objectity and the idealist reduction to consciousness, the first dissolving the subject into the object, the second, dissolving the object into the subject.

In order to assess the coherence of the reduction to givenness, we first have to situate it within the history of metaphysics. Givenness can only open up authentically to the degree that certain false presuppositions of modern metaphysics are exposed. We need to see how these presuppositions grounded early phenomenology with premises that are fundamentally representationalist, because of which relation necessarily imposed an original similitude between the related terms.

This freedom from similitude achieved in the reduction to the horizon of givenness depends on an originary contact that stands in contrast to the originary similitude that alone guarantees relation in its metaphysical determination. Because of the excess of givenness the adequation of knower with the known (Aristotle), or affected with the affecting (Husserl), is no longer a sufficient description of the appearing of the phenomenon with the relation to what receives it. Sometimes the given shocks the receiver. This shock so reverberates in and as a body that it identifies the very personhood of the receiver in this reverberation. Originary contact, the originary tremor of existence, arising when the phenomenon is reduced beyond ontological causality and its similitude, was excluded as philosophically invalid by the dualism presupposed in the modern oculocentric theory of perception upon which Descartes bases his methodical doubt, through which he imposes his univocal methodology, and in which Husserl's phenomenology remains entangled. I will argue that such a theory is implicitly deconstructed in the reduction to givenness. To the degree that a phenomenon gives itself from itself (that is, without efficient cause), the phenomenon touches the receiver directly, affecting what she is from her very origin without passing through representation and the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience. To the degree that a similitude or conditions of possibility impose, the phenomenon fractures into, on one side, a given received as object commensurable to the mind and, on the other side, the ungiven essence. In other words, on one side, pure univocity—the masterable immanence of representation in which the receiver seizes the gift as its own—and, on the other, pure equivocity— the abyss of nonrelation. Or again: possibility as the a priori, on the one hand, and, on the other, impossibility as the negation of the possible and the exclusion as nonrational of whatever is not a priori. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate and justify originary nonsimilitude in the reduction to givenness, so that I can deepen what I have begun to sketch as a different kind of relation, a relation not governed by similitude, but which can instead be understood according to what

Marion describes as anamorphosis (Chapter IV). Giving itself as response to the impossible, the most intimate relation is prior to the a priori.

In the first section of this chapter, I will show that the correlation that defines experience as absolute leaves Husserl with a residual nominalism in his transcendental method. Husserl's correlation is grounded in a hidden premise that is itself a corollary of the split between the thing-in-itself and the perceived thing, a division that arose in seventeenth century science and grounded modern philosophical method. Uncovering this premise allows me, in the second section, to broaden the correlation from the act of perception (the correlation of perceiving with perceived) to the deeper correlation of originary affectivity and originary alterity that actually identifies the very selfhood of the being that can receive saturated phenomena, no longer reducing the objects of consciousness to the a priori conditions of experience.

In the third section I will argue that we can reduce the correlation itself to its given—as it gives itself as a flesh. We already saw that real relation, even in the radicalized sense that I developed, "requires something absolute" to be received as "real." I will show that the flesh understood according to saturated phenomenality can take the place of the absolute substance in Aquinas and can even be understood as a development of the absolute substance. In its full phenomenality as a given absolute, the substance no longer signifies the essence as an unphenomenalized cause, an intuitively empty concept. Rather the identity of the flesh with its other floods intuition to such an extent that it is "torn from the category of relation," and thereby arises as absolute due to its excessive givenness, the excessive way in which it is entangled in a world.

§1. The Phenomenological Correlation, Relation, and Representation

The founding of phenomenology as a philosophical method requires a paradigm shift in philosophical thinking that still has not been fully taken into account. Marion's readings of Husserl in *Reduction and Givenness* examine the ways in which Husserl's breakthrough of the *Logical Investigations* and his "return to the things themselves" offers a "'new beginning' for philosophy as such."[1] Marion examines the ways in which both Husserl and Heidegger fail to entirely free themselves from a metaphysical *residuum*: the transcendental subject and the horizon of the object. For Marion, they still cannot see the implications of phenomenology clearly enough and remain enmeshed in the limits that metaphysical method imposed upon phenomenality. *Reduction and Givenness* is an attempt to bring into full account the paradigm shift that phenomenology inaugurates but which its founders do not adequately bring into its own because they did not lead phenomenality back to givenness. Following this genealogical work, *Being Given* would be Marion's constructive attempt to do this new philosophy without the metaphysical *residuum* apparent in the work of previous phenomenologists.

From its commencement with Husserl, phenomenology has been proposed as a philosophy that resolves the aporias of transcendental method and the problem of representation by "going back to the things themselves." A representational model of perception was presupposed by almost every enlightenment thinker and grounded modern metaphysical method.[2] This model imagines the mind as a passive container to receive ideas of the things of the outside world. The mind is not directly aware of any *thing* outside of itself, but is only aware of the representation within itself. The representation mediates between mind and world. The mind has no access to the thing itself. These representations are creations of the mind, its own constructions in which it applies a universal category to what it perceives only

[1] RG, 2; RD, 9.

[2] This is true even for the empiricists. See for example, John Locke: "Since the Mind in all its Thoughts and Reasonings, hath no other immediate Object but its own Ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our Knowledge is only conversant about them." *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* IV:I.1, vol. 2, 121.

as raw sense data. Consequently, any act of interpretation that goes beyond validating what persists in presence (by means of an a priori adequation to the consciousness that knows) is necessarily an erroneous and willful imposition of the ego upon its object. Against Husserl and Heidegger, Marion argues for a more original reduction to givenness, prior to the reduction to the object or to Being.

There are two foundations of representational theory that are important for my argument. First, representational theory has its roots in scholastic nominalism. While nominalism suggests that what we know is only the particular thing and that we cannot know universals, representational theory suggests that we receive the particularity of sense data from which we build a form to attach to it. Representations are constructions of the mind re-presented from raw sense data, which is unique and classified within a genre only after the fact, by the mind. The mind applies universal categories to what it perceives only after it has perceived it in a non-meaningful form. Sensory data, as Descartes rightly saw, is not of the order of the true. We perceive particular sensory data and secondarily conceive it as a "what." Its quiddity is always a reconstruction and therefore either an illusory construct or an ideal universal with no concrete existence. As a consequence of the split between world and mind, the re-presentation that comes after perception *temporally*, comes first in the order of knowledge. Without this noetic priority of representation, a known could not appear at all. We can confirm the object's truth-value only by means of its adequation to an a priori system. For nominalism and representationalism, the universal is purely analytic with no real existence. Determination of universal categories follows perception and are said to be real, not by corresponding to the external world (which correspondence is excluded by the theory itself), but by corresponding to the *a priori* conditions of possibility, which are the mental conditions of its appearing that by definition precede its objective facticity. To identify the a priori is to locate in the appear-

ance that which is actually universal and not a fanciful construct of the particular mind. It is to see what persists in presence within what appears.

Second, the representational model of perception depended on the early modern theory of corpuscular physics: that the mind receives impression from corpuscles or particles, which are the physical raw sense data that the mind then forms into coherent concepts and meanings. This is a sort of scientific nominalism. The representational copies are generated within us by the causal influence of the object that we are perceiving, but because we only perceive raw data immanently (that is, we perceive only the corpuscles that affect the mind), the object must be re-presented as an inner object re-spatialized in the mind, known with certainty only if it corresponds to the a priori.[3] From passive perception of sense data the mind constructs concepts and gives this raw data an interpretable and meaningful shape. The representation (inner object) is always a reconstruction. Therefore what can be known a priori becomes the only authentically knowable truth. It alone meets the requirements of being (the conditions of possibility), while all other appearance remains within the negative moment of indeterminacy (following Descartes).

The distance implied in representationalism and corpuscular physics is the finite distance of mathematical spatialization. As a finite distance, it is a digitalized distance. Because Marion has a different concept of "distance," it is critical to describe how the distance between world and mind in representationalism operates, how perceiving and conceiving in this model of perception gives itself. This distance enacts a complete rupture between perceiving and conceiving. Thus corpuscular physics is preceded by the mathematical determination of space first manifested in the linear perspective developed by Leon Battista Alberti.[4] Linear perspective determines space according to a precise mathematics. The painted canvas becomes an exact mapping of the spatial coordinates of the perceived object. The

[3] Herman Philipse. "Transcendental Idealism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, eds. Barry Smith and David W. Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 292-297.
[4] Hoff, 84-87.

viewer takes the precise position of the painter. This position is the mirror image of the vanishing point in the painting. The kind of perspective whose condition of possibility is a single, nonspatial point makes possible the non-space of the transcendental ego that will emerge with modern philosophical method. The painted image increases in similitude to reality precisely by separating itself from the real through the tiny but finite and insurmountable gap between the real lifeworld and the visible image. This gap is finite and therefore insurmountable because the image can only be seen correctly from the non-space of the vanishing point. The "verisimilitude" *appears* only when the place of the viewer *disappears*. Whether or not such verisimilitude has merits for painting is unimportant here. What is important is that, as Johannes Hoff has argued, linear perspective in art provided the imaginative framework in which science and philosophy are able to seize onto a mathematical understanding of space, a representational model of perception, and an understanding of being and materiality as simply extension in space.[5] I will contend further that linear perspective implies a finite phenomenology of distance.

Hoff points out that the modern age never *adequately* solved the medieval problem of squaring the circle. Leibniz thought that the irrational number *pi* was the perfect solution because he assumed "that every deviation in mathematical space can be disregarded as a *quantité négligeable* if it is not capable of being reduced to quantifiable straight lines—as if, for example, the quantifiable, 'digital' pixels on my computer screen could provide me at least in principle with an exhaustive representation of an 'analogical' circle."[6] Thus the difference between curved and straight lines was simply approximated by means of a digitization of straight lines that makes them appear to be curved. The difference between straight and curved is never really overcome because it is an incommensurable distance—incommensurability understood as the finite distance of the atomized, virtual approximation

[5] Hoff, 50-58.
[6] Hoff, 65.

of the curved with no real contact between them. Since this approximation is finite and digitized, there's actually no real relation between the virtual (univocal, pure analytic) and any "real" or "other" term. In the next section (III, §2), I will show why the problematic character of this *finite* distance should not lead us to discard Marion's concept of *infinite* distance.

One of the major problems with philosophical methods arising out of seventeenth century science is that corpuscular science itself has since been disproved. Rationalism sought a priori logical truths and was thus not phenomenological, which involves a posteriori attention to phenomena. Indeed rationalism was founded on a suspicion of any phenomenological approach precisely because, within corpuscular perceptual theory, a posteriori reception or intuitive fulfillment could not result in knowledge because it could not be verified and thus would lack certainty, the *sine qua non* of knowledge. Thus any return to phenomenality within this framework begins by submitting what appears to the *a priori* conditions of possibility. This is what we see in Husserl. The method excludes from the start any means by which the phenomenon could give itself from itself.

Although representationalism is based on a false understanding of phenomenality stemming from an outdated science, this limited view of phenomenality by no means disappears in philosophy when scientific theory advances. Corpuscular science leaves a residue in philosophical method that is present in both naturalism and idealism. This residue persists in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and, to a lesser degree, in Heidegger's analytic of Dasein. Though Marion does not address these foundations of representational theory in *Reduction and Givenness*, it is important to point them out in order to assess whether Marion's reduction to givenness does in fact overcome this kind of representation more successfully than do Husserl or Heidegger. There is a principle of corpuscular physics which grounds Husserl's transcendental idealism and his understanding of the correlation, which I argue, is

overcome in Marion's reduction to a horizon beyond consciousness. The implicit removal of this premise is the key to understanding givenness and how it overcomes representation.

The Phenomenological Breakthrough: Intentionality and the Correlation

Husserl considered himself to have had a "breakthrough" in his *Logical Investigations* that allowed him to overcome representation and return to "the things themselves." But Marion thinks he is not entirely successful. I will now look at the means by which Husserl tries to accomplish the reduction to the things themselves, so that we can locate the *residuum* of representationalism that remains within his ideal of objectivity and that keeps him from successfully returning to the things themselves. This will give us the clarity to determine if and how Marion's reduction to givenness overcomes the representational trace that persists in Husserl. This preliminary investigation has the eventual aim to show, in the next section (III, §2), that the reduction to givenness is in fact more successful in overcoming the trace of representation. Further, I argue that the means by which givenness expresses its freedom from this trace is the absence of any originary similitude between any given and the one who receives it.

Here we will briefly look at the aspects that constitute Husserl's phenomenological breakthrough. Its first aspect is the return of intentionality. Where representation implies that everything happens within the mind, intentionality shows that everything is in fact other than the mind. The mind perceives the object through its intentional aim. Within the representational framework, one of the chief philosophical difficulties is that of externality and solipsism: whether we can know anything beyond our own minds. Only in such a framework could Cartesian rationalism be founded on the possibility that what appears to us could actually be a universal hallucination. Consciousness is seen to be primarily consciousness of ourselves and our concepts. It presents a solipsistic model of mind: the mind cannot know if its concepts and

images correspond to the outside world because its knowledge is formed internally. Raw sense data must be re-constituted into meaning-bearing knowledge. Husserl used intentionality to show that every perceptual act perceives something other than the mind that perceives. The mind intends an object, which, as the *intentional* object, transcends both the one perceiving and the act of perceiving. Consciousness is always "consciousness of" something (an intended object). There can never be a pure consciousness (of itself).[7] Intentionality lets us understand how we actually see more than what is visible. In seeing a cube for instance, I still perceive the sides that are invisible from my point of view, otherwise I would not see it as a cube. The invisible sides are seen as absent. Absence is part of the experience of presence. This is because I intend a cube as such. I do not construct a cube after the fact of seeing various lines and surfaces (as raw data).[8]

Second, Husserl broadens intuition to include the a priori categories. The inclusion of the categories in intuition meant that being is made phenomenally present.[9] Being is no longer a transcendental term, but a phenomenological one. One of the main reasons the categories are included in intuition is that intentionality shows how transcendence is not really "transcendent," but is simply the absent *side* of immanence. The "transcendent" in this case is not the "invisible as such," because it is seen in immanence. Thus being is experienced even in its absence. Being is given even if it always remains unseen.

Husserl still thinks of his philosophy as a "transcendental idealism." This attachment to transcendentalism arises out of certain a priori limits that he sets for phenomenality. First, his idealism is determined by the a priori truth of logical laws, which are by definition measurable by the mind. Second, his aim for objective knowledge means that the phenomenon is adequately known or knowable by an abstract ego: knowable by anyone at any time and in

[7] For more on intentionality see Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 12.
[8] Besides Sokolowski, also see Mulhall, *On Being in the World*, 6-34.
[9] RG, 5; RD, 13.

any location. Thus a Husserlian definition of truth would be objective truth: something is true if it is true of objects. Third, the aim towards objectivity means that he is seeking propositional knowledge that satisfies the laws of logic. Knowledge therefore remains a priori despite the seemingly a posteriori nature of phenomenology as a science of experience. The laws of logic are the a priori conditions for the possibility of objective knowledge.[10] Therefore all a posteriori experience is led back to the a priori as its ideal limit. What cannot be measured by the a priori is excluded from phenomenality by means of the reduction to objectivity

The final and decisive aspect of the phenomenological breakthrough is the correlation of what appears and the appearing. This became the founding principle of phenomenology. By this "marvelous correlation"[11] Husserl does away with the problem of the thing-in-itself [*Ding an sich*] by rendering it a meaningless concept. What Husserl shows is that all concepts that cannot be led back to their origin in experience are meaningless, intuitively empty, concepts. Experience (appearing) is identical to what is experienced (what appears) because any concept other than the experienced is absurd and nonsensical.[12] There is no difference between the experience and the mind's transcendent (intentional) object, i.e., that which is "world."

A well-known example that shows this clearly is the phenomenon of pain. The experience of the pain is no different than the pain itself. It is exactly what I feel it to be. There is no painful thing other than the pain itself. No part of the pain has been reserved elsewhere. For Husserl, experience is said to have "absolute being." What he means is that there is no experience behind the experience and the experience relates to no other thing, to no thing-in-itself. It is identical to itself. The experience is said to have absolute being because the experience accomplishes all that it is without remainder. It has no relation to another thing or aspect that is not phenomenalized. An experience is fully adequate to itself because there can be no

[10] Philipse, 246.
[11] Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1964), 10.
[12] Husserl, *Idea of Phenomenology*, 31.

aspect of the experience that is not experienced. While it is almost a platitude that this is the case for a relatively simple phenomenon such as pain, even for the more complex phenomena that we perceive, it holds true. To see a thing *as* a cube means that the appresented, invisible sides, are nevertheless experienced and thus part of what appears without reserve. This perfect immanence of the experience defines its "absolute being." It is absolute because it is perfectly immanent with no relation to any thing-in-itself. In other words, the perceived thing is not a representation of a thing-in-itself.

Since what appears is identical to the appearing, appearance cannot deceive. Whereas for Descartes, appearance plays out its decisive role as the dubitable flux—a possible "mere appearance" utterly separated from the apprehension of the true—for Husserl, that which transcends the mind (the intentional object, the phenomenon) does not need to be reconstituted in order to appear to me, but presents itself immediately and absolutely in the appearing. It *is* its presentation. Husserl's phenomenology is not representational because the phenomenal object is not representing another object existing *an sich*. The object of the intentional aim is identical to the object that appears.[13] It is transcendent only insofar as projected from consciousness. Husserl's transcendentalism is this: that the world is nothing other than the intentional correlate of the intending mind. The "world" in Husserl's sense is a dependent intentional structure of transcendental consciousness.[14]

While Husserl's reduction can universalize the experience, it only reaches the universality of objects and never transcends consciousness. The correlation expresses the absolute nature of the experience. It therefore means that nothing escapes consciousness. The world as world separate from mind in fact depends for its "transcendence" as world on what counts as world not being able to escape experience. The correlation therefore never really arrives at the thing itself. After all, Husserl's call "back to the things themselves" does not oppose the thing-

[13] Philipse, 267.
[14] Philipse, 250. See *Ideas* I §§49-55.

in-itself to the phenomenal thing, but unites them. Husserl escapes the predicament of solipsism through the correlation, but he remains residually representationalist and continues to subject all phenomena to the Cartesian *ordo rationis*. Thus Heidegger's critique:

> Husserl's primary question is simply not that concerning the character of the Being of consciousness [*nach dem Seinscharakter des Bewusstseins*]. Rather, he is guided by the following concern: *How can consciousness in general become the possible object of an absolute science*? What guides him primordially is the *idea of an absolute science*. But this idea, that *consciousness must be the region of an absolute science*, is not simply invented; it is the idea which has occupied *modern* philosophy ever since *Descartes*. The elaboration of pure consciousness as the thematic field of phenomenology is *not derived phenomenologically by going back to the things themselves* but by going back to a traditional idea of philosophy.[15]

Husserl only surpasses representation by means of another form of idealism. The phenomenological reduction does not lead beyond the a priori of logical laws. These laws are the means of the reduction used to verify the thing and thereby reduce it to an object.

Aporias of the Phenomenological Correlation

Since, for Husserl, the world ontologically depends on mind, he calls his philosophy a transcendental idealism even though his understanding of intentionality and the absolute nature of experience makes it radically different from the transcendental idealisms of representation in which the pure a priori excludes experience. This makes Husserl's philosophy sometimes seem like a realism.[16] It is not, however, a realism because the transcendent object is transcendent *as* perceived—the transcendent object is the phenomenal object, ontologically dependent on consciousness. Husserl believes this is not representational because there is no thing-in-itself to which the intention really refers and which the appearance re-presents. He sees phenomenology as purely descriptive. It describes what is intuited as it really is because what is intuited is the phenomenal object and not a physical entity.[17] The object to which the

[15] Quoted in RG 83-4; RD, 128. *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena,* trans. by Theodore Kisiel, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 107. Emphasis is in the text.
[16] See, Karl Ameriks, "Husserl's Realism." *Philosophical Review* 86 (1977).
[17] Philipse, 251. *Ideas* I, §24.

perceptual intention refers is identical with the object that appears to us. For Husserl, what is perceived is a phenomenal world that has no necessary connection to a "real" world outside of consciousness. *Epoché* (bracketing) allows one to suspend the question of the existence of the world outside by simply considering the phenomenal world as world. Within *epoché* and the phenomenological stance, the question of hallucination is irrelevant. The question of an outside world is not only not important, but is a meaningless question because there is no meaning-laden thing-in-itself beyond the experienced thing. The world as world is the phenomenal world, ontologically dependent on the mind. Husserl's apparent realism is simply the tautology of his idealism: that the world is perceived as it really is because the world *an sich* is the perceived world.

Despite his aim for a presuppositionless philosophy, there are in fact certain representational presuppositions that validate Husserl's transcendental idealism. Herman Philipse argues that what grounds Husserl's philosophy as a "transcendental idealism" is a "hidden premise" that arises from the science of corpuscular physics. This hidden premise is the principle of immanence. The principle of immanence says that what we perceive is truly and fully immanent to the mind while the thing-in-itself is inaccessible because we only receive raw data that must be reconstituted as a phenomenal thing.

Philipse shows the ways the principle of immanence arose from corpuscular physics in the seventeenth century. Corpuscles were believed to form a direct impression on the mind as raw sense data. Since corpuscles lacked secondary qualities (color, for instance), physical reality could be quite different from perceptual appearance, which had to be constructed by the mind from the immanent but formless impressions it received. What we perceive is really immanent to the mind because it affects it, but since this immanence only extends to raw sensory data, the concepts, ideas, and forms that we conceive are separate from the world as such. The principle of immanence then implies that there are mental entities that exist in the

mind only. While realistic accounts of perception imply mental entities as the intentional object that re-presents the world as such, idealistic accounts also assumed this principle as a necessary presupposition by which they assume that any world is a transcendental projection of what is really immanent to consciousness.[18] The principle of immanence is not a descriptive result of phenomenological investigation, but "a 'sedimentation' of traditional seventeenth century philosophy, which Husserl did not recognize as such."[19] Husserl assumes that experience is given in adumbrations and this validates his system of transcendental consciousness with the lifeworld as its intentional correlate, and, consequently, the correlation of appearing with appearance.

While Aristotle also has a doctrine of intentionality,[20] Husserl remains essentially within the anti-Aristotelian theory of perception that arose in the seventeenth century and continued to predominate in the 1890s. He arrives at a doctrine of intentionality not through a return to a sort of Aristotelian realism, but through the projective theory of consciousness, a theory that was prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century.[21] Where representation posits consciousness as a screen on which to interpret a world to which it has no direct access, projection means that the perceived world is projected from and subordinate to consciousness. Sensations, which are understood to be purely immanent in contrast to the transcendent concept or the transcendent thing-in-itself, are, in projective theory, projected by means of conceptualization to a place other than that of the ego. This allows phenomena to be understood as both transcendent of consciousness and dependent upon it. Consciousness is always "of" something other than itself, but this is only because it projects the thing it perceives. This projective theory allows Husserl to give a new meaning to the term *Ding an sich*. For Husserl, the *Ding an sich* is that which is identical to, rather than opposed to, the phenomenal thing:

[18] Philipse, 296.
[19] Philipse, 296.
[20] *De anima*, Bks. II and III.
[21] Philipse, 265-267.

the correlation of what appears to the appearing is absolute. It is distant from consciousness (and so "in-itself") because of the intentionality of knowing, thus because of the structure of consciousness and not because of its independence from consciousness. The world is the sum of these projections, unified as a world by the unity of the transcendental ego that projects them.

With the principle of immanence, Husserl assumes one could doubt the existence of the external world without doubting perception. More precisely, if one brackets the natural world, what is left, for Husserl, is transcendental consciousness and the world as its intentional correlate.[22] One does not then even need a concept of "external world" since one arrives at transcendence through perception. Thus we come to the crucial point. Since in this view, the world ontologically depends on consciousness, the experience becomes absolute in the correlation only because the principle of immanence grounds it. Only the principle of immanence, the certainty of perception without a certain world, allows the correlation to be an absolute without affecting the ego. Only with this principle is the ego that from which appearing is correlated to what appears. Consciousness, however, remains transcendental (and an a priori condition for a world) because according to projective intentionality the world is projected as the dependent object of consciousness. Husserl's reduction to consciousness and the ideal of objectivity results from the principle of immanence, the *residuum* of representation within his thinking.

I would thus contend that what happens in the correlation of appearing and what appears is that the principle of immanence is reified into an absolute. It is not the particular experience as such that is authentically absolute, but the certainty of having an immanent perception. Thus the principle of immanence itself is made absolute. Absolutizing the principle of immanence absolves consciousness from any responsibility towards what it receives

[22] *Ideas* I §§33-49. See Philipse, 249-252.

because the phenomenon, given as a dependent intentional structure, cannot give itself from itself and so cannot affect the ego. The correlation as projected world does not affect the ego in its ipseity. The reduction of the world to the intentional correlate of the mind is exactly what Levinas defines with his concept of totality. He critiques Husserl's correlation insofar as it does not permit the advent of the other but closes the world within the horizon of the object: "*Correlation does not suffice as a category for transcendence."*[23]

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas argues that Husserl's correlation is problematic because it confines the relation of the I to any not-I as a relation of a subject to an object. Relation reduced to objective relation prevents the absolute separation of the I in its selfhood and forecloses any encounter with the Other in its alterity. Levinas argues that intentionality, "consciousness of," and the correlation it defines, only lead back to the a priori of the object and thus to a totality. This is why I will call the correlation of what appears and the appearing the epistemological correlation, or the epistemological interpretation of the correlation. It determines the correlation within the noetic field without having any ontological implications for the receiver.

Levinas opts to do away with the correlation in favor of a pure separation and dialogic structure. But Levinas is here assuming implicitly that the correlation *must* be grounded in the principle of immanence. I am contending that it is this principle alone which is the real basis of the totalizing horizon of the intentional gaze and which prevents the correlation from reverberating with any real "beyond." Only the principle of immanence leads to a totality because it alone keeps the reduction within the field of consciousness as an ultimate framework. Against Levinas's shortsighted polemic, but in continuity with his deeper insight concerning originary alterity, I will show that the phenomenological correlation ought to be retained and that it can be justified from another basis than that of the principle of imma-

[23]Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1996), 53. Hereafter TI.

nence: it is justified according to the reduction to givenness and reception of the saturated given. It is, consequently, led back from an epistemological principle to an original dynamic more fundamental than the a priori.

Husserl's understanding of the correlation only surpasses modern method by means of making one of its presuppositions, the principle of immanence, an absolute. He escapes the problem of the external world, not by overcoming the radical divorce between apperception and the thing-in-itself, but simply by excising one term of the dichotomy (the thing-in-itself) while maintaining the presuppositions that gave the dichotomy in the first place—the principle of immanence, the ideal of objectivity, the submission of the phenomenon to the conditions of the *ordo rationis*. But just getting rid of one term of the phenomenon-noumenon dichotomy does not overcome the metaphysics of the object or the limitation of phenomenality to objectity. Rather, it completes this metaphysics in an all the more knowable certainty: more certain because there is no unknowable "beyond" of the thing-in-itself that reserves itself from the totalizing gaze.

While Husserl partially overcomes the dualism of modern method through the correlation and intentionality, he does so only by excluding the *Ding an sich* and raising the principle of immanence to an all encompassing principle: the correlation as leading the thing back to its origin in immanent conscious experience. In short, Husserl overcomes the dualist framework through a principle that produced the very framework he aims to overcome. By blocking one term of the dualism, he only increases the aporia.

§2. Reducing the Correlation: From an Epistemological Principle to a Principle of Identity

Husserl's "ideal of objectivity," Marion argues, "calls into question the very objective of phenomenology—the return to things in question. For it is not at all self-evident that the

things in question are given only in the form of their constituted objectification."[24] According to Marion, the drive towards objectivity and its determination of phenomena within the a priori conditions of possibility is not attentive to how phenomena give themselves. Even if the way in which Husserl overcomes representation remains aporetic, it is not necessarily the case that he presents a false philosophy. The way in which Husserl aims to overcome representation through the correlation and intentionality, though only partially successful, sheds significant light on the path we must take.

I have begun this chapter with an overview of Husserl's phenomenology and thus with a theory of perception ultimately to show how phenomenology as a mere epistemology, a way of knowing phenomena, breaks down, mixes with ontology and is ultimately suspended in givenness. The "absolute being" of the epistemological correlation expressed a "pure epistemology" because it allowed the perceiver to disappear into the transcendental ego and the real world to disappear into the dependent intentional structure of this ego. The line between the perceiver and the received phenomenon becomes blurred in Marion. Indeed, the two become identified absolutely. What began in epistemology and similitude ends in givenness and nonsimilitude. It thus becomes relevant to the question of analogy insofar as it becomes a question of relation as such and from the origin (i.e., not merely a question of perceiving phenomena).

I have sketched Husserl's accomplishment and its limits so that I can now show that Marion's reduction to givenness operates precisely so far as the principle of immanence has been removed from the reduction. This is why Marion's reduction looks so different and has been opposed with such hostility by those still working in the representational, immanent framework. Rather than rejecting the correlation outright, givenness provides a radical understanding of the correlation because givenness reduces the correlation without the principle of

[24] RG, 2; RD, 8.

immanence, which is so basic to the correlation's determination as the absolute experience. Abandoning the principle of immanence is like removing the very dam that holds the correlation within the mind's boundaries. It now spills over giving new shape to what a minded creature is: the correlation is no longer adequate to consciousness and its reason, but floods it. The aporias are overcome by pushing phenomenality beyond the act of perception towards a phenomenon that gives the self of what receives it.

What I aim to do, beyond Marion, is to show that the coherence of the reduction to givenness expresses itself only insofar as an immanent absolute no longer operates as it does in Husserl. Thus the reduced absolute no longer contains a suppressed dualism. Second, the broadening of phenomenality to givenness entails that the given gives the one who receives it rather than needing to adequate to any transcendental conditions. Receiving a given is not then only an act of perception, but ontically affects the receiver all the way down. It is not merely a matter of accumulating knowledge, but of receiving oneself. In short, the correlation reduced to the level of the originary entails an absolute disruption of the self (rather than its enclosure in a totality). I intend to show that the reduction to givenness supplies the correlation without relying on immanence to ground it. Radicalizing the correlation rather than rejecting it is the best way to overcome any totalizing ambition. I am arguing that this is what the reduction to givenness accomplishes.

From the mediation of the gaze to the immediacy of touch

Representational theory is oculocentric. It takes vision as the paradigmatic sense by which perceiving takes place. Representational theory will be the decisive framework in which Descartes can found his philosophy upon a radical skepticism: that the eyes can be deceived by appearances and therefore the world could possibly be a deception, a mere appearance. One can think that what one saw was not actually what was there, even that the

whole world of one's ocular perception is an illusion. I may see a pool of water, but this may be only a product of my wishes (I am thirsty) or the result of intense heat rising off the pavement.

As opposed to the oculocentrism of representation, a contact theory of perception would see not vision but touch as constitutive of all perceiving. In Aristotle and Thomas, the sense of touch is the "basis of the other senses,"[25] (which does not mean that the other senses are simply extensions of touch). One touches the world without any mediation, for the sense of touch is itself the medium by which we feel. With touch there is no mediation, but to touch is to be touched and to feel oneself feeling, without intermediary to project it as world. Touch has no organ, and is constitutive of being alive.[26] Its only mediation is itself, the fact of being sentient. The soul itself is one with sensing. Jean-Louis Chrétien writes, "Touch is the perpetual place of exchange through which the nonidentical is identified, through which we are disclosed to the world and the forms of the world are disclosed to us."[27] Aquinas says, "God himself touches the soul [*tangit animam*] by causing grace in it…. The human mind [*mens*] in a certain way touches God [*tangit Deum*] by knowing or loving him."[28] Or, for more precision, Cusa: "attingitur inattingibile inattingibiliter" (the untouchable is touched in an untouching way).[29] Originary contact identifies a "place of exchange," the place of the gift, rather than the most general concept that binds the two in a generic similitude. Contact offers the immediacy without which our finitude could not encounter the infinite.

While one can see what is not really there (deceive oneself), one cannot be deceived in feeling because the feeling is identical to the experience as we saw with Husserl. The correlation is not only grounded in the primacy of touch, but touch shows that the correlation is the

[25] *Sum. Theol*., 1, 76, 5.
[26] *De Anima*, II, 2.
[27] *The Call and the Response*, trans. Anne A. Davenport, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 117.
[28] De ver. 28, 3, Resp. See also John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, "Truth and Touch" in *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001), 60-87; Graham Ward, "The Body of the Church and its Erotic Politics," in *Christ and Culture*, (Oxford: Blackwells, 2005), 92-110.
[29] *Idiota de sapientia* I, n. 7, 13-14.

truth of being a person: to be alive is to feel oneself feeling and felt. Marion writes, "Husserl extended in this way, with unequaled virtuosity, the thesis of Aristotle that touch has its privilege over the other senses from the fact that in its case alone the *milieu* of perception is one with the perceiver in such a way that this feeler could never feel without first feeling him- or herself…all phenomenalization of the world for me passes through my flesh."[30] The primacy of touch *in perception* is the basic insight of Husserl's correlation of the appearing with what appears even if his representationalism implies an oculocentric model *of knowledge*.

The primacy of touch confirms my development of a radical real relation without similitude. We can see that it is only an oculocentric understanding of relation that identifies two things as related by means of a perceived similitude, as when one gazes on two objects side by side and perceives a common genus by which to classify them, or even when Husserl excludes the thing-in-itself by the absolute adequation of what appears to the intention that aims at it. A phenomenology of touch allows another form of relation, no longer by means of a comparison mediated by an external gaze, but a relation through the immediate contact of the related terms all the while maintaining an infinite distance with regard to similitude. In his essay, "The Body and Touch," Chrétien, drawing upon Aristotle, develops a phenomenology of touch in which he replaces a distance-touch dichotomy for a near-far contrast within touch itself:

> To show that touch involves a sense of proximity is to show that it involves a sense of distance. To touch is to approach or to be approached, not to apply a surface against another. Proximity forgets, through contact, what separates it from the thing that it touches. It no longer feels this distance as such, precisely because distance no longer impedes touch but instead constitutes the medium though which we feel.[31]

[30] IE, 89; DS, 107.
[31] Chrétien, 89.

Approximation, distance, approach: Chretien's phenomenology of touch is full of the concepts that Marion uses to express the iconic logic that overcomes the logic of similitude, its idolatrous conceptions of the divine, and its totalitarian definitions of man.

The correlation of receiver to given must be understood within this proximity that "forgets, through contact, what separates it from the thing that it touches."[32] Only a felt feeler can be affected by the thing it receives. In the real relation of the perceptual act, reception forms the perceiver (as feeler) into that very thing it receives not in such a way that it dissolves into the given, but in such a way that it receives itself as a feeling thing by means of receiving the given that affects it.

Oculocentrism presupposes a distance-contact dichotomy. A near-far contrast within the infinite distance of touch describes inherence within the sensuous in which the sentient as sentient exists in distance. According to Chrétien's analysis, distance is the givenness of touch itself where sight proposes distance only as something to be overcome by the objectifying gaze that constructs its objects. Sight, divorced from a genuine sensitivity, abolishes distance because it re-presents a univocal totality of objects, separate from any meaningful contact with what it sees. But if all the other senses presuppose touch as a *basis*, sight always contains an originary sensing: the distance of seeing as a possibly overwhelming contact, as in cases of bedazzlement. Original sensing disrupts the totality of oculocentrism. Levinas writes,

> Sensibility constitutes the very egoism of the I, *which is sentient and not something sensed.* Man as measure of all things, that is, measured by nothing, comparing all things but incomparable, is affirmed in the sensing of sensation. Sensation breaks up every system…[33]

For representation, reality is already there as a possibility of the mind that perceives it. In perceiving and conceiving it actualizes an innate possibility. The problem with this view has nothing to do with realism against idealism. Rather, the problem is that the perceived cannot be more than what the mind already is. The mind has no freedom except as it constructs its

[32] Chrétien, 89.
[33] TI, 59-60.

own virtual reality. On the one hand, it conceives only according to the causal influence of the object (a naive realism), and, on the other, the givenness of the object is predetermined by the structure that the mind already has taken. The mind simply represents what is according to its own limits and the limits of the efficient causality of the object, which is to say it represents itself.

Marion's persistent emphasis on the gaze seems somewhat problematic insofar as his project only gains its coherence as a contribution to the overcoming of representation and its oculocentrism. But when the intuitional excess floods the intentional aim, as it does in the saturated phenomenon, Marion can hardly be accused of an oculocentric model of perception grounded in immanence that demands a constructed or a priori conceptualization. In Marion's analysis of saturation, the gaze does not master its object, but is stupefied and astounded by the excess of its givenness.

Spatialization and Distance

What I have argued in Chapter II concerning the incommensurability of the orders seems to imply that we abandon the term analogy altogether. Analogy, as it is normally understood, implies some similarity between the terms. We are now speaking of relation rather than similarity. Analogy has been primarily conceptualized in order to mediate equivocity and univocity. Within this meaning of analogy, there is 1) analogy as proportionality and 2) analogy of attribution. These analogies both signify participation of some kind. Further, we sometimes understand analogy as similarity, resemblance, parallelism, or symbol. I have been aiming to uncover what in the doctrine of analogy speaks relation pure and simple. Thus I have needed to separate analogy from similitude insofar as relation is distinct from similitude. So I will not be using it in these last senses, though no doubt talk of proportion and attribution will remain useful, as we will see in Chapter IV.

There is another sense of the analogical that is important for my reading of the incommensurability of the orders and of infinite distance. This sense is not often connected with the doctrine of analogy, with participation, or with analogical predication. It is the sense of the term when we speak of analogue as opposed to digital technologies. One would not immediately think that the theological analogy has anything to do with the way we speak of analogue technologies, like an analogue clock as opposed to a digital one. These seem to be fairly equivocal uses of the term. But once we look deeper, there turns out to be a unity between them. This unity is revealed the more we think analogy as a structure of relation.

Analogue relations oppose the virtual spaces of a digital framework determined by comprehensible concepts and in which the distance from the certain ego to the non-determinable real is an insurmountable finite distance. An analogue understanding of perspective does not create the rupture between seeing and the world seen that emerges with linear perspective, corpuscular physics, and the transcendental ego. It does not reduce the visible to the mathematically mappable in such a way as to exclude the surplus of the invisible in the visible. This does not imply that the distance between the knower and the world is surmounted. An analogue model does not identify the knower completely within a web of relations. If it rejects the finite distance of digital space, analogue perception receives the other within *infinite* distance. Analogue relations can appear as infinite distance-in-relation because infinitude allows analogue (real) contact between incommensurable terms, indeed, real contact *through* incommensurability. In this way analogue reception of the other does not need similitude to govern over what is and is not in relation. Analogue relation would express an originary *absence of similitude* in contrast to the digital, "truth-like" virtual realities of Alberti's "verisimilitude" that creates "*images* that are *deceptively similar to*, without being *part of*, the world that we inhabit."[34] Within an analogue world, incommensurability does not

[34] Hoff, 84.

imply nonrelation. It is only the digitization of space that equates relation with similitude and incommensurability with nonrelation.

Underlying the felt need to make analogy into an ontology is the belief that only similitude gives relation. In order to presuppose the necessity of similitude, this on-to(theo)logy must also presuppose the digitization of space. Only within such a context is similitude confused with relation and analogy as "partially similar, partially different" is seen as the only way of escape from the univocity-equivocity either/or.

At issue is two different kinds of incommensurability. The digital kind has been presupposed both by those who would reject the analogy of being and by those who champion it. In the digital framework, the distance between the mind and the world is the insurmountable alienation of the virtual from the real. However small the distance seems, there is still no "nearness." Within an analogue space, one does not need to collapse distance by means of similarity in order to have nearness. Rather, the only requirement is an analogue contact between terms that may nevertheless remain originarily incommensurable and dissimilar.

The analogue phenomenology of touch means that the ego only "approximates" or approaches what it knows rather than grasping it as an object. We must be clear about what kind of approximation this is. Digital systems also approximate an analogical reality. Yet the distance inscribed between the system and the reality marks the absence of any real relation between them in the same way that 0 has no real relation to 1 (in digital code). Originary contact does not obtain for purely immanent, digital philosophies, univocal in their virtual spaces that are absolutely ruptured from reality. What "approximation" means within univocal philosophies and digitized spaces amounts to uncertainty and a gesture towards the real like a guess or a fantasy. By contrast, "approximation" within the near-far contrast of the contact of incommensurable orders does not amount to a noetic guess. Such approximation may obtain real certainty (i.e. knowledge) without appropriating the known as a comprehensible object. It

sets off from that which it touches, thus from what it knows by nearness and not as an object. Nearness gives distance in the certainty of its intimate contact. It advances into the light of the unknown from the night of the dimly known. The choice of assent does not have to do with whether one will *know* what one assents to or not, but with whether one will assent and thus *understand*, or will suppress and not understand what one nevertheless knows. If "I believe in order to understand," it is nevertheless the case that I already know and continue to approach the unknown in the known. In this economy, knowledge comes before faith, which perfects knowledge, and which knows through contact what it cannot grasp by sight.

Approximation in an analogical world has to do with the infinite approach rather than with the inexactitude of a virtual system of objects, an inexactitude to be overcome by the positive determination of the a priori. This is because in the case of analogical approach, approximation has to do with the superlative nature of intimate relation. As Cusa knew, "the *coincidence of opposites* cannot be approximated on the level of rational comparisons."[35] Any mathematical or wholly analytic account offers only a virtual finite approximation rather than an approximation by means of participation in infinite distance. Non-digital approximation gives an immediate contact that establishes an apophatic comprehension of the other. In the words of Cusa: "The more incomprehensible I comprehend You-my-God to be, the more I touch onto you (*attingo*), because the more I touch on the End of my desire."[36]

Chrétien's near-far contrast is the correct phenomenology of analogue contact where the distance-contact phenomenology implies a digitalized, finite distance and oculocentric model of perception. Likeness is only said when we look on two objects from an outside perspective in which we can compare them according to their finitude. This is why it so easily slips into the distance of the transcendental ego with God as its (virtual) object. Despite the mathematical precision of the verisimilitude of linear perspective, one can only pass between

[35] Hoff, 67.
[36] *De docta ignorantia*, c. 16 nn. 73,

the real to the likeness from a position outside the space of either. One cannot be placed in one through contact with the other. By contrast to this purely comparative relation is the relation of excess from within an analogue space. From any perspective within the relation as it is received, the "in" becomes so superlative that it breaks out as a "beyond." This relation is ecstatic. It cannot be conceived within a digital space for it exceeds its three-dimensional boundaries, advancing towards what is more near than any univocally determined object of thought. If the three-dimensional world is necessarily outside of me and I am alienated from it, the intimate is only achieved within an analogue account of touch.

Freedom from Immanence: The contact theory of perception and the reduction of the correlation to givenness

To assert the primacy of touch over the conceptualizing gaze can only be a first step if we are to overcome the principle of immanence and its basis in the false theory of perception derived from corpuscular physics and nominalism. For Husserl, following Descartes, consciousness is certain and indestructible and is thereby established as first principle. Yet, contrary to Cartesian skepticism regarding appearances, Husserl wanted to show that the realm of indubitability extends to "this marvelous correlation"[37] of epistemic experiences and their intentional objects as such. The intentional object corresponds precisely to the a priori conditions of the mind that precede any objectification. Husserl's move to overcome the oculocentric model of perception would only broaden the Cartesian realm of indubitable objects. Yet so long as the correlation is understood epistemologically (as the correlation of what appears to the appearing) the horizon of phenomenality remains the horizon of consciousness and the knowing ego remains certain and indestructible only insofar as it is a purely abstract condition on which the phenomenal world depends. The egological principle that grounded the Cartesian method is still very much at work in Husserl's philosophy.

[37] Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, 10.

Since Husserl's correlation derives from the principle of immanence, I have demonstrated that the correlation itself is what maintains the trace of representationalism in Husserl's phenomenology and ultimately preserves the dualism of phenomenal thing and thing-in-itself even while it exorcises one of the terms. The correlation reduces phenomenality to a flat objective immanence that only retains its flatness by the transcendental transcendence of the ego. If the principle of immanence is what transcendentalizes the ego and grounds the correlation, and if the split between subject and object, mind and world underlying corpuscularism as a scientific nominalism is in fact a division to be overcome; then, in order to keep the correlation and avoid Husserl's incoherence, Herman Philipse argues that either we must ground the correlation elsewhere than the immanence of experience or we must justify immanence otherwise than in corpuscularism.[38] If neither of these options can succeed, we must simply do away with the correlation and so also with phenomenology as a rigorous philosophical discourse. This dilemma arises in part because of the univocal framework and the consequent digital incommensurability between the mathematical, scientific model of the world and the world of actual experience. One must choose between competing realities. Either the mathematical, scientific and determinable world is the true one and the images and conceptions of the mind are illusory (except in the poor way in which they adequate to the a priori); or the experienced, common sense world is the real world and that of science is a derived construct.[39]

Philipse gives two options. I want to show that there is a third way. Rather than justifying the correlation as it stands through a bolstering of immanence or grounding the correlation elsewhere than in immanence, we can reduce the correlation itself, that is, lead it back to its own given. While this move has in some sense the character of grounding the correlation elsewhere, it is without a proper "ground" for it does not stabilize the correlation

[38] Philipse, 299.
[39] Philipse, 300.

as such. In its own phenomenality as given, the correlation no longer obtains as an epistemological principle and therefore cannot secure a ground. Its reduction to givenness is accomplished only by means of completely transfiguring it and passing beyond the logic of the "consciousness of," i.e. intentionality, thereby reducing the ego from its transcendental position to an affective position.

This reduction can only be realized in the analogue space in which distance can be infinite without excluding relation. The contact theory within which the reduction to givenness makes sense not only leads away from immanence, but also from adequation (Aristotelian and Kantian) and even perception as such insofar as it leads toward the aseitic givenness of the flesh: from the similitude of the concept toward original difference. Thus it leads away from any basis in a "ground" precisely because it moves towards a givenness *a se*.

Husserl had only taken the correlation so far as to prove the absolute nature of experience. The ego remained outside as a transcendental observer. But Marion implies that the correlation should be understood as the proportional equivalence of reduction and givenness, i.e., the principle "so much reduction, so much givenness":

> Givenness is equivalent in fact to the phenomenon itself, the two sides of which, the appearing (from the side of consciousness) and that which appears (from the side of the thing), are articulated according to the principle of an "admirable correlation" only because the first is taken as a given, given by and according to the second, givenness itself.[40]

We must recognize that Husserl's correlation is an *interpretation* of the equivalence *as an epistemological principle.* Only because of immanence does the principle show that experience is absolute. Though Husserl interprets it in this way, it is not at all obvious that the correlation should be understood as an epistemological principle nor that phenomenology need follow his interpretation. Husserl claims experience as absolute only because he assumes

[40] IE 21; DS, 24.

the principle of immanence, which alone can make something like pain exemplary of all phenomena.

The reduction of the correlation to givenness is legitimate for at least two reasons. First, once the phenomenon is freed of its doppelgänger, the thing-in-itself, the reception of the object perceived no longer needs to be understood as a constituting act (with the presupposed chasm between perception and conception). It can instead be understood according to Aristotelian identity of the perceiver with the perceived. There is no thing-in-itself to constitute precisely because the receiver receives the thing to the degree that the thing presents itself. Not needing to re-present it in order to verify the truth-value of the received, there is no reason that the ego might be quite plastic in taking the shape of what it receives without first submitting to the conditions of possibility. One can then do away with both the objectity of the phenomenon and the understanding of the act of receiving it as an act of perception. The correlation of perceiver with perceived is now the correlation of the receiver with the given and no longer submits the given to the ego. The given in its surplus over the receiver can in fact give the receiver to herself.

Second, now freed to receive the other as infinite, this identity (receiver to given) can be seen to go all the way down, delegitimizing the transcendental ego, the divorce between immanent sense data and the thing in itself, and surpassing any mere "adequation" between this infinite alterity and the receiver who receives it. Instead the given makes a claim about and upon the haecceity of the receiver.

Givenness to Consciousness: Originary Disruption of Mind

Husserl's correlation could be said to complete metaphysics insofar as it reduced the world to consciousness and being to a priori possibility. More radically, it dissolved the resistance to totalization that the concept of the thing-in-itself provided. But if the correlation

is reduced to givenness and is no longer grounded in the principle of immanence, then it may be that the very identity that completed metaphysics is the means of surpassing it. With the insight that givenness precedes objectity and consciousness, Marion argues that the reign of presence, under metaphysics, is overcome. In *Reduction and Givenness* we can already see in rudimentary form the justification for reducing the correlation insofar as givenness is not the givenness of consciousness, but is givenness *to* consciousness. Since Husserl broadens the concept of perception (intuition), Marion shows that what intuition receives might disrupt the solipsism of consciousness. It might disrupt it so deeply as to give the receiver to herself.

Rather than turning to a simple realist theory of perception where the real object precedes consciousness of it and is not dependent on consciousness at all, Husserl thinks that we need "a fundamental broadening, until now. . . not accomplished, of the concepts of perception and of intuition."[41] Thus the phenomenological breakthrough, as Marion reads it, "is accomplished by leading back to intuition everything that claims to be constituted as a phenomenon."[42] This broadening of intuition hints at what I am developing and could open phenomenality beyond the totalizing gaze toward what is not apperceived, indeed cannot be apperceived, but which nevertheless approaches—phenomena that affect us so deeply as to give our very ipseity.

While for Husserl experience is absolute because it is perfectly immanent and therefore dependent on consciousness (transcends it only as its intentional correlate) the correlation's givenness, for Marion, makes it the given to consciousness such that the given is not merely the intentional correlate of consciousness. It must in some way disrupt consciousness, or it would not be truly given but would be predetermined by the a priori. Marion interprets the Husserlian breakthrough in a key passage of *Reduction and Givenness* that I will quote at length:

[41] RG, 8; RD, 16. *Logische Untersuchungen*, II, 2, *Hua,* XIX/2, ed. U. Panzer, 782.
[42] RG, 8; RD, 17.

> Appearing (*Aussehen*) no longer counts as a datum [*une donée*] for the single conscious subject, but first as the givenness [*la donation*] of what thus appears: the appearing, through the correlation that merits the full title of "phenomenological," *gives* that which appears. Or again, 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*]." The phenomenological breakthrough consists neither in the broadening of intuition, nor in the autonomy of signification, but solely in the unconditional primacy of the givenness of the phenomenon.[43]

The fact that intuition or signification (intention) does not rule over the given means that consciousness does not rule over the phenomenon, and that the phenomenon therefore does not have to appear as an object.

> Givenness precedes intuition and intention because they make sense only for and through an appearance, which counts as the appearing of something that appears (a phenomenon being) only by virtue of the principle of correlation—and therefore of givenness.[44]

There is no longer the possibility of being "deceived by appearance," not only because appearing is correlated to appearance, but because this correlation is first given, that is, something appears: "From now on, seeming [*paraître*] no longer belongs to the domain of semblance [*apparence*], since, in the capacity of an arrival at seeming [*paraître*], it issues from appearing [*apparaître*], and therefore from something that appears."[45]

The given *to* consciousness does not reside in consciousness, but disrupts it. Givenness thus does not produce a reduction to presence in the way that the epistemological correlation does. The given is constrained within neither consciousness nor world, but disrupts them to such an extent that it gives the ego to itself and gives world as world. Givenness therefore is in no way commensurable with what we identify as having being. It transcends

[43] RG, 32; RD, 52-53.
[44] RG, 32; RD, 53.
[45] RG, 32; RD, 53.

being altogether. The givenness of being in no way legitimizes the metaphysical tendency to collapse the given into being as possibility. It therefore enables a "third way" between grounding the epistemological correlation elsewhere than in the principle of immanence or justifying immanence otherwise than in the heritage of corpuscularism.

Husserl's broadening of perception could in the end simply encompass the world in a totality according to immanence. The broadening enables a more adequate and complete enclosing. So, rather than a broadening, I am arguing we consider a release—that is, a release from immanence—that would free philosophy from an all-encompassing totalization. This freedom is enabled by "givenness to consciousness." The rupturing implied in the *givenness to* means that in the case of saturation, the phenomenon is never received as purely immanent to the mind because it comes as rupturing difference. The given to consciousness that disrupts the ego by giving the ego to itself (affecting the whole) implies a release from immanence. Only with this release can the correlation itself be reduced. If the correlation enacting the phenomenological reduction binds phenomenality to "experience," reducing what appears to the appearing, now the correlation is that between the given, *le donné,* and *l'adonné,* a figure of the ego which receives itself from what it receives which implies that the correlation itself is reduced into the ego because it affects it, even gives the ego to itself.

Givenness as the Basis for Nonsimilitude

From his early work, *The Idol and Distance* (1977), Marion saw that the phenomenological turn opened up the possibility and indeed priority of relation without similitude and understood this nonsimilitude to oppose an analogical yet still conceptual identification of the related terms:

> Between distance and the *Ereignis* there intervenes no similitude, nor any dissimilitude either, since no directly measurable relation [*rapport*] joins them; but an indirect relation is established: the *Ereignis* enters into distance from distance. It is no more opposed to distance than it is composed with it; it is disposed over against it in the in-

> timate alterity and separated communion that distance mobilizes. It is therefore a question neither of an identification nor of an analogy in the current sense of the term.[46]

To some degree, this way of opposing relation-in-distance to analogy leads to confusion regarding what he is actually doing. I often hear, for instance, *God Without Being* dismissed as a Barthian thesis. But once these quasi-theological claims are contextualized in the phenomenology of givenness, we can see nonsimilitude is simply a surpassing of analogy and has little to do with a Barthian understanding of distance, which remains a finite, metaphysical understanding of distance. Marion's understanding of distance and relation without similitude that emerges as early as *The Idol and Distance* will be the foundation for his development of a phenomenology of givenness.

Another critique leveled against Marion is that givenness secretly links phenomenality to a transcendental giver, that is, it reintroduces an onto-theology into phenomenology.[47] But the origin of givenness in a phenomenology of distance shows that it means precisely the opposite. Givenness develops from the phenomenology of distance and nonsimilitude. It speaks of the self-gift of the phenomenon and puts in question the common definition of phenomenology as a science of consciousness. The reduction to givenness clears away all that is not given from itself, all that the ego or the a priori imposes. Far from introducing a form of direct causality or an external giver, givenness means that the phenomenon is given from itself alone and not from an ungiven cause.

> The datum merits its name by its being a *fait accompli*, such that it happens to me, and in which it is distinguished from all foreseen, synthesized, and constituted objects, since it happens to me as an event. This unforeseen happening marks it as given and attests in it to givenness. Givenness does not indicate so much here the origin of the given as its phenomenological status. Better, most often, givenness characterizes the given as without cause, origin, and identifiable antecedent, far from assigning them to

[46] ID 243; IeD, 304.
[47] Dominique Janicaud, "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology," trans. Bernard Prusak, in *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate*, ed. Dominique Janicaud, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 16-106.

> it…givenness does not submit the given to a transcendent condition, but rather frees it from that condition.[48]

The given is *a se*, defined as given precisely insofar as it is from itself, not merely from a cause (or giver).

The simultaneity of contradictory critiques—accusations of Barthianism, on the one hand, and, on the other, of smuggling in a natural theology (through the gift given by a Giver)—clearly signals that Marion is doing something quite different, something that challenges the very framework that these critics presuppose. We tend to think of givenness as imposing a similitude between the giver and the receiver or between the gift and the receiver who appropriates it. For Marion, however, the horizon of givenness gives within an originary nonsimilitude because the welling up of the given exceeds the horizon of the mind that receives it. Consequently, the given can never be reduced to immanence. It never submits to the adequation of being to possibility, thus to the horizon of consciousness. Just as plunging into a cold lake doesn't make one more aqueous, but makes one more alive through life's vigorous reaction to the chill, so the given gives us to ourselves by tracing distance within us.

The reduction itself leads to the indubitability of touch as against the illusionary transcendences that are purged away by the reduction:

> Now, the reduction eliminates all transcendence, that is to say, the intentional ecstasy of consciousness toward its objective, which alone allows knowledge of it, but also incertitude, error, illusion, and so on; thus the givenness of the given, on the express condition that it is already reduced, reduced to the pure given, becomes absolutely indubitable.[49]

If the reduction to givenness brackets all transcendences and conditions in order to see the thing itself as it gives itself, then, to make explicit what is implicit in Marion's thought: givenness is the basis for nonsimilitude. Similitude sees the phenomenon as an effect of a cause rather than as itself. Givenness gives a relation of nonadequate terms. But givenness, and the immediate and indubitable contact with the phenomenon that givenness implies,

[48] IE 25; DS, 28-29.
[49] IE, 18-19; DS, 21.

brackets similitude so that the effect does not become a mere shadow of an *eidolon*. Reduced to givenness, both terms of the relation, received and receiver, are as real as possible because no longer comparatively related.

§3. The Flesh: The Reduced Correlation

The correlation is what Husserl uses to break free of representationalism. Husserl argues that the correlation between appearing and what appears shows that experience is absolute. Experience is not a re-presentation of another world. Husserl, however, does not fully overcome representation. The givenness *to* consciousness which gives the ego to itself cannot depend on the ego as its transcendental condition in the way that experience achieved absolute being as the intentional correlate of transcendental consciousness. My argument in this section is that the correlation, reduced to givenness, is no longer dependent on consciousness. The reduced correlation now appears *as a flesh*, which is defined as the correlation of feeling with the felt. Consequently, the correlation will be able to define a real concrete egoity rather than being dependent on an abstract ego that lacks reality and affectivity. More radically, I will argue that the "absolute being" of the epistemological correlation is in a certain way retained in the phenomenon of the flesh, which, Marion says, is absolute by means of excess. The flesh cannot be reduced to a web of relational dependencies any more than it can retain the status of a transcendental subject.

We are now in a position to understand the correlation as a description of the facticity of the flesh itself and no longer as a description of the absolute being of what the empirical me of a transcendental I experiences. There is no doubt a clear and acknowledged Husserlian genealogy for Marion's concept of the flesh. Marion notes that already for Husserl the flesh is what accomplishes the egoity of the ego "by the irreducible givenness of a phenomenological

original act of feeling…The flesh only attains itself in feeling itself…"[50] Thus the ego is inseparable from the flesh:

> [I]f the act of feeling acquires such a privilege, it is because it finally assigns the ego to itself. But it can do so only because flesh always remains original to it, because it can never distance itself from it; in short, because it is taken there…The ego takes, when it takes its flesh, like cement or plaster takes once the water has left it—in fixing itself. It does not fix itself to its flesh; it fixes itself to itself as flesh.[51]

The ego only attains itself as an I in that it attains itself as a flesh. This enfleshment is not added on to a bare existent, but is originary, coming before the *cogitatio*.[52]

Though Marion's development of the phenomenon of the flesh is largely dependent on Husserl and Michel Henry, what his development of the flesh as a saturated phenomenon uniquely draws out is the holding together of the paradoxical phenomenality of the flesh as at once an absolute (without similitude or relation) and at the same time correlated to what it receives, correlated in fact in such an intimacy as to be identified entirely by what affects it: "If a subjectivity must surmount the destruction of the metaphysical subject, it can only come from flesh, where hetero- and auto-affection are mixed."[53] On the one hand, auto-affection identifies the flesh as an absolute:

> If flesh did not manage to absolve itself of all relation, it would not manage to accomplish what it alone can accomplish—to render me to myself, to assign me to myself—in the double sense of assigning me my proper place and of making me feel its power.[54]

On the other hand, the flesh only receives itself from the other that gives it: "Thus is born the gifted, whom the call makes the successor to the 'subject,' as what receives itself entirely from what it receives."[55] This other without which there would be no self identifies what Marion calls originary alterity. The flesh gives itself as a paradox: it appears from originary auto-affection and originary hetero-affection.

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[50] IE, 91; DS, 109.
[51] IE, 91; DS, 110.
[52] IE, 86; DS, 104.
[53] IE, 101; DS, 121.
[54] IE, 100; DS, 121.
[55] BG, 268; ED, 369.

Only the flesh thought as saturated resolves the aporias of the epistemological correlation and the transcendental ego, for only in the excess of enfleshment—absolved of all relation yet identified in its affection—can the ego be assigned to itself. I want to show that saturation and the reduction to givenness, now that the principle of immanence has been dissolved, doubles back upon the ego *as a flesh* so that the "absolute being" of the epistemological correlation is transferred to the absolute of the flesh itself. That Marion defines the flesh in terms of the correlation is self-evident:

> The flesh is defined as the identity of what touches with the medium where this touching takes place (Aristotle), therefore of the felt with what feels (Husserl), but also of the seen and the seeing or the heard and the hearing—in short, of the affected with the affecting (Henry).[56]

It remains to be seen that the correlation reduced to its givenness is the correlation as a flesh, the sentient feeler which alone manifests the given.

I will show that in the flesh, the correlation is no longer an abstract principle that determines phenomenality according to a foreign horizon, that of consciousness. This is because the "absolute being" of experience was determined as absolute precisely as an adequate phenomenon: it fulfilled what intuition could receive according to the limitations of immanence. Experience (what appears) bears a sufficient similitude to consciousness (appearing). By contrast, the flesh is absolute because it is without immanence. Mere adequation no longer applies as its limit. The excess of phenomenality over intuition lands upon the flesh so as to fix it. At the same time, this excess that imposes upon it does not dissolve its egoity and absolute separation precisely because adequation no longer applies. The ego receives itself only insofar as it is directed towards—that is, *desires*—what it receives. Thus what I will argue is that the epistemological absolute (Husserl's correlation) actually merges with the ontological absolute of Aquinas's substance. This merging will enable me to deepen the understanding of relation of incommensurable orders I began to sketch in Chapter II.

[56] BG, 231; ED, 321.

Absolute Flesh as the Reduction of the Correlation

Marion says that the flesh as a saturated phenomenon frees itself from the definition of common phenomena given by Kant because it is free of one of the categories that determine phenomenality according to Kant: relation.

> [F]lesh only refers back to itself, in the indissoluble unity of the felt and the feeling. Flesh is referred to itself as it auto-affects itself. In consequence, it eludes all relation—my pain, my pleasure, remain unique, incommunicable, unable to be substituted—in an absoluteness without compromise, without anything like it or equal to it [*dans une absoluité sans regard, sans égard, ni égal*].[57]

In *Being Given*, Marion says that the "absolute character of the flesh" defines its saturation.[58] What is apparently the most relational of phenomena, allowing our contact with the world, is in fact "torn [*s'arrache*] from the category of relation."[59] It is still important to emphasize that the flesh is only absolute *as* a correlation and thus as a relation even if it exceeds the *category* of relation. The "absolute" status of the flesh, insofar as it is an absolute correlation, is inherited from the absolute being of Husserl's epistemological correlation rather than from the "absoluteness" of a transcendental ego which is said to be absolute because unaffected by the world and nonsensible.

That the flesh fulfills the correlation's "absolute" means the similitude of effect to cause is no longer an accurate account of the "relation" between the correlated terms: the originary other and the affected flesh. The correlation gives itself as an *absolute identity*. This identity is no longer projected to the absolute of what a transcendental ego knows (appearing/what appears) but concretized as the flesh itself. Where experience is absolute to itself as absolutely immanent to consciousness by means of the primacy of touch, the flesh, which has

[57] IE, 100; DS, 121.
[58] BG 231; ED, 321. That absoluteness characterizes all saturated phenomena is put forth by Marion at BG 211 (ED, 295): "…not only no single horizon, but no combination of horizons, could successfully tolerate the absoluteness of the phenomenon, precisely because it gives itself as absolute, that is to say, free from all analogy with common-law phenomena and from all predetermination by a network of relations, with neither precedent nor antecedent in the already seen or foreseeable. In short, there would appear a phenomenon saturated to the point that the world (in all senses of the word) could not accept it."
[59] BG, 231; ED, 321.

no mediating organ, identifies itself as the correlation. Yet immediately it becomes apparent that this correlation is not immanent to consciousness since it is absolute and free of the category of relation precisely by means of an excess so great that it fixes the whole flesh. It exceeds itself and therefore exceeds immanence.

Auto-affection is the correlation reduced to its concrete givenness as flesh. That flesh is "without relation" is analogous to the way that the epistemological correlation excludes any relation to a thing-in-itself. The difference here from the epistemological correlation is that the flesh is affected by a nearness-in-distance, and is not, like the transcendental ego, determining the immanent experience as absolute by means of adequation and projection: precisely for the sake of excluding the transcendence of the thing-in-itself. Thus the flesh's irreducibility through the nearness of affection makes it uniquely my flesh so far that the intimate other gives me my flesh, even myself, without remainder. The correlation of affected to affecting is absolute precisely to the degree it disrupts consciousness absolutely and no longer submits to the ego as its adequate condition. The flesh is absolute to the degree that immanence no longer obtains. Where finite distance was a condition for oculocentrism, here distance is given in and by contact. The other that the flesh feels is decidedly not the flesh that feels, but neither is it the flesh's object since it gives the flesh to itself. Thus the flesh gives itself as the correlation.

That the flesh is the correlation expressed in its facticity (and thus as *fait accompli*) is shown by the fact that in the phenomenality of the flesh, the epistemological correlation no longer appears, as it does for other phenomena: the "common definition of the phenomenon—adequation between appearing/appearance [*l'apparaître*] and what appears [*l'apparaissant*], intuition and signification, noesis and noema and so on" cannot define the phenomenality of the flesh, "[f]or in flesh one cannot find this distinction precisely. Since 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 the possible fulfillment."[60] What this means is that the very act of intending fulfills the flesh as flesh. It is directed toward what affects it all the way down and therefore toward what gives it as flesh. The phenomenological transcendence of the projection of the intentional object — therefore, also the immanence of the epistemological correlation — is impossible to accomplish in the flesh. Since the aim accomplishes the flesh itself, there is no intended object to project and consequently no absolute immanence that could achieve a totalizing system without rupture.

What Marion refers to here as the "essential immanence" of the flesh simply means that it is not projected as the phenomenological transcendence of the epistemological correlation — a transcendence which depends upon the a priori ego, and therefore a transcendence that the flesh indeed cannot even pretend to achieve. Yet if the immanence of perception is no longer valid, as I have argued, rendering the projective transcendence of the epistemological correlation also questionable, then the immanence of the flesh already breaks with the principle of immanence since precisely in this way its givenness *to* consciousness ruptures immanence, by definition, in rendering the flesh to itself in an already accomplished facticity without condition. The flesh passes beyond immanence by means of excess and the analogue contact that replaces the immanent-transcendent dualism for nearness-in-distance. "Essential immanence" means in this case that the intentional aim of the perceiver is correlated to the perceived without adequation, but rather as auto-affection. The perceived looks back at the gaze that looks upon it. As saturated (impossible, unforeseen, etc.), the flesh can hardly fit the traditional definition of immanence.

Without immanence the appearing is reduced to an originary feeling rather than to the a priori conditions of appearance. Then "what appears" corresponds to a felt flesh. In the oculocentric interpretation the correlation appearing/what appears depends on a transcenden-

[60] IE, 99; DS, 119.

tal ego as a condition, but in auto-affection feeling is the felt feeler. It expresses saturation precisely because it is without condition, which is to say impossible and absolute. In the absolute being of experience, the appearing is the appearance of what appears. So it is not identified with consciousness but is projected from it. In the fleshly correlation, by contrast, feeling does indeed implicate consciousness, for this consciousness is not transcendental, but is a flesh. Yet the flesh is irreducible to consciousness because it fixes itself as an ego prior to consciousness: the originary feeler, neither transcendent nor immanent, neither ontic nor noetic.

The excess of the flesh inverts the epistemological interpretation in which the "absolute" means a "totality," which perfectly accomplishes the reduction to consciousness by means of excluding the thing-in-itself behind the phenomenal thing towards which an intention "really" aims. According to saturation, the "experience" is experienced as an absolute only because it identifies the self of the receiver who receives her identity from what affects her. The paradox not only inverts the direction of epistemological mastery but also ruptures any totality rather than giving it so that the correlation of the flesh is defined from the infinite and according to the "ever new" of impossibility.

The correlation is brought to such density in the flesh that it no longer appears visibly, but expresses itself as an absolute: the perceived is one with the perceiver. The correlation is not merely "in" the flesh only because it is identical to the flesh that renders the correlation possible because it renders itself as the correlation (possibility of the impossible). This double fact of the reduction of the correlation to the flesh in its concrete being and the persistence of the correlation's absolute character shows that it is the absolute of the epistemological correlation that has become a substantial absolute in the flesh. The absolute articulates the haecceity of a particular flesh, which is only a particular non-repeatable ego insofar as it is inseparable from what it receives in the same way what appears is absolutely correlated to the appearing.

Flesh and Nonsimilitude

The saturation of the flesh is not an excessive experience. It does not belong to the realm of experience or epistemology at all. That saturation is nonexperiential has to do with its superlative grammar that surpasses any comparative adequation. Saturation corresponds simply to how certain phenomena are—not as experienced but *as given from themselves*. In the case of flesh, self-givenness is identical to being given by what it receives. The saturation of the flesh is not an experience of saturation or a possibility that it reserves, but the mode in which it is. Thus I would argue that the "thing-in-itself" is given a third meaning when thought according to saturation: no longer the noumenal (ontic) thing behind the phenomenal (noetic) thing as in Kant; no longer the correlation of appearance/appearing (ontic only *as* noetic) as in Husserl; now the thing-in-itself should be understood as a given excess that is at once immediately and wholly there (i.e. not reserved behind the phenomenon, following Husserl's innovation) and also expressive of the infinite "beyond" (i.e. its immediacy does not enclose and foreclose givenness as in the absolute being of the Husserlian thing-in-itself). The saturation of the flesh shows itself in a relation of nonsimilitude to the world in which it inheres, by which it is affected, and towards which it tends: "I relate to these objects precisely as not being me, and not being like me."[61] Objects are not like me because "I am according to my *flesh*" and only erotic beings, not objects, have flesh: "my flesh allows itself to be affected without end by the things of the world; and it can do so only because it reveals itself to be affectable in itself, and thus affectable first off by itself and in itself."[62] While objects can and do in-form me, the flesh, which receives itself in being affected, is effectively separate from world. It is beyond the objects that affect it to the precise degree that affection identifies it so absolutely that it becomes an absolute-in-itself.

[61] ER, 13.
[62] ER, 13.

Originary affectivity expresses an originary relation between infinitely distant terms. I am basing this argument on an insight that goes back to Levinas's understanding of the distance and non-adequation of the radically other:

> This remoteness is radical only if desire is not the possibility of anticipating the desirable, if it does not think it beforehand, if it goes toward it aimlessly, that is, as toward an absolute, unanticipable alterity, as one goes forth unto death. Desire is absolute if the desiring being is mortal and the Desired invisible. Invisibility does not denote an absence of relation; it implies relations with what is not given, of which there is no idea. Vision is an adequation of the idea with the thing, a comprehension that encompasses. Non-adequation does not denote a simple negation or an obscurity of the idea, but—beyond the light and the night, beyond the knowledge measuring beings—the inordinateness of Desire. Desire is desire for the absolutely other.[63]

The originality of Marion's concept of givenness can be seen in its nonavailability to Levinas, who equates the given with the idea (implied by equating the "not given" with that "of which there is no idea"), thus equating the given with the concept and what appears, what *has being* opposed to a reserved noumenon (see IV, §5). But the genealogy from Levinas remains crucial. In Marion's more kenotic understanding of the given, invisibility "implies relations" not with what is *not given*, but with what is *not seen* even perhaps what does not appear. For Marion, there may yet be a given without appearance. Invisibility implies relations with what is in fact given, but perhaps not to consciousness. After Marion, the given and the visible must be distinguished.

Despite this ambiguity that equates the given and the seen, Levinas's crucial contribution is to show that sensing as such, the correlation in the flesh of the felt with what feels, gives itself as originary difference. Sensing is to know the world as other, even perhaps as hostile. Primordial fear arises from this original separation and hostility.[64] Originary difference gives the contingent world.

As both absolute (self-given) and correlated to its affection to the point that it is pinned down and identified in an inseparable mineness, the flesh accomplishes what the

[63] TI, 34.
[64] TI, 116.

modern figures of the ego do not. It makes the world my world—desired and affective, even giving me to myself as a flesh—only by allowing the world to rupture egoity with the ever new. Individuation is accomplished only in the facticity of the flesh:

> this ipseity only finally individualizes me by an always already accomplished mineness. Now, it is up to the flesh to take me before I choose it, or before I decide to do so. This carnal ipse is true for me, precisely because it is not I who has chosen it although I have never been without it. 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.[65]

The lifeworld as intentional correlate of transcendental consciousness could never achieve this identification of a personal me despite the world's absolute dependence on subjectivity. The flesh therefore deconstructs the ego's transcendental position. The correlation is no longer merely ideational (as intentional structure), but is real: the concrete givenness of the self from itself in which it receives itself in the uniqueness that alone identifies it as a me according to the absolute correlation of the originary: originary alterity with originary auto-affection.

Once we are loosed of the constraints of immanence, the phenomenality of the correlation is loosed from its subjection to consciousness. The experience was said to be absolute because of the adequation of appearing to what appears. This adequation was determined by the a priori ego. The flesh is absolute not because of adequation ruled by any a priori, but because of its excess *over* the a priori and its possibility of receiving what ruptures its self-enclosure. As the absolute identity of the felt with what feels, the flesh is the correlation itself, at least a privileged instance of it. The flesh ruptures the order of consciousness, the shield of immanence and its univocal rationality. The whole self as a flesh is implicated as the correlation. The flesh becomes an absolute because the correlation immediately floods back onto the site where it appears and thereby identifies it. It immediately ruptures the totality consummated in the epistemological correlation because the given now breaks upon that in which it takes

[65] IE, 98; DS, 119.

place, the flesh, and identifies it through rupturing its univocal bounds not with something that is like it or equal to it, but which touches it directly.

Without the flesh receiving itself in what affects it, there is no egoity. The correlation given as flesh gives the most fundamental realization of personal identity: "Flesh gives…nothing other than the ego itself, at the same time that every given gives itself to it. It fixes it in it as an adonné—that which receives itself from this very thing that it receives, according to the simultaneity characteristic of flesh since Aristotle."[66]At once absolute and given by what affects it, the flesh breaks the bonds of immanence by offering an immediacy that is nevertheless infinitely distant:

> My flesh is distinguished from every object of the world, therefore from every body, in such a way that before even being able to perceive itself as a possible external object in the world, it perceives; before even making itself be seen and appearing, it makes me feel (myself) and appear.[67]

The object of affection can never be encompassed by the mind and its rationality precisely because it identifies the receiver all the way down so as to give her to herself. What it accomplishes—assigning the ego to itself as a personal I—is a direct result of the eclipse of immanence. The ego cannot encompass the affective phenomenon as its object. This encompassing was the condition by which experience attains absolute being in Husserl. Instead the saturated phenomenon bears down upon the ego as what draws it and assigns the absolute to the ego itself in assigning the ego as absolutely identical to its affections.

A complete identification with its affection, paradoxically, allows it to slip from the status of an entity of the world by means of the infinite distance of an absolute. Therefore, a personal I is accomplished with no similitude either to any other ego or to the alterity that gives it. Insofar as it is a personal I, it is absolved of all relation, at least all relation understood as a category that determines it. Its freedom from world is attained once the received phenomenon is no longer submitted to adequation or poor phenomenality where intention

[66] IE, 100-101; DS, 121.
[67] IE, 87; DS, 105.

determines every intuition because every intuition must be immanent. The absolute being of experience is nothing more than its determination by intention and the a priori conditions of possibility. Now the saturated phenomenon defines the intention, and the intentional gaze of the receiver makes the given appear to the degree that the receiver can bear the excess of its givenness. The saturation of intention demands that intention no longer determines phenomenality, for the flesh also *receives* its intention as a desire that comes over it. It receives the intention so far as to receive itself.

The unconditionality of the flesh (and equally of all saturated phenomena) is the expression of its release from immanence, that measurer of phenomenality. Where Kant and Husserl both contributed to the removal of the phenomenon-noumenon dichotomy, the new dichotomy that Kant introduced between the phenomenon and its a priori conditions of possibility also rests on the immanence of phenomenality as against the transcendent set of conditions, not directly perceived and not sensible, but which determine the validity of a phenomenon according to objectification. Within the conditions of possibility, the phenomenon must be received as an experience, that is, immanently. Immanence as a requirement for phenomenality allows Kant to deductively work out the conditions by which such a phenomenon could appear.

Givenness exceeds immanence if and only if it is unconditioned. It is somewhat odd that Marion is so ready to attribute to givenness its own immanence (the "essential immanence" of the flesh, etc.)[68] even while he so perceptively sees the incapacity of the philosophical concept of transcendence to really transcend or exceed a totality (II, §2). For example: "joy, pain, the evidence of love…in short, the numen in general (provided that one assigns it no transcendence), all arise from the flesh and its own immanence." Marion would thus put himself among those who reject the unfavored son of the dualism (transcendence) without

[68] IE, 99; DS, 119.

actually freeing himself from that very dualism. But surely givenness never really submits to immanence. Without a complete re-defining of the term, how can one really credit immanence to what in fact and by its facticity ruptures presence, that is, the givenness *to* consciousness, what always differs from itself because it identifies itself absolutely in its affectivity? Givenness can hardly make use of either term of the dichotomy, transcendence or immanence, precisely because it is itself the unconditioned that transgresses the last dichotomy of modern metaphysics—experience and its a priori conditions of possibility. Even the absolute immediacy of auto-affection disrupts immanence. It is absolutely immediate in its identity as affected and affecting, yet its immediacy is not configured according to the closed manner of the immanent because it does not function as a condition or principle. The "givenness to consciousness" means precisely a disruption of the immanent much more radical than the metaphysical and phenomenological figures of transcendence have offered. The very phenomenon of the flesh entails the possibility of what is not yet possible: what only achieves being in the essential mineness of affecting a flesh prior to being possible. The immanence of the flesh is identical to its intimate *other*. As other and othering, the flesh remains a principle of transcendence in its very immanence. The flesh does not adequately refer to some transcendence, but relates to it hyperbolically. This is precisely what its "absolute" status signifies.

Two Modes of the Absolute and their Two Originary Correlations

The correlation is now not only absolute but also originary, giving the ego to itself. It can thus confront what metaphysics has thought as "essence" and "substance." In this way, we can examine in more detail the paradoxical and nonadequative nature of the correlation as a flesh. I want to go so far as to identify the absolute flesh of Marion with the absolute substance of Aquinas as I developed it in Chapter II. The flesh gives itself as the real relation (of creatureliness) at the same time as it gives itself as an absolute. This identification is a move

carefully excluded by transcendental phenomenology and its reduction to immanence. Insofar as Husserl's phenomenology banished the thing-in-itself by means of the epistemological correlation and reduced all concepts to their origin in experience, such a phenomenology excludes any relation to the Aristotelian concept of substance. It is a pure epistemology without an ontology of the knower. The epistemological correlation describes the "absolute being" of the phenomenon precisely insofar as it excludes the substance or thing-in-itself. It correlates being to possibility by means of removing the sensibility of the ego. It determines all concepts through experience only because the ego remains unaffected. Its status as absolute means precisely that there is no essence behind the experience. As a consequence, either the ego or the phenomenon becomes an essentially unreal term. The reduction to givenness, however, does not necessarily exclude what the substance stood in for. This would be the case because under the reduction to givenness not only transcendence (of the substance), but also the immanence (of the experience) no longer holds. Thus I will argue that the reduction of the correlation to the flesh allows us to speak about the givenness of the absolute substance: a given without visibility. The flesh as sentient feeler (mind) that "takes" as extended sentient (body) is distinguished from the body from which it is inseparable because it lacks extension, visibility, relation, etc. I am thus developing further what I have already mentioned as a third definition of the thing-in-itself.

Marion recognizes that the flesh "attributes to itself the privilege that *ousia* holds for Aristotle: not to arise from relative terms, *oudemia ousia tōn pros ti legetai.*"[69] Ousia is traditionally understood as an absolute insofar as it is the thing-in-itself. But the flesh only appears as absolute because it arises as the correlation saturated in its own givenness. The flesh is not absolute in the manner of the ungiven cause of given effects. It is not absolute in the manner the substance is said to be absolute. No doubt to think flesh as substance would be

[69] BG, 231; ED, 322.

a radical reinterpretation of the absolute of the ousia, now that the absolute of the flesh is identified in a perfect reception of itself from another, an absolute derived from the absolute being of experience in the epistemological correlation. But if we look closely at what it means for the flesh to be "absolute" we can see that it is absolute in two ways, one of which I show is analogous to absolute substance even while the other is the result of the reduction of the "absolute being" of the epistemological correlation.

I make this distinction from a close analysis of auto-affection, the correlation of perceived with perceiver, first as *auto*-affection and then as auto-*affection*. *Auto*-affection is analogous to the absolute substance of Aristotle and Aquinas, while auto-*affection* identifies the ego through originary alterity, the *différance* of the self from itself, which is analogous to the absolute being of the epistemological correlation, but reduced to the flesh. This analysis is central because Marion sometimes speaks of originary auto-affection and sometimes of originary alterity. The two should not be confused, nor should we see them as incompatible. Thus I have broken them down into different inflections of the same phenomenon: the first as *auto*-affection, emphasizing the self, and the second as auto-*affection* emphasizing the otherness of affection and thus originary alterity. The first absolute claims that all affection and thus all relation must arise from an originary auto-affection. Marion says that in order for consciousness to even render possible the reception of what it intentionally aims at, it must first be affected intuitively. It can only be so affected if its essential characteristic is "radical affection in itself."[70] But being affected in itself excludes any "external or preexisting affect" which is to say that "it accomplishes itself unconditionally."[71] Originary auto-affection as unconditional "saturates the horizon to the point that there is no longer any relation that refers it to another object."[72]

[70] BG, 231; ED, 322.
[71] BG, 231; ED, 322.
[72] BG, 231; ED, 322.

The "indissoluble unity of the felt and the feeling" is the fundamental sentience of the flesh as *auto*-affection. First of all, the flesh feels itself felt in feeling its world. Before it feels the world, it feels itself feeling the world and *precisely* feels the world *as feeling itself feeling.* It is not active or passive because in auto-affection it is both the felt ("passive") and the feeling ("active") at once. The distinction between activity and passivity dissolves completely in the correlation of originary feeling: "It goes without saying that this receptivity cannot be defined within the framework of a trivial opposition between passivity and activity, since it is privileged to mediate them."[73] The "rupture" in relation that the flesh signifies is therefore not a passively received rupture, given in time. The rupture is itself the self-givenness (auto-affection) of what concretely identifies an ego. What it ruptures is precisely the active-passive dichotomy in its aim to determine objects and subjects. Neither active nor passive, the receptivity of "feeling," transforms givenness into manifestation.[74] The flesh is not active in the subjective sense because it lets the phenomenon (its own self as flesh) manifest itself from itself. It is not passive in the objective sense because the phenomenon cannot manifest as a given without its being received "actively" and "otherwise" in (active) feeling.

In a moment, I will show why *auto*-affection is the givenness of the absolute substance, but now we will look at the second way in which the flesh is absolute: as auto-*affection.* Its affection is common to no other flesh, but identifies itself alone and does so without remainder: "the flesh provokes and demands solipsism; for it remains by definition mine, unsubstitutable—nobody can enjoy or suffer for me…it 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."[75] The flesh that identifies itself in what affects it is absolute all the way down and free of any external other. This absolute is not like the absolute we just sketched as *auto*-affection. Nor is it similar to the way in which the

[73] BG, 264; ED, 364.
[74] BG, 264; ED, 364.
[75] BG, 232; ED, 323.

substance is said to be absolute. This is the absolute that corresponds to the way Husserl says that the epistemological correlation is absolute. The receiver (affected) is identical to the received (affecting) just as the appearance was identical to the appearing for Husserl. In this case, the *affecting* is not the flesh as flesh—as it was for *auto*-affection—but is the other that it desires and intends. It is only the *affected* that is the flesh as flesh. Despite this difference, there is still an identity, as in Aristotelian perception, where the knower takes the form of its intended object.

In auto-*affection*, the flesh is absolute because it is identical to what it desires and therefore to what affects it. The affecting gives the affected weight because it attracts it like gravity. Like the epistemological correlation, it is absolute insofar as it excludes a dichotomous transcendent "beyond" opposed to immanent presence. There is no identity apart from the affection: no reserved substance and no aspect of the affecting that does not correlate. The desiring expresses the arrival of the desired not in the mode of possession, but of identification with and givenness towards. The ego is fixed through another, more original than itself because without affection the ego would not fix as ego. In contrast to the epistemological correlation, the performance of the absolute as the exclusion of a dichotomous beyond now marks the ego itself and leaves its mark precisely by impressing the ego as the absolute and not as the measurer of absolution. It is nothing other than its desired other which, at the same time, comes with so much excess that it disrupts the ego to such a degree as to identify it. It therefore does not disrupt the ego's unity, but fixes it. It disrupts the possibility of the ego's totalizing gaze (the horizon) and its abstract egoity (the transcendental I). The affecting is not dependent on consciousness, but gives it. Thereby, in a certain way, it precedes *auto*-affection.[76]

[76] Husserl's "'principle of principles' mentions the horizon and the constituting I as the two unquestioned presuppositions of anything that would like to be constituted in general as a phenomenon; and yet the saturated phenomenon, inasmuch as it is unconditioned by a horizon and irreducible to an I, claims a possibility free of these two conditions; it therefore contradicts the 'principle of principles.' Even and especially with the principle

Is there a contradiction between the absolute of *auto*-affection and the absolute of originary alterity, auto-*affection*, the later derived from the epistemological correlation but without the horizon of immanence while the former validates or is at least analogous to the Aristotelian absolute substance which "does not arise from relative terms"? The relation between the two is hardly clear in Marion. He does not seem to ever make this distinction between the two ways in which the flesh expresses itself as absolute. This lack of analysis of the absolute results in an ambiguity regarding the ego. Is it given by the wholly Other in such a way that it excludes Aristotelian substance as Marion says in *Being Given*:

> The passage from the nominative to the objective cases (accusative, dative) thus inverts the hierarchy of the metaphysical categories. Individualized essence (*ousia prote*) no longer precedes relation (*pros ti*) and no longer excludes it from its ontic perfection. In contrast, relation precedes individuality.[77]

Or as Marion had claimed less than forty pages earlier, does the self as flesh maintain "the privilege that *ousia* holds for Aristotle," because it "saturates the horizon to the point that there is no longer any relation that refers it to another object" so that it "demands solipsism"?[78] To resolve this ambiguity we must first point out the structural similarity of the correlation in these two cases, which similarity at first only increases the apparent aporia, but ultimately points toward a new insight and a way to respond to some of the objections commonly raised against Marion's understanding of givenness.

The correlation here is that of received to receiving/receiver where the epistemological correlation is that of appearing to what appears. In the epistemological correlation the ego is left out of the correlation, while the correlation of the flesh expresses the ego itself as auto-

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of principles, he maintains a twofold reserve vis-a-vis possibility (the horizon, the I). Nevertheless, Husserl's reserve toward possibility can bespeak a reserve of phenomenology itself—which still keeps a reserve *of* possibility so that it may itself be overcome in favor of a possibility without reserve. Because it gives itself without condition or restraint, the saturated phenomenon would offer the paradigm of the phenomenon finally without reserve. In this way, following the guiding thread of the saturated phenomenon, phenomenology finds its final possibility: not only the possibility that surpasses actuality, but the possibility that surpasses the very conditions of possibility, the possibility of unconditioned possibility—in other words, the possibility of the impossible, the saturated phenomenon." BG 218; ED, 304.

[77] BG, 268; ED, 370.

[78] BG 231-32; ED, 322-33.

affection. But there is a radical difference between the correlative identity of auto-affection and the correlative identity of originary alterity. The first says that the perceived/felt flesh is one with the perceiving/feeling flesh: the perceiver perceiving itself, or, broadened to a much more fundamental statement, the receiver receiving itself. The second correlation, having the same structure (received to receiving), is nevertheless quite different in content. Here the received is the received other which is correlated to the receiving self (receiver). Because of their structural similarity and equal claim to originary status, the radical difference of these two correlations seems to render Marion's phenomenology of the flesh incoherent: two opposing claimants jostle for supremacy. Is it the absolutely other or is it *auto*-affection that gives the self as such? [79] This question is central to the interpretation of Marion. Originary alterity has led some scholars to critique Marion as simply reversing the subject-object dichotomy of the idolatrous gaze. Now the ego become a *mihi* is nothing more than the object of the gaze of a supreme subject.[80] Or, if *auto*-affection remains originary, a dualism persists where the Other is no more than a transcendental object.

I will show that there is not actually a contradiction here. If we pay closer attention to what each correlation does, then we can see a mutual complementarity without synthesis and—because there is no synthesis—beyond contradiction. Both can remain originary and fundamental because the origin does in fact contradict univocal spatialization. What is each correlation actually doing? What the first correlative absolute (*auto*-affection) accomplishes in its performance is to dissolve the passive-active distinction. In the flesh the felt ("passive" flesh) and the feeling ("active" flesh) are identical in an originary sentience or affectivity. The main achievement of the correlation leading to auto-affection is to exceed the grammar of being, beyond the passivity and activity that links a substantive to a predicate. If it fixes an absolute identity in auto-affection, what it never establishes is the I's correlation to itself: I=I.

[79] No doubt, we can see the influence of Levinas in the first, originary otherness, and the influence of Henry in the second, originary auto-affection.
[80] Schrijvers, "Ontotheological Turnings?".

The immediacy of affection as a factically accomplished a priori that gives the I itself excludes the possibility of such an equivalence to itself. If the grammar of being does not intervene between the wholly Other and *l'adonné,* there is not any contradiction between *auto*-affection and originary alterity because the other would necessarily not be reduced to an object of the auto-affecting self. Participation-in-the-other, or being-in-relation would no longer demand a pre-existing relation according to the adequation of a predicate to a subject. Participation as originary alterity would express the utter difference of the response with respect to the *reconnaissance* of the Other and would do this without falling back into passive dissolution into the divine or active usurpation (autonomy) of the infinite's prerogative.

That the opposition between active and passive is no longer relevant in the originary is fundamental for understanding the broadening from perceiver to receiver, which does not make the self passive (a dative me), but simply broadens the act of perception (intuition) beyond the representational chasm between passive, immanent perception and active, but objectifying, conceptualization. Receptivity is not passive for the precise reason that in the originary, an activity-passivity dualism no longer applies, at least not as an either/or. The first correlation, *auto*-affection, dissolves the passivity-activity distinction in the originary such that the alterity received in the second correlation does not make the *I* a passively received *me*. The originary Other that calls me cannot simply reverse the subject-object dichotomy such that I become the object of God. Such a dichotomy could only apply if passivity and activity determined phenomenality within a univocal horizon: a horizon in which the I appeared in the plane of any other object of the world (and not as the original sentient feeler), a horizon in which the originary Other could determine this objective me as its passive object. In other words, the excess over the grammar of being achieved by auto-affection enables a reception of an alterity so original that it could not be similar to the receiver in any immanent a priori grammatical structure. *Auto*-affection doubles back upon originary alterity so that

originary alterity no longer describes the passivity of a (poorly) given ego in the face of the wholly Other. Now this originary alterity describes the freedom only found in the wonder of standing before the Holy One, the freedom of the attraction that draws us towards the wholly Other.

The two correlations confirm different aspects of the self. *Auto*-affection accounts for the aseity (self-givenness) of the ego and replaces both substance and spontaneity. It cannot account for haecceity, however, which, surprisingly, originary alterity alone can give as "the immanent succession of my affections…that make me irreducibly identical to myself alone," the affections that are identical to me because no one else can experience them for me.[81] A mineness is only accomplished through desire, that is, an affection for the other that is inseparable from being affected by the other. Thus as *auto*-affection supported originary alterity through exceeding the grammar of being and its immanence, so also originary alterity supports, even accomplishes, auto-affection by giving the ego a self in person (haecceity). Yet we should not too quickly suppose that we have resolved the aporias of this double absolute as one resolves a problem, for it is the very impossibility of bringing the two into an immanent structure and an immanent identity that signifies their originary status in manifesting the irreducible mystery of the person as both *a se* and yet wholly given over to the One that gives her. The correlation remains asymmetrical and unilateral because the received is infinite. But precisely because the received is infinite, unilateral directionality does not exclude the ego's prerogative of self-giving as a flesh that precedes the world, not because it projects it or represents it, according to immanence and its *adequatio*, but rather because the sentient one maintains a primary solipsism prior to the grammar of being (in place and time) that breaks into and as body in the world. It is at the point where I am absolutely identified in and thus

[81] BG 232; ED, 323.

given by what I love that I give myself from myself to the point of being, as a flesh, free of all relation. In the flesh, maximal relation (originary alterity) *is* minimal relation (*auto*-affection).

The paradoxical nature of the affected flesh as "without relation" is not far from Thomas's thesis that real relation requires something absolute in which it can be received. So I am arguing we can define the flesh as both a real relation (originary alterity) and an absolute substance (*auto*-affection), not according to the dichotomous opposition of a phenomenon-noumenon or phenomenon-condition of possibility. The correlation of the real, concrete affection to the receiver's affective, concrete reality *is* the substance. The flesh as real relation means 1) radical openness towards what is wholly other and immeasurable, but also 2) that it is absolute in its auto-affection: nothing other than this correlation itself without reserve: an utterly contingent absolute. Real relation, saturated as the flesh, exceeds relation. Torn from the category and made absolute, "it can be affected in itself only inasmuch as its affection presupposes no external or preexisting affect."[82] The ego is identical to the affection it affects which only arises when it arises and is only made possible at the moment it arises.

One reason it is so difficult for us to imagine this description of the flesh as an "absolute" is that we continue to think the absolute according to being and the stasis that identifies the absolute of the essence in opposition to the "becoming" of relational, effectual, and temporal existence. Such a dichotomy would exclude the radical rupture in being that the flesh gives as the most originary and essential identification of the person in itself, the flesh in its excess over objectity. But if what the flesh receives is always something new, because inseparable from its reception, generated by the reception, and not even within the spatiotemporal flux or the a priori of the conditional, then it is not the case that the affecting would abolish the absolute self-givenness of the flesh that receives it, nor would it erase its absolute separation from that to which it is nevertheless most intimately bound. The aseity I have

[82] BG, 231; ED, 322.

outlined arises before passivity-activity, the affection before passively received affection could render it non-absolute.

To understand the absolute of the flesh, the Kantian and Husserlian bracketing of the thing-in-itself does not suffice, but would dissolve the identity of the flesh into a pure relation, on the one hand, or remove the ego from egoity via the transcendental reduction, on the other. The absolute substance of Aristotle and the absolute of experience of Husserl rather startlingly merge in the absolute of the flesh according to givenness. The absolute substance is no longer a thing-in-itself opposed to phenomenality or deconstructed by phenomenological method, and the absolute of experience no longer performs the act of totalization but doubles back to give the ego to itself in its own affections. I am thus radically reinterpreting the absolute substance in order to make sense of the relation of originary auto-affection and originary alterity. No longer standing in reserve behind existence, absolute substance offers the very possibility of what is not possible within possibility, i.e. "in the world" in every sense of the word: a newness that is generated in the absolute identity of the ego with its affection. In this way, the substance no longer guarantees persistence, but the persistent possibility of the impossible, thus access to the eternal dynamism of God.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that, while Husserl aimed to overcome representation through the phenomenological method, the principle of immanence and his ideal of objectivity hamstrung his method such that he failed to return to the things themselves. Thus his phenomenological correlation ended up completing metaphysics as a totalizing system, by reducing the world itself to the a priori. I was, however, able to take his insight concerning the correlation and apply it within a non-representational phenomenology of distance to reduce the correlation itself to the flesh of the one who receives the other. The correlation was

thereby reduced from an epistemological principle to that which gives personal identity: an identity at once absolute and disruptive of totalizing spatialization because it entails nonsimilitude between the other and the receiver by means of the hyperbolic nature of the relation. In this way the correlation became relevant to the question of analogy as soon as it was reduced to givenness. Through givenness the correlation becomes concrete and speaks of the most originary aspect of human identity in relation to its origin where the maximum relation of intimate alterity *is* the minimum relation of *auto*-affection and self-givenness. The correlation thus becomes relevant to analogy at the same moment that it slips out of a logic of similitude.

CHAPTER IV

The Logic of the Icon, or Anamorphosis as Hyperbolic Relation

This chapter consists of two parts. The first sketches how radical real relation shows itself as what Marion describes as anamorphosis. For certain relations, Marion contends, the movement of anamorphosis actually replaces the logic of similitude. I use two examples that are anamorphic as Marion describes them and then I argue that, because the flesh is absolute, it must be related to the originary in another way than that of a similitude to a concept or idea or even to a cause. In the second section, I develop the consequent grammatical structure of this radicalized "analogy" as a synthesis of Rahner's trinitarian principle with Przywara's "creaturely metaphysics" because, on the one hand, Rahner's principle—*the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa*—is quite obviously an instance of the correlation, but, on the other, it seems to be structured according to the Husserlian absolute of experience, where the Trinity would appear as the intentional correlate of an a priori and abstract consciousness. But an in-beyond grammar that is central to Przywara's metaphysics (where the "in" is identical to the "beyond" as a disruption of totality as I sketched in Chapter II) allows us to think the axiom as received not according to the rules of experience, but received anamorphically. This reading requires a correction and augmentation of Rahner and Przywara through Marion and Jean-Yves Lacoste.

§1. Anamorphosis: the dynamics of relation without similitude

Anamorphosis concerns taking "a point of view that does not coincide from the outset with the one that we would take when holding the central position of a neutral and masterly

spectator, who would constitute it transcendentally as her object."[1] Using the example of anamorphosis in a painting, we can contrast the view of the spectator to that of the receiver. Where the spectator imposes her gaze upon the visible, anamorphosis takes place when the viewer must change her point of view in order to see what is being depicted. Thus, in the case of Holbein's *Ambassadors*, the viewer must not stand in front of the painting from the point of view of a spectator. In order to see the *memento mori*, the depicted skull, in correct perspective, the viewer must take on the point of view of the painting by standing to the side of the painting, so that the image of the skull comes into perspective. Marion writes, "the aim here is to shift this gaze to the point of view—initially undecidable and locatable only by successive approximations, by feel—that, on the basis of which and according to the demands of *this* sudden phenomenon giving itself, would succeed in showing itself, all at once and in its very own radiance."[2] Anamorphosis describes the kind of relation that takes place in the case of the saturated phenomenon.

While the saturated phenomenon is unforeseeable, unpredictable, unrepeatable, thus unconditioned by and unlike the receiver, still it must be received or it would not appear. Anamorphosis describes the mode of reception that makes the wholly unpredictable appear in and as the flesh, which is itself unrepeatable, unpredictable, and saturated. In short, it describes the economy of a relation between two absolute terms. In anamorphosis, there is no predetermined union between the viewer and the phenomenon, which is why Marion takes anamorphosis as exemplary for receiving saturated phenomena. Without the category of relation determining the phenomenon in advance, we can only think of the relation through this change of position, which is not a random or spontaneous change, even if it is not determinable in advance. This change of place is always in response to that which is irregardable from a spectator's perspective. The phenomenon saturates the flesh that receives it precisely

[1] GR, 64-5.
[2] GR, 65. Also see ED, III, §13, pp. 174-7; BG, 123-125.

because it alters the flesh entirely. On the one hand, it gives no predetermined relation and thus no object to be seen. On the other, in order to receive it, one must undergo the phenomenon and submit to its unexpected givenness. Anamorphosis thus gives the phenomenological description of relation without similitude.

In this section, I will analyze two instances of relation without similitude explicitly developed by Marion: 1) the relation of the icon to its prototype and 2) the erotic use of language. When the terms of the relation are incommensurable because both are saturated and absolute, any relation between them becomes a paradox. Thus the relation cannot be accounted for by the similitude of an immanent term to a transcendent term or of an effect to a cause, or of a subject term to an object term. Due to the superlative, unconditioned nature of the relation, the logic at play in the originary is the logic of anamorphosis, for anamorphosis can think the relation of absolutes where similitude cannot.

The Iconic Economy as a Logic of Recognition

In his essay, "The Image and the Prototype," Marion draws attention to the definition of the icon that the Second Council of Nicaea (787) provided in response to iconoclasm. The Council marks that the icon is a *τύπος* of the Cross neither through participation in its being nor through mimesis. The participation of the type is a "manner of approaching" which Marion writes "it is not necessary (despite the emphasis of the Latin translation, *sicut…ita…*) to understand as a comparison, even less a similarity [*similitude*]: *παραπλησίως* indicates approximation, the point of approach [*le fait de s'approcher de*], without either confusion or assimilation."[3] That the icon is without similitude to the prototype may be somewhat surprising, but it is important to remember that what Marion wants to get at is the essential nature of the relation. If similitude gives a certain kind of logic, and the icon functions according to its

[3] CV, 69; CdV, 123-124.

own logic (that of approach), we need to separate the icon from the mimetic in order to understand what is really happening. Instead of a vocabulary of similitude, likeness, and comparison, the topological language of "approach" is employed. Approach is related to our phenomenology of sensing inasmuch as it is topological and temporal. As with its cognate, "approximation," I would argue that it is necessary to interpret this phenomenology of approach within an analogue space that allows the contact of incommensurable orders. The intimacy of such contact ruptures the bounds of three-dimensional spatialization.[4] Approach in this sense does not refer to a noetic guess—the approximation involved in the immanent economy thought from a transcendental position. It positions the I in a space in which it can really approach the other. Approximating or approaching the other thus concerns a hermeneutical "as," i.e., an act of recognizing that which is indeterminable since it is never known like an object but can only be received through intimate contact.

Marion's essay is particularly relevant to my concerns because it reveals how the iconoclastic critique presupposes and operates according to a logic of similitude, while the icon operates according to an alternative logic, that of recognition realized in the approach. It is precisely this contrast of similitude to recognition that enables us to see how anamorphosis would not involve a mere passivity towards its original in the way that similitude does. This passivity would make the image an inferior diminutive of its prototype. This is important to insist upon not for the sake of human freedom (at least initially), but because Christ above all is the "icon of the invisible God" and he is not of a similar substance to the Father, but is consubstantial with the Father. As a consequence of the iconic economy not functioning according to similitude in the case of Christ, I can then show that similitude is not necessary for the economy in which the human person is said to be the image of God.[5]

[4] With respect to distance and approach, Marion argues for a "fourth-dimension": the "depth" of charity that "surpasses all knowledge" (Eph. 3:18-19) at ID, 247-48; IeD, 309-10.
[5] We will return to this also in V, §5.

Marion shows that iconoclasm works within the same logical framework as the idol because it always presupposes the "horizon of similitude" and the "logic of *mimesis*": "Iconoclasm criticizes the supposed idolatrous derivation of icons, because it persists in interpreting according to the logic of similitude and mimetic rivalry, without ever suspecting—or accepting—that the *τύπος* has categorically [*sans retour*] broken away from any imitation of an original."[6] Mimesis for Marion results, at one extreme, in metaphysical iconoclasm and, at the other, in conceptual idolatry, but iconoclasm turns out to presuppose a conceptual idolatry as its logical framework. He analyzes Plato's idealism as a type of idolatry that involves iconoclasm as its first stage—it tears down the excessive and unstable to get at the unchanging ideal. For Plato, the ideal chair is the most real and its visible representations contain less of its reality the more visible they are. As imitation and visibility increase, so reality and truth decrease. As Marion writes, "Access to the original and essential being [*l'étant*] requires canceling out the visible and sensible intermediaries as so many distorting filters."[7] For iconoclasm, appearance is dissemblance. The flux of appearance hides this more essential similitude to the original. Thus, for Plato, we must shatter the images in order to get to the original. But this iconoclasm only gives way to an idol, quite literally the ideal (*eidos*)—what is seen.[8] The ideal is the frame that crushes a totality, including the invisible, into visibility (Chapter I). And what is seen with determination can only be, in this case, what is already similar to the gaze. Further, Marion argues that Hegel like Plato reduces the images of art to the sign of the idea: "art assures a mediated, provisional, and mimetic access to the invisible of pure intelligibility."[9] The beautiful and the temporal act as a mere cloak for unchanging intelligibles. So Marion claims that the two dominant figures of metaphysics admit to iconoclasm, and thus privilege the idol. For Marion, the ideal and the intelligible function as idols

[6] CV, 77; CdV, 136-137.
[7] CV, 79; CdV, 141.
[8] Cf. GWB, 9.
[9] CV, 79-80; CdV, 141-42.

precisely because the image can only imitate the original in a diminished way. Its indeterminable material excess must be discarded for the sake of the minimal qualities that express the original in an inevitably poor and objective manner: "the weight of glory must directly relate to the original, by deserting images as mere idols. The original cancels out [*annule*] the image (at least in the end)…"[10]

As we began to see in Chapter I, the idol swells out of proportion and no longer submits to any original. The image takes some of the glory of the original as its own. According to the reasoning of iconoclasm, the image thus needs to be destroyed or deconstructed in order for the original to take back its glory and its truth. The visible is thus desaturated and impoverished to get at the essential and for the sake of the glory of the invisible. But the invisible in this case secretly turns out to be a visible insofar as it is conceived as an *eidos* to which the mimetic idol adequately or deficiently refers. Iconoclasm assumes mimetic rivalry and thus always produces idolatry by arriving at another visible—the ideal. It subjects the prototype to some preconceived form contained in the image and arising from the seer. Iconoclasm presumes that the visible insofar as it is rational is a poor phenomenon wholly determined by the ideal, the seen par excellence. According to the logic of mimesis, the original becomes another visible, able to be seen and in competitive rivalry with the image. What happens here is that a verifiable and fixed object is abstracted from the image as the most real insofar as it is the most persistent in presence. This abstraction then is taken as the ideal because it is most adequately seen.

The very presupposition of this horizon puts in place a negative idolatry (in the case of iconoclasm) that usurps the position of the Holy by dissolving the infinite distance between the image and the prototype. Iconoclasm secretly performs the very usurpation it critiques by presupposing a common, thus finite, framework. Iconoclasm operates within a logic of

[10] CV, 80; CdV, 142.

mimetic rivalry that "dominates the entire debate concerning the visible and the invisible."[11] Marion suggests that the very framework in which such a debate takes place must be altered. Thus he argues that the icon does not participate by similitude, however strange this argument still sounds. In the essay I have been examining, the Cross is the fundamental instance of the way in which the iconic relation surpasses similitude entirely.

For Marion, Christ destroys the possibility of mimesis on the Cross because this ultimate revealing of his divinity is without glory.[12] It is the very absence of worldly glory that shows that the Cross reveals Christ's divinity. Because it is not a matter of a visible radiance, it is a matter of interior recognition of the absence of worldly glory *as* the manifestation of divinity, an invisible given without being seen. The Cross demonstrates that it is in a coincidence of opposites that the divine power reveals itself. Marion concludes that in the Cross Christ not only fulfills "even within his Incarnation, by it and not despite it" the prohibition against idols or likenesses (*εἴδωλον* and *ὁμοίωμα*), but further, no similitude to the divine may appear in the visible without constituting an idol. Indeed it is worth remembering that the Church Fathers until Augustine generally rejected language of "similarity" in the economy of the image because similitude was seen to denote inequality between divine persons—*homoiousios* rather than *homoousios*. I will return to this in the next chapter.

In the visible world, this absence of similitude shows itself as a coincidence of opposites. The cross is a folly to iconoclasts and idolaters because, though it is in the world, it ruptures the world's power structures. It is the iconic logic itself that is the scandal. The will being indivisibly personal, corresponding to nothing other than itself (III, §3), bears no resemblance to the will with which it communes and as which it receives the world iconically and receives itself as an icon. Since the icon's return to the invisible Father is "permanent and total," the icon is not similar to the Father:

[11] CV, 80; CdV, 143.
[12] CV, 71; CdV, 127.

> Returning—or better, being returned—to the only Holy One, the icon finds its fulfillment in definitively relinquishing any claim to imitate the Holy One to which it returns and which returns it [*auquel elle se remet et s'en remet*]; if an appropriateness can be ascribed to it, this would be due to unmerited grace and by virtue of a communion of will [*volunté*], never due to the adequacy [*la suffisance*] of any intrinsic correspondence; for the imitation always tries to revert to a model that constitutes an ideal, in order to glorify itself as much as possible; but the icon has nothing that it has not received. It renounces, by an aesthetic asceticism, any mimetic rivalry with glory.[13]

It is important to see that the lack of adequation to the Father is not a deficiency of iconicity, a failure to meet the requirements of a true icon. Rather, it is due to the perfection of the icon's return to the Father. One must recognize the divine in worldly weakness and thus precisely divinity appears *as love*, the one who gave himself completely even unto death so as to manifest God completely. Thus "returning all glory to the invisible" is the coincidence of absolute self-giving with absolute self-receiving. In Christ's case, it is what manifests him in person, i.e., as the Son. This should not be understood within the false humility and worldly weakness that continues to operate within the logic of mimetic exchange.

We can now examine in more detail the relation of approximation that replaces the mimetic relation to the prototype. As a paradoxical sign the Cross puts in place a relation of approximation (*παραπλησίως*). The cross is only visible as the power of God through an anamorphosis by which I change my point of view to that of the Father.

> To regard the Cross as a type and not merely as an object of sight it is thus necessary to see (thus recognize and confess) in the marks made upon his body the stigmata of the invisible attested by the sin of humanity; the gallows exhibit only a corpse, which, according to the logic of the mimetic, would resemble nothing—but the Cross, like the sign of the Cross, offers to the one who will confess, according to the logic of the type, the Son of God. Thus the cross, when thus sighted, becomes an icon.… [I]t is not necessary to see the visible as a spectacle, but necessary rather to pick up the trace of the invisible. So the icon can be contemplated with honor only by a gaze that venerates it as the stigmata of the invisible. Only the one who prays can thus climb from the visible to the invisible (according to the logic of the type), whereas the spectator can only compare the visible to the visible (according to the logic of the mimetic). To the saints these things are holy: only the one who prays crosses the icon, because he alone knows the function of type.[14]

[13] CV, 76; CdV, 136.
[14] CV, 74-75; CdV, 132-33.

Since, within the logic of similitude, even the invisible is determined by the visible, it is only the anamorphic response of "one who prays" that can "see" and thus "climb," not by comparing one thing to another, icon to prototype, but by an irreducible act of interpretation that "takes the point of view" of the invisible. The invisible is not a heteronomous elsewhere determined by the logic of visibility. It is invisible because it transpierces the visible and sensible. It is not the negation of visibility, but an excess given to it, and therefore only received insofar as it alters one's position entirely.

The invisibility of the appearing object has only superficial similarities to the kind of invisibility Marion wants to get at here. The appresented invisible sides of a cube, for instance, appear in the visible as the invisible aspect. The invisible aspect is governed by the logic of the visible: what is already seen and measured by the seen. It can be predicted as the invisible side of the seen. This invisible falls within the same order and the adequate phenomenality of the object. The intention that aims to see a cube is more than adequate to "see" the sides of the cube that are hidden. The invisibility of the icon, by contrast, refers to the surplus of intuitive givenness that floods the intentional aim so as to alter it. The invis*able* does not refer to some invisible aspect or noumenal transcendence because it is not governed by the logic of similitude. The one who sees the Cross as the visible sign of the invisible God does not see an appresented God, who would be the other side of the visible. Only the cross is seen and it is seen without visible radiance. This is why it can function as an icon that reveals God precisely to the degree it is *interpreted as an icon*, that is, seen anamorphically from the point of view of the Father.

> The icon thus finds its logic and its unique legitimacy only in the repetition—this time between the face of the resurrected Christ ("colors, mosaics, and other suitable materials") and an irreducible approximation (*παραπλησίως*)—of the paradox of recognition without spectacle which sees the visible tool of torture as the invisible holiness of a Living One, who nevertheless died there. Such a repetition breaks here with every

> imitation, since the one moves from the visible to the visible by resemblance, whereas the other moves from the visible to the invisible by recognition [*reconnaissance*].[15]

God is revealed through recognizing in the weakness of the cross a power and a glory that is not like the world's power and the world's glory. Thus the "taking the point of view" is not within the logic of similitude because the terms are incomparable. Any logic of similitude would presume that icon takes the point of view of some other visible to which it submits like an object. Against any accusations of a fideistic passivity, which can only arise within iconoclastic similitude, the recognition of the receiver is what instigates the iconic economy and does so only through an irreducibly personal action. In short, anamorphic relation no longer has to do with adequation to an original.

The Cross reveals the crossed intentionalities of, on the one hand, the invisible God who loves absolutely, even to this absolute condescension into the visible, and, on the other, the will of humankind that expresses its hatred of God in its rejection of his self-gift. So "the visible receives the mark of the invisible in it only according to the mode of its own murderous hatred for the invisible itself—according to the mode of refusal, even to the point of killing it."[16] Of course it is not the case that Christ's divinity is only revealed through his execution by the hatred of humankind. Human evil is not a necessary condition of the manifestation of God. Yet in this world, one of the signs of Christ's divinity is his capacity to block evil, absorbing its shock without passing it on (by mimetic rivalry or retribution).[17] The perfect absorption of the blow of evil without mimetically transmitting it forward in the least illuminates Jesus as the Son, an act God alone can accomplish to the end. Thus the power of God is revealed as what blocks the mimetic powers of this world. I would want to put this capacity to block the mimetic perpetuation of evil into a broader logic concerning the inherent contradiction that love enacts not only with respect to evil narrowly defined, but against the

[15] CV, 74; CdV, 132.
[16] CV, 73; CdV, 131.
[17] See "Evil in Person," in PC, 1-30.

world's uncreative and predetermined possibilities. In this way, the Crucifixion occurred because *possibility as necessity* opposed the creative principle of love (impossibility as necessity). Yet despite this opposition, the Cross manifested the impossible, and so was as generative as it was effectual.

This broader economy of anamorphic generativity as opposed to worldly and sterile similitude is described perfectly by St Paul: "Do not be conformed (*suschematizesthe*) to this age, but be transformed (*metamorphousthe*) by the renewing (*anakainosei*) of your mind that you may recognize (or prove, and so "recognize by doing," *dokimazein*) the desire of God, which is good, pleasing and perfect" (Rm. 12:2, my translation). In Paul's injunction to the Roman Christians, the "being affected" is no longer passive (as a schematization [*suschematizisthe*] of the self to what already is [this age, the world]) when it is correlated to the affecting, which is Christ—the telos and form of the Christian. Paul is saying that the true self would disrupt the world's order such that it is consequently generative (creative of something new, *anakainosei*). What I am metamorphing into, my self in the flesh of my affections, stands outside time and this world (*to aioni*) as my most ancient past, which nevertheless comes as my absolute future (the desire (*thelema*) of God which is good, pleasing, and perfect (*teleion*)). In Paul's text, schematization to presence (this world, this age) is a passive conformity to what is already there according to what Marion understands as the idolatrous gaze. "Do not be caused by this world, but be changed…"

Metamorphosis in Paul's terminology or anamorphosis in Marion's breaks in with the new (*anakainosei*). Without this newness (of renewal and regeneration through the *reconnaissance* of the immemorial) we do not participate in the desire of God, but merely fall back into the bondage of *suschematizesthe*. That is, participation in God's will is ever ancient, ever new, and not a schematization of the self to some other, but is a renewing of the self signified in its anagogical transformation, a metamorphosis in the presence of the desire of

God: coram Deo. *Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est, ponere in Domino Deo spem meam* (Ps. 72:23). Suspension (*adhaerere*) in God, is "good for me" (*Mihi…bonum est*) not only because of the infinite excess of God's goodness towards the one who loves him, but because in him, our hope, we create something new beyond the relation itself and beyond any schematization in general. If, in the economy of the icon, the visible is every already existing schematization (the schema that include all possibles), then the invisible has every capacity to reorganize this world towards the will of the invisible as its final telos.

Mimesis, according to Marion, is necessarily in antagonistic relation to the original because it takes some of the glory of the original. This is certainly the objection that iconoclasts throughout the ages have raised against the use of icons. On the one hand, the relation of efficient causality implies the poor phenomenality of the idol that is "merely made" ("*They have mouths but do not speak: eyes but do not see"*). On the other, but according to the same logic, the bedazzling excess of the image (saturated phenomenality) seizes the glory of its efficient cause, diminishing the cause to an effect of the effect.

Recognition, however, involves a "hermeneutic transition"[18] in which one must recognize the invisible in the visible as the kenosis of the invisible towards the visible. Even the visible's suppression of the advent of that which is not of the schemata of the visible are recognized as signs of the invisible's love for the visible. The *thelema tou theou* floods into the world even though the world wants to keep to its own, cannot comprehend it and would not receive it. Because recognizing the invisible in the visible involves altering one's position to take the point of view of the Father, to recognize is to participate in the divine economy. In the instance of the Cross it is to participate in the divine love through a hermeneutic of seeing in the Passion not merely the signs of hatred, but the inverse, condescending and saturating signs of love, which absorb this hatred like a filament in a light bulb absorbs the current,

[18] CV, 75; CdV, 133.

converting it into a manifestation of the truth itself. Recognition is participation precisely because to recognize is also to begin to convert the merely visible into a manifestation of the impossible. To recognize, one must approach. And this approach, which is an anamorphosis of the self, makes the one recognized intimately known since to approach is to take its form as one's own.

Erotic Response as Anamorphosis

We have seen that the icon expresses an anamorphosis because it expresses its iconicity in a logic of recognition: anamorphosis as *reconnaissance* by which a visible becomes a type of an invisible. A second thematization of anamorphosis in Marion's work develops from his analysis of erotic discourse. Marion sees a parallel between the speech of love and speech in response to the call of God. I will examine the two essays in which he takes up this analysis. In both essays, Marion first looks to the structure of negative theology in order to examine how speech might exceed the common function of affirming and denying propositions.

"In the Name: How to Avoid Speaking of It" is Marion's response to Derrida's critique of negative theology.[19] My purpose here is not to evaluate the adequacy of Marion's response to Derrida, or the efficacy of Derrida's critique of negative theology, but to show how so-called negative theology operates, for Marion, according to a hyperbolic, non-adequative logic (which may not be so far from Derrida's own understanding as Marion contends[20]). Marion points out that because the mystical theology of Dionysius is not double, but triple—1) *via affirmativa*, 2) *via negativa*, 3) *via eminentiae*—the third way, the path of eminence, lies beyond presence and negation because language is freed of its need to either assert or

[19] Derrida, Jacques, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, eds. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992); and *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit, trans. David Wood, John P. Leavy Jr., and Ian McLeod, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
[20] Derrida suggests this himself in his response to Marion's lecture. See Derrida's reply in *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, ed. John Caputo and Michael Scanlon, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 42-46.

deny some x about some y. There is no longer a straightforward opposition between affirmation and negation, presence and absence, as there is in predicative speech. The surpassing of negativity does not lead to a secret affirmation, but to the infinite that cannot be determined by any predicative nomination. Eminence deepens unknowing. It "lays bare and circumscribes the divine truth as the experience of incomprehension."[21] Marion sees then that the way of eminence exceeds the binarism of the adequation of being to possibility.[22] This binarism is overcome in part by realizing that even affirmation and negation are hierarchically ordered, negation prevailing over affirmation when it comes to the divine, as argued by Dionysius. Descartes' reversal of this order flattens the hierarchy into a mere juxtaposition of incompatible terms, thus producing the binarism (Chapter I). In the third moment "negation itself submits its very own operation, and above all its duel with affirmation to the final transgression."[23] Marion thus argues for what he calls de-nomination which "bears the twofold function of saying (affirming negatively) and undoing this saying of the name."[24]

Ultimately, Marion's concern with negative theology has less to do with the fact of not being able to predicate names of God than with reintegrating theology into a spiritual practice whose purpose is to transform the one who does *theo*-logy. This spiritual ascent cannot be achieved from the transcendental position of theo-*logy.* Eminence therefore only gives itself in an anamorphic relation precisely because God cannot be known from the position of the spectator who predicates some x about some y as in the economy of presence. The *via eminentiae* thus leads to an economy of call and response rather than to necessary causal relations. Marion interprets *αιτὶα* in Dionysius as something different than the metaphysical cause. According to Marion, *αιτὶα* should be interpreted as that which calls: "what all those who demand [*αιτιατά*] demand [*αιτὲω*] when they aim at the One from whom they come and

[21] IE, 136; DS, 164.
[22] IE, 137-38; DS, 164-65.
[23] IE, 138; DS, 166.
[24] IE, 139; DS, 167.

to whom they return. The *αιτὶα* has precisely no other function but to pass beyond every affirmation and negation."[25] While this interpretation of *αιτὶα* is controversial,[26] what is important for my purpose is to see how this economy of call and response operates according to the dynamic of the anamorphosis of incommensurables rather than the structure of similitude of an effect to a cause. The *αιτὶα* in this case does not escape determination by reserving itself (the metaphysical cause's transcendence) but by excess even over such a predicative negation that reserves knowability behind a negative facade.

The *αιτὶα* relates to the speech it engenders not as that about which something is said, affirmatively or negatively. Instead of affirmation and denial the *αιτὶα* opens onto a discourse of praise and prayer. Like the proper name, which never designates the essence of the thing it signifies, but simply beckons in the direction of the one it names, pragmatic language approximates, that is, touches, without identifying that towards which it intends. It responds to a call to which it never predicates an adequate term, nor aims to. Thus there is no sense in which our response to the *αιτὶα* would imply that we can predicate the same term of it and of the response to it even though by definition a response is meaningless except in relation to that to which it responds. In short our being is straining towards, because given from, an infinite other that is traced in the formal pattern of our speech and of our being as a response to a call so anterior as to leave no memory, so interior as to elude experience.

Participation Marion emphasizes is not ontic for Dionysius who says that "even non-beings not only 'desire' the *αγαθόν* but participate in it."[27] The Good is beyond being and our relation to it is not one of some beings (entities) participating in Being (*esse*). With respect to participation in the anamorphic economy of response to an invisible call, "it is no longer a matter of saying something about something, but of a pragmatics of speech, more subtle,

[25] IE, 139; DS, 168.
[26] Tamsin Jones, *The Genealogy of Marion's Philosophy of Religion: Apparent Darkness*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 24-39.
[27] IE, 146; DS, 176.

risky, and complex. It is a matter of being exposed in one's intending a non-object, exposed to the point of receiving from this non-object determinations that are so radical and new that they speak to me and train me infinitely more than they teach and inform me."[28] When such a "pragmatics of speech" is a pragmatics of *theological* speech, there is a reversal from theo-*logy* to *theo*-logy, from saying something about God and designating him, to being identified and exposed before him: "Henceforth, the words spoken no longer say or explain anything to me about something kept for and by my gaze. They expose me to what lets itself be said only for the sake of no longer permitting me to say it, but to acknowledge it as goodness, thus to love it."[29] De-nomination marks an "inversion in the gravity and orientation of speech." It is common to interpret negative theology and the way of eminence as manifesting the breakdown of theological language, as if all that was happening was that we failed to grasp the infinite and incomprehensible and so our words ended in incoherent ramblings in the face of God's ineffability.[30] This view contends that we cannot really say or know anything true about God. Indeed, eminence is the moment in which nothing can be said predicatively or predicatively negated. Instead, it is a matter of a call, which is linguistic though not predicative. "With praise, it is no doubt no longer a matter of saying but of hearing, since according to the conventional etymology that Denys takes from Plato, bountiful beauty bids—*καλλοσ καλεῖ*."[31] We see how the economy of praise supersedes predication most clearly in Marion's recent Gifford Lectures where the Trinity becomes more than a dogmatic proposition or an arbitrarily revealed piece of information about God. Marion thinks the Trinity as a logic of manifestation in which the viewer is taken up into the economy through confession and praise.[32]

[28] IE, 148; DS, 178. Trans. mod.
[29] IE, 148; DS, 178.
[30] For a more robustly theological account of the apophatic way see Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[31] IE, 148; DS, 179.
[32] I will address these lectures in the next section.

The trace of the call always marks the response, but between the call and response there is an infinite distance. If we think the reversal in "the gravity and orientation of speech" towards *theo*-logy as anamorphosis, the God's eye view proposed has nothing to do with a disembodied and presumptive view from nowhere. Rather it concerns a more embodied and decisively topological position. It solidifies the soul in place and as a real self by dislocating her from a transcendental position and reorienting her in response to what gives her.

The economy of call and response entails a nonadequative relation, as Marion develops in more detail in the second essay concerning erotic speech and theological language entitled, "What Cannot Be Said: Apophasis and the Discourse of Love." Here he finds an analogue to theological apophatic speech in the language of love. The *via eminentiae*, Marion argues, "tears discourse away from predication altogether" so that it "no longer has the ambition of making constative use of language."[33] The pragmatic use of language that replaces the predicative is not confined to the discourse of mystical theology only. It is also the essential dynamic of the discourse of love. After Austin, we are familiar with the concept of the speech act: the performative speech act, for instance, which is an utterance that does what it says and puts into effect what it signifies.[34] Marion argues that erotic language, like negative theology, is neither predicative nor performative, but perlocutionary. It is indeed a speech act, *doing* something rather than predicating something about something. But unlike the performative speech act that does what it says, the perlocutionary speech act does something *other than* what it says. I will argue that, on the one hand, the logic of call and response is always perlocutionary, not performative or illocutionary, but, on the other, this perlocutionary othering-in-relation takes place precisely by taking on the point of view of the call without abolishing or even blending the absolute distinction of the two. In other words, it does not simply enact the call like the effect of an efficient cause, as if it were made effectual simply in

[33] VR, 104.
[34] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962).

the saying and as the saying. The logic of call and response mirrors the iconic logic of recognition without similitude. It is worth noting that, in this essay, Marion does not actual distinguish between performative and illocutionary speech acts in his engagement of Austin and Searle. While this is a somewhat significant oversight on Marion's part, the difference between the two does not actually matter for Marion's point. In a certain sense, illocutionary acts enact something "other than" what they say, according to Austin's definition, but this sense of "other than" is a much weaker sense of otherness than the otherness provoked in what Marion will describe as the perlocutionary speech act spoken in "I love you."

Marion shows the speech act "I love you" does not predicate anything of either the locutor (sincerity cannot be proved or adequated to a substantial characteristic of the speaker) nor of the interlocutor (the declaration can be made to anyone for love is not spoken for the sake of, or earned by, the qualities of the beloved).[35] While indeed "I love you" is certainly not a locutionary saying something about something but is a speech act, Marion argues that it is still not a performative statement or illocutionary act. It does not effect its meaning in the saying because it is not executed by all its participants: the "I" who speaks it and the "you" to whom it is directed. "I love you" is perfectly accomplished even if the other does not receive it. The promise, by contrast, is the perfectly accomplished performative, for all participants must execute the performance correctly and completely and must live in the future as if the performance was effective. "I love you," however, functions only in the present: first, because the intention "remains utterly unverifiable," and second because "the freedom and fragility of 'I love you' have no ambition to be of any value for anything other than "now," certainly not "in the future."[36] Although "I love you" does not require the locution of both participants in order to be accomplished, it does necessarily bring the interlocutor into play.

[35] VR, 106.
[36] VR, 109.

Where illocutionary speech performs what it says (for Marion) or at least what it implies, erotic speech is purely perlocutionary and "accomplishes something other than what is says."[37] For Austin, what we could also identify as an "other than what it says" of an indirect illocutionary act is an implied meaning. If I say, "That chocolate cake looks very tasty," I may be asking you to offer me some of your cake. The intention of the statement is not merely to observe something about the cake, but to be given a piece of it. The implied meaning is therefore enacted where the locution says something else. Further, the perlocutionary aspect of this utterance would be, for Austin, the response in the other of offering the cake to me.[38] To say "I love you" is different than the indirect speech act because, rather than enacting an implied meaning, it brings into play the otherness of the other. It always produces an effect, a response of the "you" to whom it is addressed: "returned love, saddened or fearful refusal, placing the other in a position of power over me, fear, gratitude, surprise, etc."[39] Erotic speech provokes a response other than what it says because it aims at a nonobject—the will of the other. The "other than" is not an implied meaning (indirect illocution) or even a determinable response (as in Austin's sense of perlocutionary), but a counter-intention. "Instead of saying something about something, or bringing about what I say, it is rather, for me, about saying *to* someone, not necessarily what I say, since I mean for my listener to understand something *other* than what I say, but that I am here, that I am speaking to him or her, imposing my will or having his or her will imposed on me."[40] So, as Marion writes, "in the perlocutionary act what essentially matters is not what I say (the intention and the meaning) but to whom I say it…the listener is thus privileged over the speaker."[41] The second person "you" therefore becomes saturated where in all other forms of speech it more or less disappears. In this way,

[37] VR, 110.
[38] Austin, 101.
[39] VR, 110.
[40] VR, 111.
[41] VR, 112.

Marion makes the perlocutionary act its own special case of a speech act where for Austin the perlocutionary effect remains an aspect of the illocutionary act.

In this perlocutionary act of "I love you," Marion notes a structure that is pragmatic and dialogic. The perlocutionary act speaks insofar as it calls out. Not accomplishing what it says in an irrevocable affirmation, "I love you" is spoken by the speaker as "Does she love me?" and heard by the interlocutor as "Do you love me?" Marion demonstrates that the most radical affirmation of the other in "I love you!" turns to a second, apophatic moment, in which the speaker turns into the role of listener, awaiting confirmation to the question ("Does she love me?") embedded in the affirmation. Marion notes an inevitable temporal gap between call and response, doubt and confirmation: "even in the case of a happy confirmation, the temporal delay and lateness maintain a *différance*."[42]

> What the present tense sees as impossible (an affirmation cancelled by a negation), and constative language as contradictory (a *kataphasis* that gives rise to an *apophasis*), repetition and the future it conquers makes possible, but in a pragmatic, more precisely perlocutionary, sense. I reach the other and the other reaches me because "I love you!" and "Do you love me?" continually provoke a (perlocutionary) effect in us, or to be more exact, incite each of us for and by the other. We tell each other nothing in a certain (constative) sense, yet by speaking this nothing, or rather, these nothings, we place ourselves (pragmatically) face to face, each receptive to the (perlocutionary) effect of the other, in the distance that both separates and unites us. Constative and predicative (locutionary) and even active (illocutionary) speech definitively gives way to a radical pragmatic (perlocutionary) use: neither saying nor denying anything about anything, but acting on the other and allowing the other to act on me.[43]

What I want to highlight here is that the anamorphic relation incited never depends on similitude and does not lead to it, but provokes alterity: the perlocutionary effect in which I respond to the other with a response other than the other. This radical alterity is provoked at the level of the originary by which a totally affected will, a totally stricken will, approaches the other in person. We thus see that it is not a relationship of efficient causality that governs here. The response is wholly other than the call and does not resemble it as an effect resembles its cause. If a lover's call precedes me, how do I give back to him a fitting response? Certainly

[42] VR, 114.
[43] VR, 115-116.

not by returning the measure he gave me, as one gives back the talent that one has buried or as if what he gave could have produced any effect measurable by me so as to give it back proportionately. Its only production is a stirring of my will. In response to the one who calls me, I cry out with my whole being, even with "my bones," in the words of the Psalmist, that is, I respond with what is totally other than he to whom I respond, especially in the case of God: "*Omnia ossa mea dicent: Domine, quis similis tibi?*" (Ps 35 (34) v. 10).

The call does not do what it says. Yet it of necessity provokes a response. It does not determine the response as an illocutionary act effects immediately what it wants to say. The call is perlocutionary. And the response—which is the "something other than what it says" that the call provokes, i.e., something other than a direct execution of an efficient cause—is only made intelligible under the figure of anamorphosis. With erotic speech, as with the economy of the icon, there is an anamorphic taking-the-point-of-view—the response which makes the invisible call appear as a visible. The response takes flesh as an anamorphosis to the invisible call. It takes the point of view of the one whose invisible gaze is cast upon it (the one who calls out) in the way that anamorphosis is a taking the point of view of the transcendent (nonspatialized, invis*a*ble, [im]possible, and nontranscendental) without transcending the logic of place, but precisely according to a topology. In the visible, this identity of call and response is so complete that the invisible gaze of the infinite other is only there in the world if the receiver takes its point of view and becomes the visible of his irregardable gaze. The call is only manifested in the response.[44] Invisibility simply means that the visible can appear in a new, un-predetermined way, such that it is altered from its very origin by the saturated encounter with the other who regards it. Thus, paradoxically, it is precisely as far as anamorphosis is accomplished that the most intimate relation of call-response reveals itself as nonrelation: the call provokes something entirely *other than* what it says. In anamorphosis, relation is

[44] BG, 282-290; ED, 398-400.

achieved not by being similar to what is received, but by responding to the given with one's whole being. Anamorphosis is *relation as nonrelation*: an intimacy that provokes separated communion. We are no longer dealing only with a linguistic phenomenon (erotic language, negative theology, hermeneutics), but with the very grammar of human existence. I want to demonstrate that an anamorphic topology of the flesh can begin to be imagined along the lines of the economy of the icon and of erotic speech. The anamorphosis describes a relation that is at once total and totally free: it is personal precisely because it affects the other all the way down so as to provoke the emergence of a radical willing. Anamorphosis is not only a mode of phenomenality, but is the particular mode of the appearance of personhood that only the call summons into existence because the call alone summons a "you." In other words, anamorphosis is not only where I no longer gaze on the world as a transcendental spectator and am instead put into question before the other. It is also the mode of the appearance of a radical freedom by means of the radicality of the affection

§2. The Topology of Iconic Relation

We have seen how the hyperbolic way of eminence, the erotic call-response economy, and the logic of the icon only manifest themselves through an anamorphosis that exceeds comparative relation. I now want to show how this anamorphic relational dynamic is the very logic of human existence in relation to God. This argument will draw on the work of a constellation of thinkers including Husserl, Heidegger, Przywara, Rahner, and Lacoste. I use these thinkers in addition to Marion because many of them go further than Marion in certain ways. Also, I want to reveal the limits of the earlier thinkers in order to show that the later thinkers, primarily Lacoste and Marion, are restructuring the very means by which we think relation at the extreme, especially the relation of the human person to God or to the Absolute. This is the case because they more adequately overcome the limits imposed on phenomenality by means of a metaphysical determination of relation. The transcendental interpretation of the

correlation (as subject to consciousness and finite spatio-temporal reality) is given theological expression in Karl Rahner's axiom that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa.[45] I will center my analysis around Rahner's trinitarian axiom and use Przywara's "creaturely metaphysics" as a hinge that enables me to reinterpret the axiom without the transcendental horizon and in light of Marion and Lacoste. I read Rahner's axiom as an instance of the phenomenological correlation and employ Przywara's "creaturely metaphysics" to show how it is tied up with human existence without being reducible to a product of existence. This serves as a good starting point for my analysis because it enables me to assess the limits of these earlier thinkers and to see in just what way Marion and Lacoste surpass them when we think relation structured according to anamorphosis.

In his last Gifford Lecture, entitled "A Logic of Manifestation: The Trinity," Marion remarks on the compatibility of his argument with Rahner's axiom.[46] But there are other reasons for situating an analysis of Rahner within the present chapter, namely, as stated above, that 1) we ought to read his axiom as an instance of the phenomenological correlation and that consequently, 2) the criticisms of the axiom mirror the criticism of Husserl's phenomenology, so 3) Rahner, saved in the same way as Husserl is saved (Chapter III), remains critical for a doctrine of the *imago dei* developed according to givenness and not according to the adequation of being to consciousness, which is at once fulfilled in Rahner and exploded by him. What I will then show is that Marion's development of a trinitarian manifestation that gives itself according to the logic of *mysterion* and *apokalypsis* rather than *aletheia* provides a hermeneutic for Rahner's axiom that does not reduce God to consciousness/history or require a return to the thing-in-itself to ensure God's freedom and transcendence. The axiom interpreted in this way escapes determining God because it functions according to another logic than that determined by possibility in the world. The ego relates to God in the mode of

[45] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel, (London : Burns and Oates, 1970), 22.
[46] GR, 97-98.

anamorphosis towards the given and not the similitude which adequates being to consciousness, the realm of the possible. As a consequence anamorphic relation disrupts totality without a violent imposition. In order to escape the aporias of the transcendental interpretation of Rahner's axiom and to avoid its reduction to Heidegger's understanding of inherence (which indeed has its own "in-beyond"), I argue that it should be thought in the way Jean-Yves Lacoste works out liturgical existence within a logic of place. In this way Rahner's axiom is led back to a doctrine of creation, to a creaturely metaphysics, and thus to the question of analogy now thought under the figure of anamorphosis.

Rahner and Marion on the Incomprehensible

Debates concerning Rahner's trinitarian axiom often start from unexamined and incompatible understandings of "mystery." Undergirding Rahner's concept of God and his trinitarian axiom is a concept of mystery that simply does not fit the division of immanent and economic Trinity. Such a division presupposes a different concept of mystery. Thus I will begin this section by outlining the three basic ways mystery is usually understood and then situate Rahner and Marion within a particular shift in twentieth century thought away from a negatively defined concept of mystery and towards a positive one. This positive concept, however, takes on various forms (starting, for my purposes, with Heidegger) as it is developed in partial opposition to the transcendental horizon of philosophy. If both Marion and Rahner aim to overcome the finite limits of modern philosophy by means of the thought of the infinite and of a positive concept of mystery, Heidegger's understanding of inherence offers the most decisive challenge to a theological interpretation of the infinite and of positive mystery.

There are at least three ways one might understand the idea of mystery. *The first idea of mystery is mystery as the uncomprehended.* In this definition a mystery would be what we do not yet know, but can know: what knowledge has not yet reached, but will or can compre-

hend and master. Here mystery is equated with the uncertain and incites interest only so far as it is uncertain, vague or confused. Comprehension dissipates the mystery into the certain and exhausts it there. In this its weakest sense, mystery takes the form of a problem that clear thinking or right method can solve by converting it into an object. Descartes' reversal of the movement of negative theology (Chapter I) is the quintessential example of this movement from the vague or uncertain to the clear and distinct, from the negative confusion to the positive dissolution of the unknown into the certain. If we go about the theological task as if God were the uncomprehended then we fall quickly into conceptual idolatry, the very method being incapable of rising to *theo*-logical thinking.

As "that which is greater than can be thought" God must exceed this banal sense of mystery as the uncomprehended. God by definition must be understood as incomprehensible as such and not merely uncomprehended. While most theology within a broad orthodoxy acknowledged this, theologians in the past have typically labored under what I will call the idea of "negative" incomprehensibility, for incomprehensibility can be thought negatively or positively. *Thus, the second concept of mystery is negative incomprehensibility.* Traditionally metaphysics secured incomprehensibility through the inaccessibility of the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself is incomprehensible because it is not given to the knowing faculty as is the phenomenal thing which adequates to consciousness through an intentional or a priori unity. The real thing is thus preserved in its freedom from the totalizing tendency of consciousness by being posited as the noumenal essence. The noumenal essence is not given and is incomprehensible by definition while the phenomenal thing is by definition given, comprehensible and comprehended. The noumenal thing-in-itself as the incomprehensible as such stands over against the given comprehended thing. But it is negatively incomprehensible precisely for the sake of a positive certainty of the phenomenal object. Thus the noumenal thing—precisely as a condition that makes the phenomenal object appear—fits the definition of being (the logical-

ly possible) and is thus enframed by an implicit positivity (II, §2). Again, following the Cartesian movement from vagueness to certainty the incomprehensible remains determined by what the mind can know with objectivity. It is determined as the negation of that objective knowability. Mind determines it by excluding it from the known for the sake of knowing the phenomenal thing in an objective, certain manner.

The third concept of mystery is positive incomprehensibility. Where the negative incomprehensibility of the thing-in-itself is grounded by the positivity persisting in the adequation of being to possibility, the third idea of mystery would see mystery as a positive incomprehensibility. By "positive" I mean that the very incomprehensibility is *given* where the "negative" concept of mystery as the thing-in-itself understands incomprehensibility as an epistemological nullity and horizon of objectivity. In the positive sense, incomprehensibility is not a negative limit on comprehension, but the excess of the mystery's givenness over any intentional aim. So by positive I do not mean that it is reducible to presence like the phenomenal thing (a possible and adequate phenomenon) or like the noumenal thing (the condition of possibility which reduces the phenomenon to a being). Rather, the positive *plenum* of the given results in the negativity of divine darkness, of being known in not being comprehended.

In this case, incomprehensibility is not mere incomprehension, not knowing enough (yet) or not having worked out a cogent meaning. Instead, incomprehensibility increases to the measure that knowing increases. Could it not be the case that the incomprehensible is the origin of knowledge and not that which the ego aims to extinguish by knowing its object and mastering it? Here knowledge wouldn't exhaust being and defeat incomprehensibility. The human mind would rather drink from the incomprehensible as an inexhaustible source of knowing. Only in this case the given is not finally defeated as one vanquishes a foe (first concept) nor does it remain separated like a besieged but impregnable keep (second concept).

I would argue that Rahner and Marion's understanding of mystery is this third concept, positive incomprehensibility. The shift to positive mystery is one of the most significant developments in twentieth century theology and philosophy. Indeed Heidegger's understanding of the horizon should be understood as an instance of this positive concept of mystery. In it he aims to go beyond a simple concept of a limit, as in the epistemological limit which is the metaphysical understanding of transcendence as the thing-in-itself, the negatively incomprehensible.

Since for Rahner the mystery marks a givenness, not the self-reservation of the immanent Trinity, there is no apparent need for an immanent Trinity to preserve God's incomprehensibility. At the same time, his theology does fail to maintain the divine freedom that the doctrine of the immanent Trinity aimed to secure. I will argue that this failure is a result of the reduction of the Trinity to a possibility of consciousness within the transcendental horizon. The correlation, economic to immanent Trinity, is an instance of Husserl's epistemological correlation—appearing (economic Trinity) to what appears (immanent Trinity). I therefore aim to reconcile the correlation with the givenness of mystery by means of clearing away any residual dualism that might collapse the mystery into the immanent domain of history once the noumenon (reserved Trinity) has been removed.

Rahner's Axiom

Traditionally, the reconciliation between the doctrine of God's inaccessible transcendence and his historical immanence in Jesus Christ (and at other times and in other ways) was achieved by means of the distinction between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity.[47] I want to point out that "historical immanence," or the immanence referred to in the immanent-transcendent dichotomy, employs nearly the opposite usage of the term "imma-

[47] Paul Molnar's recent book (discussed below) is a fine example of a classical argument for the doctrine of the immanent trinity and against Rahner. *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, (London: T&T Clark, 2002).

nence" in the "immanent Trinity" which refers to the Trinity in itself, thus precisely what is transcendent of (historical) immanence. To avoid confusion in this section, I will generally not use the term with respect to historical or phenomenal immanence, but will instead speak of history and appearing. My analysis of mystery above suggests that the immanent Trinity, which corresponds to a negative incomprehensibility, is equivalent to a noetic nullity. Even its negativity cannot secure it from being an all-too-human conceptualization that consequently fails to do what it set out to do: secure God's transcendence. But in light of the third concept of mystery we might preserve God's transcendence without requiring the rather impoverished and human concept of a transcendence that is nothing more than a noetically null divinity. The common critique of Rahner's axiom is that it collapses God into history.[48] Rahner's axiom seems inadequate to safeguard the non-historicity of God, because the vice versa (the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity) appears to make God nothing more than his historical manifestation of himself. Rahner wants to say that it is not just that the economic Trinity really is God himself (thus *is* the immanent Trinity), but that God gives his whole self in and as the God of history. He does not reserve himself elsewhere. I intend to show that this common critique of Rahner's axiom is only valid when the axiom is interpreted within the same method that sees the correlation as idealist and does not reduce it to givenness. In short, it is not the axiom itself that dissolves God's transcendence, but the representationalist framework within which the axiom is thought.

My argument in this section makes three essential moves. First, I show that the transcendental horizon presupposed not only by Rahner but also by his critics inevitably results in a historical concept of God. Here the axiom is more or less understood as an in-

[48] In addition to Molnar, see Hans Urs von Balthasar: "while, according to the Christian faith, the economic Trinity assuredly appears as the interpretation of the immanent Trinity, it may not be identified with it, for the latter grounds and supports the former. Otherwise the immanent, eternal Trinity, would threaten to dissolve the economic; in other words, God would be swallowed up in the world process—a necessary stage, in this view, if he is to realize himself." *Theodramatik,* II/2 (Eisiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1978), 466; *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. Vol. III. Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 508.

stance of the Husserlian correlation. For this reason the Trinity in this interpretation of the axiom fails to remain incomprehensible and non-historical. Second, I demonstrate that despite a complex and historically aware understanding of mystery, Rahner confuses the divine infinite with the infinite of inherence in the world. It is by this conflation that Rahner makes room for the erroneous interpretation and the attendant critique. A brief engagement with Heidegger will make this evident. Third and most crucially, his transcendental method presupposes that reception of God requires that human beings have an a priori capacity for God, that is, an intrinsic, immanent openness to him that adequates the human person to God before God can give himself to us (and before we can give ourselves to God), in short, before the will, on either side, is implicated. His critics, opposing this a priori intrinsicism of the transcendental method and rejecting God as a possibility for us, simply put in place an iconoclastic argument and the kind of quasi-Barthian distance that presumes the very same presuppositions and the same understanding of what relation entails: an adequation or similitude. I am proposing an alternative dynamic of relation that would reframe the whole debate. As an alternative to a merely adequative correlation, I propose that of anamorphosis — all the more intimate because not predetermined by a ruling possibility (being), all the more intimate because prior to the a priori. By this route, we return to the iconic logic of the previous section (IV, §1) and further clarify the relational structure of human existence itself.

Rahner as Husserl: Rahner's Trinitarian Axiom as an Instance of the Phenomenological Correlation

I first will show that Rahner's trinitarian axiom is an instance of the phenomenological correlation. This allows me to measure its nonidentification of God with (salvation) history in the same way that Husserl's correlation no longer imposes a reduction to consciousness once the transcendental presuppositions have been removed. Instead, the axiom allows us to think of God's transcendence not as that which is opposed to immanence — what is just out of

reach and eluding us — but rather as what gives itself completely in its plenitude — to such an extent as to be the origin of an absolute difference.

Just as Husserl understood the correlation to be absolute in order to overcome the problem of the thing-in-itself, so Rahner attempted to overcome a theological Kantianism by making his correlation reversible. Not only "The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity," but also, "the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity." In other words, for Rahner, there is no God *behind* God's activity in the same way that for Husserl there is no thing-in-itself behind the phenomenal thing. It is worth noting that Husserl's goal of banishing the thing-in-itself emphasizes the *reversed* version of the correlation: that "what appears" (the thing in itself) *is* the appearing, and not the more simply realist account in which the appearing is a manifestation of a real what. This Husserlian reversal is precisely what becomes the scandalous "vice versa" of Rahner's application of the correlation to the Trinity: the immanent Trinity (the *what* of the appearing) is the economic Trinity (its appearing).

That *the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa* has everything to do with Rahner's emphasis that God's manifestation in the world as Logos and Spirit is his *self*-manifestation, not a mere appearance. There are two senses to this self-manifestation. First, it means that God manifests himself from himself and cannot be a mere object determined by us but comes in freedom. Second, it is himself that is manifested, not a mere appearance or emanation. Rahner wants to show that the self-gift of God is "not merely a copy or analogy of the inner Trinity, but is the Trinity itself."[49] This directly parallels Husserl's concern to show that appearance is not mere appearance that we must get behind (iconoclastically) to get to the real noumenal thing. Instead, the appearance is the thing itself. Thus what appears is correlated to the appearing and is correlated absolutely. There is nothing behind the appearance that is not given. Rahner's axiom thus concerns a reduction to givenness.

[49] Rahner, *Trinity*, 35.

As Husserl used this principle of correlation to overcome the dualism in which appearance is a semblance that we must get behind to get to the really real, so Rahner employs his principle to escape the "mere appearance" of a modalist understanding of the Trinity, where it is really just the one God appearing in different ways and who could have appeared otherwise (Jesus could have been the Father rather than the Son, for example). In this modalist view, when we get behind the appearance of a Trinity, we arrive at the one God. Modalism is an inherent temptation of any theology where the Trinity is understood as originally unified in one noumenal essence of God. Precisely because it is a *self*-communication and not a mere appearance, the economy is absolutely correlated to the thing-in-itself. The "appearing to us and for us" (economic Trinity) is God in himself (immanent Trinity). There is no being behind the appearing of God for us—no man behind the curtain operating the spectacle, for the spectacle is God himself.

For Rahner, if our doctrine of God does not correspond to how we are as humans then the doctrine is simply meaningless, an empty concept. At the same time, his doctrine entails a critique of the *merely* human. The humanly fabricated concept of the immanent Trinity—produced via negation of the sensuous and the received (and thus ultimately a negation of the given)—results in an extrinsic model of the gift in which our relation to God is one of direct efficient causal dependence imposed against our nature and without the act of receiving. Rahner argues that there must be a trinitarian structure in us if God really gives *himself* to us.[50]

The perfect reversibility of the correlation is the most consistently critiqued aspect of Rahner's trinitarian theology. That God in himself is identical to his self-manifestation seems to jeopardize his transcendence, making him capturable by consciousness or identical to Hegel's Spirit developing through its history in relation to the world. I would contend that this

[50] See Vincent Holzer "Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Twentieth Century Catholic Currents on the Trinity", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, eds. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: OUP, 2011).

typical critique of Rahner's axiom persists in reading it according to the epistemological interpretation of Husserl's correlation. I am not arguing that Rahner is not vulnerable to these critiques. He does indeed hold the position his critics ascribe to him. He likewise assumes the requirement of adequating the received God to a possibility of the ego (an a priori openness). But, given my analysis of Rahner's axiom in relation to Heidegger and with respect to Rahner's doctrine of mystery, I want to argue that the reversibility of the axiom and the dissolution of any noumenal Trinity means that Rahner's axiom does not actually fit within the transcendental philosophy in which he situates it and thus within the epistemological interpretation of the correlation. Thus, as with Husserl, we can take Rahner another direction than he explicitly intends, for the very aporia of a God reduced to history vanishes once the axiom is considered according to the phenomenality of the correlation that I have developed with respect to the intimate alterity, which, on the one hand, identifies the flesh that receives it, and, on the other, no longer itself submits to the ego precisely because it gives the ego itself at the same time as it gives itself to the ego. Because of the reversibility of the correlation, the trinitarian axiom is much more enigmatic than its simplicity lets on.

Rahner as Heidegger: Positive Mystery and Transcendental Premises

The difficulties of Rahner's theological premises are much more complex than a comparison with Husserl can illuminate. This is because of the subtle relation of the axiom to Rahner's understanding of mystery, which is the hidden basis for the axiom. In his concept of mystery Rahner wants to understand it as a positive giving, not a reserved noumenon. Based on this positive concept of mystery, I am arguing that the traditional division of immanent and economic Trinity cannot hold. But it is not enough just to assert a positive giving in order to truly overcome totalizing structures. Positive mystery takes many forms in twentieth century thought as philosophy feels its way out of modernity's limits.

In the development of his concept of mystery and the corollary re-analysis of the reception of the infinite, one of Rahner's chief adversaries was Heidegger and his "apriorism of finitude." In *Hearer of the Word*, Rahner pits his own understanding of "transcendence toward the infinite" against Heidegger's "transcendence towards nothingness."[51] Instead of tending towards the nothing, for Rahner Being turns towards the infinite pleroma and an a priori relation to the infinitude of God. For Rahner we experience God whenever we experience our horizon or the indefinable.[52] One of the more important ways in which Marion shows similarities to Rahner is the broadening of intuition oriented towards givenness and the possibility of the reception of the infinite.[53] We will see, however, that Rahner's critique of Heidegger and his deployment of the infinite is not sufficient. In his transcendental method Rahner never overcomes the Heideggerian world-earth dialectic but rather works within that Heideggerian horizon. I would contend here that Rahner confuses the infinite of God with the infinite of world-earth that fixes the finitude of Dasein. He performs a complete assimilation of being-in-the-world and being-before-God, blurring the one into the other because he does not consider the way in which experience of being in the world is itself an experience of an infinite horizon that is not God. I thus want to turn briefly to Heidegger's phenomenology of inherence.

Heidegger argued for the incommensurability of Dasein to the world that it inhabits. For the later Heidegger, Dasein inheres not only in world, but also in earth. The concept of inherence developed by Heidegger gives rise to a "distance" which installs an incommensurability between phenomena and Dasein. Dasein is absolutely other according to "world" yet inextricably "in" and at home on the "earth." For Heidegger, there is an inherence-in-distance of the sentient in the sensible. The world-earth dialectic that Heidegger develops in his late philosophy goes beyond the uncanniness of being-in-the-world. Besides the not being at home of "world," there is now, also the sheltering, the being at home, of "earth": "The world, in

[51] *Hearer of the Word*, trans. Ronald Walls, (London : Sheed & Ward, 1969), 5.
[52] *Theological Investigations*, (London : Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961-1992), 4.2, 53.
[53] Peter Joseph Fritz, "Karl Rahner Repeated in Jean-Luc Marion?", *Theological Studies*, 73.2 (2002), 326.

resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there."[54] This economy of distance and inherence describes how the finitude of Dasein is inscribed within an infinite horizon without any recourse to a concept of God to account for this infinitude. As Lacoste writes,

> It is of course in the 'Open' that mortals to whom a homeland has been granted conduct themselves. But such an opening constitutes the foundation of a liturgy only for those who confuse the deities (the 'messengers' of the sacred) with the Absolute—and Heidegger's text permits no such confusion. Neither the world, such as *Sein und Zeit* thinks it, nor the play of earth and world, nor the 'infinite relation' of earth and sky, offer to Dasein, and subsequently to mortals, the theoretical conditions which would enable them to come face-to-face to God—to the Lord of Being, to an Absolute who is someone, and who promises a relation with him.[55]

Inherence inheres within an infinite horizon. World-earth is never able to be grasped as the ready-to-hand but withdraws as it envelops. It eludes in the way the horizon eludes. The horizon, as the place in which we dwell, keeps its distance. It is the condition of being, the nontranscendable par excellence as the worlding of the world. It opens the space in which visibility appears. Distance is inscribed in sensing as such. Dasein sentiently inheres in and at a distance to world-earth. The distance spanning Dasein and the world in which it inheres is the interplay of the not-being-at-home (*Unheimlichkeit*) of world and the homecoming (*Heimkunft)* of earth.

For Heidegger the horizon of world-earth inscribes the ego in a distance from being that reveals itself by veiling itself: "All revealing belongs within a harboring and a concealing. But that which frees [entities for intelligibility]—the mystery—is concealed and always concealing itself. Freedom [sense-making, revealing of beings] is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing shimmers the veil that hides the essential occurence

[54] "The Origin of the Work of Art," 47.
[55] Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Experience and the Absolute*, trans. Mark Raftery-Skehan, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 21. Hereafter EA.

of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils."[56] Even in Heidegger there is the ambition to overcome the negative concept of the thing-in-itself as that which the mind cannot access. The mystery is not only a concealing, but a revealing by concealing. For Heidegger what he describes as a "boundary" arises from the gathering of world. This gathering is a "thing." ("Thing" [*Ding*] is the old Germanic word for a gathering or meeting.) The boundary that a thing gathers "is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something *begins its presencing*."[57] The boundary is the origin. Heidegger puts the truth of Being decisively within a concept of mystery (that which reveals itself in concealing itself), but he understands this mystery as the nontranscendable boundary, the horizon of world-earth that puts in play all presencing. Like Marion and Rahner, Heidegger's concept of mystery is a positive concept—the boundary as the gathering of the world rather than that which is behind the boundary. For him, since the mystery is unintelligible in itself, it is literally no-thing. Dasein is thus structured towards the nothing even as the nothing gives the gathering that is the "thing."

Nevertheless, because of Heidegger's incisive analysis, our understanding of experience of God and relation to God must become more precise. For instance, Heidegger shows that the way restlessness, or the *Unheimlichkeit* of worldly existence, is inscribed within Being's horizon and does not point immediately to an Augustinian restless search for God as a simplistic theological reading of Heidegger might take it. We are "not at home" in the world not because we were made for another world or because our restlessness is *really* a search for God. We are not at home in the world precisely because the world appears as world. It is the nature of worlding for the worldling to not feel at home within it precisely because the world's horizon is infinite. The world shows itself as a positive mystery because it is a gathering. As a horizon it expresses a limit not by blockading access to what is beyond the bounda-

[56] *The Question Concerning Technology*, 25.
[57] "Building Dwelling Thinking," 152.

ry, but through giving finitude from the infinitude of the boundary. What Heidegger describes is not the mystery of the infinite as such, but the mystery as the horizon's infinite escape from Dasein's finitude. Human beings *are*, i.e., fix their finitude, from dwelling in the world, thus towards the nothing of the horizon. The positivity of mystery in this case is what blocks the possibility of transcendence.

It is this analysis that Rahner does not adequately overcome when he contests that Being is towards the mystery of God rather than towards the nothing of the horizon. In reality, he is operating with the same horizon of world under a different name ("God"). Rahner's reduction to experience, via his transcendental method, makes him mirror Heidegger. The "mystery" leads back only to the very unity and distinction with absolute being (mystery-term-horizon) that is the horizon of world (distinction) and earth (unity), itself a condition of being. Rahner argues that because man experiences himself as both "entrusted into his own hands and always in the hands of what is beyond his control" he is "a being oriented towards God."[58] Defining God simply as the human being's orientation to mystery (what is beyond his control) by no means surpasses Heidegger's description of being-in-the-world. "[T]hat mystery which controls us and is not controlled by us"[59] is the phenomenology of being-in-the-world, and not, as Rahner claims, the experience of God. The experience of world as horizon is precisely this not being able to control. It is the uncanniness, even the primordial fright, of being a sentient being other than the world it senses. In this horizon, a God worthy of the name does not yet arise.

Paul Molnar offers one of the most incisive recent critiques of Rahner's axiom and defense of the doctrine of the immanent Trinity. Molnar links the axiom to Rahner's transcendental method and understanding of mystery:

[58] *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William V. Dych, (London : Darton, Longman and Todd, 1977), 44. See also *Theological Investigations* 4, 49 and 11, 153. Molnar, 87-90.
[59] TI, 11, 151.

> The transcendental method excludes the idea that a special inconceivable act of God within experience is the sole source of truth. Thus, the key to interpreting lectures 2 and 3 of Theological Investigations, Volume 4, "The Concept of Mystery…" is to realize that what dictates Rahner's view of incarnation, grace, and glory and his identifying the immanent and economic Trinity is not a special inconceivable act of God. It is not the revelation of something previously hidden as it might be in Scholastic "school theology." Rather it is the fact that he believes each of these represents the radical proximity of God to creatures in their self-transcending experiences.[60]

What Molnar's critique indicates is that Rahner's understanding of mystery links God to an experience of the self in the world. God's appearance is only possible according to an original unity of God to the human, therefore as an a priori possibility for us. "By removing knowledge of God from the realm of the categorical and placing it into the realm of experience Rahner posits an original unity between creator and creatures."[61] Rahner writes that we know God "in a transcendental experience in which the subject … is experienced as being borne by an incomprehensible ground … the absolute mystery which is not at our disposal … Creatureliness, then, always means both the grace and the mandate to preserve and to accept that tension of analogy which the finite subject is."[62] Molnar sees the reduction to experience as what determines the axiom for Rahner because the immanent Trinity would be incoherent for Rahner insofar as it is not a possible experience of the self. I would also point out that, despite the mystery being "not at our disposal," what Rahner calls "grace" precedes the subject in precisely the same way that the gathering of the world precedes Dasein, as its a priori horizon. In this way Rahner has not escaped the atheistic horizon of Heidegger inasmuch as he determines God according to the epistemological correlation of Husserl. The reduction to experience leads to a God who is only the infinite finitude of the world-earth horizon. Rahner's critique of Heidegger simply replaces the mystery of inherence and its void with the mystery of God. But not only does this confuse God with the world in which we

[60] Molnar, 111.
[61] Molnar, 110.
[62] *Foundations*, 80.

dwell it also tends to confuse God with auto-affection, self-experience, and thus with Dasein. God is reflected back as the subject herself, an interiority without intimacy.

The correlation of the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity is for Rahner grounded in a correlation of God to man: "At this point theology and anthropology necessarily become one."[63] Molnar argues that "Rahner assumes that revelation has its existence in one's consciousness and is indeed subject to the structure of the knowing subject."[64] As with knowledge of objects in general, this is precisely the problem we have shown in Husserl and the solipsism of the transcendental method: knowing objects is no more than knowing ourselves. For Rahner, God and the self reciprocally ground one another: "experience of God constitutes the enabling condition of, and an intrinsic element in the experience of self…The experience of self is the condition which makes it possible to experience God" such that "the personal history of experience of the self is the personal history of the experience of God."[65] Molnar argues therefore that "being in general is the limit of Rahner's doctrine of God."[66]

That this equivalence between God and experience reduces God to "being in general" is the central critique. But this is also where I part ways from Molnar. We must point out more precisely where the aporia lies in Rahner's axiom. For if "Rahner's approach cannot imagine God actually existing apart from human experience,"[67] and this is a motivation leading him to the correlation of immanent Trinity to economic Trinity, it is also the case that the axiom derives from his positive concept of mystery. It is precisely the reduction to experience, that is, to "being in general," and not the axiom itself, that needs to be questioned. Thought according to positive mystery as an excessive givenness, it is by no means the case that the economic Trinity much less the immanent Trinity is reducible to "being in general." Thus no correlation of the economic to the immanent is ever the condition of reducing God to the a

[63] *Foundations*, 44.
[64] Molnar, 93.
[65] TI, 13, 125.
[66] Molnar, 96.
[67] Molnar, 96.

priori possibility of "orientation towards the mystery" in the first place. That the transcendental interpretation of the correlation reduces God to "being in general" does not mean we must restore the doctrine of the immanent Trinity as Molnar contends. This restoration would assume the validity of the logic of this reduction of knowing to experience and of phenomenality to possibility (being), which we have already shown is flawed (IV, §1). What is required instead is a mode of relation by which we can be freed of the world-earth horizon. In fact, once we free the thought of God and of man from the logic of inherence (and thus of immanence and the a priori), Rahner's trinitarian axiom takes on a different character.

From the Distance of Inherence to the Distance of Liturgy

In order to transcend Heidegger's nontranscendable horizon of world-earth, I want to ground Rahner's axiom in Lacoste's understanding of liturgical existence. Lacoste shows that inherence need not be the absolute horizon of human dwelling. In a similar way to Marion's anamorphosis, what Lacoste calls liturgical existence does not insert God into the order of the world as its condition of existence. Rather, liturgy, as dwelling before God, gives its own horizon which is not of the world. One can, Lacoste argues, refuse to live according to the logic of inherence, the purely transcendental horizon of world-earth, and instead dwell as one who keeps vigil for the parousia of God. I would argue that Lacoste offers a more adequate response to Heidegger than Rahner precisely because he does not confuse God's distance with the distance of inherence.

For Lacoste, the relation of the ego and the Absolute must transcend not only the representational, objective model of epistemic experience and its horizon of consciousness. It must also transcend the much more complex horizon of world-earth as "the dual unfolding" of place.[68] Lacoste argues that liturgy — which he defines somewhat idiosyncratically and

[68] EA, 18.

broadly as "being before God" — cannot arise from world-earth, yet compels us "to think in terms of place."[69] "The logic of inherence is sufficiently rich for it both to confer on us the status of the not-at-home as well as to provide us with a mother earth. But neither in the unfolding of place as world nor as earth can liturgy be included in the topological."[70]

Two different modes of distance are coming into view. Both distances unfold from a mystery that opposes itself to the pure objectity and mathematical spatialization of Cartesian philosophy. In Heidegger, there is the distance of inherence within the gathering of the world (as the "fourfold"). It inscribes Dasein as that which arises within its horizon and which cannot escape this horizon precisely in its distance from it: the horizon infinitely recedes in distance precisely through showing itself as horizon and thus as the origin of presencing — incommensurable to Dasein itself but fixing Dasein in place. This distance operates as the condition of Dasein. Without the gathering of the world in distance, Dasein would not be. Lacoste sees that the co-originary status of the not-at-home (*Unheimlichkeit*) of world and the homecoming (*Heimkunft*) of earth are only given *possibilities* at the origin "more than a given *reality*."[71] World and earth contradict each other, one being as good as the other as a way of dwelling because they are opened by "the same field of possibility (location)" which "presides over the actual emergence of the contradiction."[72] The horizon of Being as the nontranscendable horizon means that the possible is the absolute consummation of this horizon because it is the condition on which Beingness—as dwelling upon the earth and the uncanniness of the world—depends: the possible is that which can appear in the distance of the world's gathering: the possibility of either world *or* earth. In short, existence's similitude to the a priori of possible modes of dwelling within the closure of world-earth manifests Being.[73]

[69] EA, 22.
[70] EA, 21.
[71] EA, 19.
[72] EA, 20.
[73] Jeffrey Bloechl argues that this is a somewhat simplistic reading of Heidegger that enables Lacoste to oppose the "violence" of the entrance of the Absolute to the static world-earth horizon, but ultimately the speed of the

Lacoste, however, proposes a radical alteration of inherence — indeed a refusal of inherence: a relation structured according to the distance of liturgy. Where the distance of inherence was the condition of possibility of the experience of either earth or world, the distance of liturgy is the distance that gathers in the *unconditioned* response to the Absolute. Although it is unconditioned, this response cannot be separated from the logic of place. Lacoste and Marion's critiques of Heidegger (through liturgy and anamorphosis respectively) depend on a radical reconfiguring of relation, of receptivity to the true, and of Truth itself, as an inherently topological manifestation. On the one hand, the Other (who is Truth and Goodness) must be beyond Being and its world, but, on the other hand, it must be given to the world. It is not beyond in the sense of a noumenal beyond just out of our grasp, the kind of boundary that Heidegger says Being, for one, is not. For Lacoste the encounter between man and God "in no way overlooks location."[74] Marion's understanding of anamorphosis is a topological understanding of the relation to the infinite inasmuch as transcendence is constituted as a change of position that alters the world, that is, inscribed in and as a topology. I argue it is through anamorphosis that we can best understand Lacoste's response to Heidegger. Experiencing world or earth is always already imposed upon us as a destiny where liturgical experience is established in deliberation, and "born of a decision we make."[75] What I would suggest is that Lacoste's argument that "it is perhaps by transgressing it that liturgy is integrated into topology" should be configured as the intellectual and affective response that is anamorphosis, a "taking the point of view" that is a change of place: transfiguration more than transcendence, but a transfiguration that, insofar as it brings about the new, must have a non-immanent origin — an origin in the Absolute.

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advent of the incommensurable (violent or gentle) is irrelevant. Jeffrey Bloechl, "Dialectical Approaches to Retrieving God after Heidegger: Premises and Consequences (Lacoste and Marion)," *Pacifica: Journal of the Melbourne College of Divinity*, 13.3, (2000): 291-93.

[74] EA, 21.

[75] EA, 22.

While the distance of inherence is the condition of Being, the distance of liturgy is unconditioned freedom. It exceeds Being's horizon, (the possible) itself. The one who dwells liturgically refuses to live as if world-earth were one's ultimate horizon. It thereby completely reorders sensuous existence. For liturgical dwelling to be radically free of the logic of inherence, it must alter the whole of the one who dwells liturgically so that she escapes determination by world-earth. This means that it cannot be equivalent to a merely autonomous choice to live otherwise, that is, a choice from within the a priori, a simple refusal towards what is. One only escapes determination by world-earth if one responds to one who is radically, intimately other.

Heidegger's "originary" is the worldly horizon. It remains within the being-possibility correlation insofar as Dasein still "shepherds being."[76] Lacoste offers a much more radical origin, which is not worldly, but paradisal, like that of Nicholas of Cusa, who writes, "I have discovered that the place where you are found unveiled is girded about with the coincidence of contradictories. This is the wall of paradise, and it is there in paradise that you reside. The wall's gate is guarded by the highest spirit of reason, and unless it is overpowered, the way in will not lie open."[77] The merely comparative relation of inherence in which the worldly horizon both escapes and determines our finitude as its condition must be "overcome" through the superlative relation of the coincidence of opposites that leads into paradise. The paradisal gives its own topology. In this way any Cartesian spatialization leftover in Heidegger is transected by "the other side" of non-contradiction.

Liturgical dwelling as an anamorphic dwelling in place that transcends inherence reframes how we think the relation of God to the human being. It questions the very framework from which the debate on the *analogia entis* arises. Liturgy no longer presumes inherence as its horizon, for inherence as an absolute horizon presupposes the principle of immanence and

[76] Heidegger, *Brief über den Humanismus*, in GA, 9:323, 9:330; and Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 245.
[77] Cusa, *De visione Dei*, 9, 37, 7-10.

the a priori conditions of experience as starting point of all rationality. Thus the traditional debate has been framed within a relation of inherence and its horizon of necessity. If in Barth, for instance, we find a reaction to the liberal reduction of God to the a priori, still he by no means surpasses this reduction. Barth sets God apart as the wholly other while still presupposing the Kantian limits on phenomenality for philosophy (poor and common law phenomena being the only options, of which God has no part). He places any reception of God and any theological account outside of the realm of human rationality precisely because he assumes the same Kantian impoverishment of the human capacity for what is beyond it. In Rahner, God is brought into the realm of rationality again, but only to equate him with the mystery (horizon) of inherence and thus with the experience of the self in the world that is without real intimacy, which is dissolved into interiority. Heidegger's analysis shows that the horizon in which analogy takes place can be read—perhaps *should* be read—as an essentially atheistic horizon. We move towards an a priori horizon as our term, and though we are not identical to it, but dwell within it in distance, still it determines everything about us. Rahner does not withstand the Heideggerian challenge to religious experience in a rigorous way. On this matter, Lacoste has been a more significant thinker.

Lacoste and Marion both work to reframe the debate on analogy by challenging the limits of phenomenality imposed by metaphysics. Their work shows how the coming of the wholly Other is indeed rational though it is not determined by a priori mathematical reason. Without God possessing a reason of his own, we cannot resist abolishing the absolute difference of the creature and creator, whether in the tendency to erase the human in the face of divine omnipotence (the all-God of Barth) or the temptation to so exalt the human in its worldly-necessary mode so as to equate God with the self's experience of its horizon. Lacoste's concept of liturgical existence fits Marion's description of a relation in us that always

remains impossible for us. This relation is not abstract, but is deeply topological, taking a form through anamorphosis.

I have thus analyzed two different theological responses to Heidegger's atheistic horizon. One response to Heidegger is that of Lacoste and Marion who question whether this horizon of Being (the gathering of world-earth) remains nontranscendable when our concept of transcendence is altered through a hyperbolic, unconditioned concept of relation as an altering of one's position and one's approach. Rahner offers a different way of responding to Heidegger. He questions the legitimacy of Being towards the mystery of the Nothing, and replaces it with Being towards the mystery of God. In other words, he challenges Heidegger's conclusion that the phenomenality of inherence is indeed directed towards the Nothing, and insists instead that, given the same experience of inherence, what we are *really* experiencing is God. It is not world-earth that fixes our finitude, but God. Rahner's God arises within the transcendental horizon of inherence: experience of the mystery/givenness of the horizon is the experience of God. These possibilities correspond to the ego as it experiences itself. Lacoste and Marion, by contrast, develop a nontranscendental relation, not built on *adequatio* between perceiver and perceived, but upon the anamorphosis of liturgical dwelling.

The problem with Rahner's position, outlined above, is twofold. First, it does not allow the real analogical interval of creation *ex nihilo*, but instead posits that the person's openness to God is equivalent to God being an a priori possibility of experience—i.e., life as being-at-home on the earth or not-being-at-home in the world. Second, it is grounded in a phenomenological confusion between the distance of inherence and the distance of God. What Heidegger develops as the distance of inherence, Rahner simply replaces with the distance of God, a sort of demythologizing of atheism. Rahner's trinitarian axiom as he develops it within this framework and the world-earth horizon is ultimately incoherent because the transcendental conditions make the immanent Trinity historical and conditioned in the vice versa. In short,

God must meet these conditions of possibility (the a priori capacity of the ego) in order to appear within such a horizon. And he always already does so as soon as and to the degree that we are fixed in world-earth. As such by definition he can never appear as God but only as a dependent necessary being, condition of Dasein's appearance and conditioned by it.

This is precisely why Heidegger's atheistic reading of inherence is so decisive. Reading Rahner with respect to Heidegger shows that while Molnar's critique of the transcendental basis of Rahner's axiom is indeed correct, Molnar's conclusion that he has shown the axiom itself to be inconsistent with God's freedom does not follow. If we deconstruct the transcendental category of "experience," we do not have to reject the axiom. What is required instead is to rethink the belonging together of God and the human person without a reduction to the a priori or the conditional. Indeed it is the non-adequation of the Trinity to consciousness that frees God from transcendental conditionality and thus from history, but it could be a non-adequation by means of excess rather than by reserve. Instead of appropriating the axiom to the immanence of experience, we might still look at the Trinity according to its own phenomenality and thus according to givenness, for which we do not require any recourse to possibility and "being in general." For if the reduction to givenness lets things reveal themselves from themselves, this reduction is the proper mode in which to think God giving himself in his divine freedom. If, for transcendental method, it is impossible to think of God's action in the world while maintaining his absolute otherness (since a similitude of the world to the economic action always intervenes for the sake of both knowledge and being), the reduction to givenness allows us to maintain the otherness of the absolute. In this reduction the given gives itself in nonsimilitude rather than adequation—otherwise it loses its status as a given. In this way, I am simply repeating the reduction of Husserl's correlation to the flesh that I conducted in the last chapter. Increasing the intimacy of the relation is what overcomes determination by the relation.

Rahner's Axiom Without the Transcendental Horizon

Where the doctrine of the immanent Trinity maintained God's freedom by means of the negative definition of incomprehensibility, givenness maintains it by the positive pleroma of the divine aseity which requires and requests human aseity. The immanent Trinity establishes divine transcendence on the same basis that Rahner establishes its absolute presence. Rahner is a transitional thinker on this issue. While he strove to overcome a notion of transcendence as the negative limit of human apprehension of God, his methodological assumptions overturned the radicality of his axiom. The way to move forward from Rahner is neither by the reassertion of the immanent Trinity (Molnar) nor by the idolatrous identification of God with the experience of the self and the world. The way forward that I am proposing is to understand the axiom within a topological grammar of the call as it reveals itself in human response. If the economic Trinity is thought according to its own phenomenality rather than through the more subjective and purely immanent-historical category of "experience," Rahner's axiom would not reduce God to history since it would not produce a system or require an epistemological structure of possibility as its starting point. In short, if human response is thought topologically by anamorphosis, God cannot be dissolved into the self or vice versa.

Rahner's axiom only coheres so long as it no longer implies a reduction to consciousness. Only if the Trinity gives the one who receives it at the same time as it gives itself is God's freedom saved from determination by consciousness without employing negative incomprehensibility to do so. In other words, God must be received in anamorphic response. The trinitarian axiom therefore requires the conversion of the subject into the gifted. The incoherencies of transcendental subjectivity, Marion believes, are resolved not by merely inverting the dualism of subject-object in order to turn the I into a known, objective me, but in the originary affectivity where "[t]he *ego* keeps, indeed, all the privileges of subjectivity, save

the transcendental claim to origin."[78] Marion's critique of Kant here implies a critique of Rahner. Rahner's understanding of the transcendental horizon at least at one point anticipates Marion's development of the receiver and *l'adonné*:

> The transcendental horizon is, on the one hand, the subjective possibility for the individual object to show itself at all; it is, as it were, the system of co-ordinates within which the classified object is given its place and which makes it comprehensible. On the other hand, the transcendental horizon is that which is itself given only in the encounter with the object of a concretely historical experience.[79]

Like the gifted for Marion, the transcendental horizon is only given in the reception of what it receives. But here Rahner is simply marking the adequation of possibility (the transcendental horizon is the logically possible) to being ("the object of a concretely historical experience"). Rahner signals a certain givenness only to establish the a priori itself before the given. He establishes the a priori as an adequate system of coordinates in which to frame the received. This is no less the case for God than for other objects of experience. No [im-]possibilities can arise in this scheme. Yet the very fact that this transcendental horizon is *given* calls into question its originary status, or rather its status as transcendental. Why can't other givens also be given just as freely as this horizon? Rahner also says that while, on the one hand, revelation is only possible if the receiver offers an a priori horizon in which it might be received, on the other, "only if this horizon is absolutely unlimited will no law or restriction be imposed from the start on what can be revealed."[80]

These pious sentiments are hardly enough to free Rahner from the critique that Marion levels against the Kantian transcendental ego. Marion insists that the one who says "I" cannot be transcendental since only affection gives the irreducibly first person perspective.[81] Thus his essential questioning of Kant: "is it self-evident that the necessary link between every repre-

[78] IE, 45; DS, 54.
[79] "Reflections on the Unity of Love of Neighbor and the Love of God," *Theological Investigations* 6.16, (London: Daron, Longman, and Todd, 1969), 237.
[80] Hearer of the Word, 53.
[81] Marion's critique (BG 248-262) is in a long line of criticism's of Kant's transcendental ego starting with Kant's own students. See Manfred Frank, "Fragments of a History of the Theory of Self-Consciousness from Kant to Kierkegaard," *Critical Horizons* 5 (2004): 53-136.

sentation and that of the "I think"—what Kant calls accompaniment—is equivalent to the synthesis of the represented manifold (of the phenomenon) by the unity of the concept, therefore by the understanding and finally by the spontaneity of the I?"[82] Marion aims to take Kant beyond his own explicit thought by offering another possibility: "that the representation which accompanies all representation is not said in an "I think" (therefore in the spontaneity of the understanding), but in an "I feel" (in terms of the affection of sensibility)."[83] In Kant, for whom "intuition alone benefits from the privilege of givenness," the contradiction remains.[84] Intuition, even defined as "that representation which can be given prior to all thought" is yet subordinated to the originary synthetic unity of apperception.[85] Marion argues that Kant implicitly gives synthesis and spontaneity an originary character, and this is the only reason that, for Kant, "understanding precedes sensibility and the 'subject' obscures the receiver."[86] Freed from the illegitimately presumed originary status of conception, the I can be led back to its origin in the sensibility in which it receives itself at the same time as it receives what affects it (III, §3).

While the transcendental I cannot attain individuation and "unifies the manifold precisely because it remains an empty unity, orphan of all particularity,"[87] Marion suggests that Kant might be able to think the finitude and particularity of the subject inasmuch as

> he pairs the spontaneity of the "I think" with the receptivity of sensibility, while Husserl by contrast lets his transcendental I drift toward indefiniteness and abstraction because he always maintains the primacy of activity over and above passivity and the intentional aim over and above intuitive fulfillment.[88]

Husserl's I, in other words, remains abstract because nothing can mark it deeply enough to identify it where Kant's I at least receives the sensible even if not sensible itself. Husserl's

[82] BG, 250; ED, 345.
[83] BG, 250; ED, 345.
[84] BG, 250; ED, 346.
[85] BG, 250; ED, 346. Quotation is Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, §16 B, 131ff.
[86] BG, 251; ED, 346.
[87] BG, 252; ED, 348.
[88] BG, 254; ED, 350.

correlation makes the phenomenon real to the point of making the I an unreality. We can see the same fundamental problem in Rahner. Rahner's axiom, while making God real (because given, not reserved) makes the human being an unreality to the degree it would reduce God to history. This unreality of the one term easily and quickly inverts into the unreality of the other, by sheer force of a will unrestrained by the sensible weight of the real so that God becomes the self's production.

Marion argues that according to the transcendental horizon, I can only know myself in the same way as I know any other phenomenon, i.e., as an object. I appear "like any other phenomenon" and like "in general an object for me." There are therefore no characteristics of a genuine subjectivity under the transcendental figure of the ego, which at best determines a *me* according to the same determinations of any other object. Kant recognized that "from *his* "I think" we can derive neither personality nor simplicity (nor individuality either)" and so Marion argues for "the radical impotence of all phenomenality of the object to make some sort of 'subject' appear."[89] In short, the reduction to immanence, which can only see whatever fits its a priori conditions of possibility, produces objects and fails to fix a subject. The problem with any attempt at creating a subject within this frame of adequation to the a priori is that, rather than pinning down a certain and stable I, a dialectic emerges that swings between the absolutely immanent will of the spontaneous and self-certifying ego and its inversion in the violently imposed heteronomy of ideology. Here the self's difference from the world is that of the a priori: an impersonal and abstract difference of a condition that finally erases the person for the sake of a bare will.

Even though Rahner asserts something close to Marion's understanding of the receiver, what Marion's analysis of Kant shows is that the receiver as such does not require the a priori synthesizing function of a transcendental I. This analysis therefore radically questions

[89] BG, 257; ED, 355.

the ground on which Rahner builds his theological anthropology and religious epistemology, i.e. the ego's a priori openness to God. That Rahner's axiom reduces God to history is an inevitable conclusion if it is interpreted within the same method that sees the correlation as idealist, and not led back to givenness. It presumes that Husserl's exclusion of the "in itself," would necessarily reduce the thing to consciousness and the a priori because the underlying logic remains that of the adequation of being to the conditions of possibility. The transcendental interpretation of Rahner sees the correlation of economic and immanent as abolishing the notion of the thing-in-itself and giving way to a totalizing gaze in the same way as Husserl's epistemological correlation.

As we have seen with Husserl, however, abolishing one side of a dualistic understanding of being and knowledge by means of a complete absorption of one into the other does not surpass the being-possibility dualism. In the transcendental interpretation, the ego remains divorced from its object as a transcendental condition of its appearing. The transcendental interpretation of Rahner's axiom ultimately does not pay any closer attention to how the Trinity actually manifests *itself*. This is because, according to the transcendental method, the Trinity must still correspond to the mind's a priori capacity as what determines all phenomenality. So if incomprehensibility is to be preserved within the transcendental interpretation, it is only as what the a priori mind cannot reach: the negative incomprehensibility of the thing-in-itself. Since the transcendental interpretation of the axiom does not allow the Trinity to manifest itself, but is determined by the a priori and emerges with history, critics like Molnar revert to the classical position of negative incomprehensibility.

Rahner's reduction of mystery (in its revealing) to the horizon of world-earth—in which he confuses the divine mystery with the distance of inherence — grounds his trinitarian axiom in the mystery of the world. The Trinity is reduced within a totality given as the ego's own infinite but closed horizon, that is, the horizon of being-in-the-world opened up by

Dasein. Does Rahner's axiom have to be grounded in an understanding of the mystery of God as inherence? Does the axiom become useless once his identification of God's mystery with the mystery of the world is shown to be idolatrous and all too human? Just as we grounded the phenomenological correlation without the principle of immanence, so the axiom would not reduce God to the historical when the principle of immanence is no longer presupposed. Based in originary contact and excess of intuition over the intentional aim, the axiom can only be understood from within the non-adequative reception of the appearing Trinity and not abstractly from without: only from within the economy of anamorphosis.

The Correlation and the Infinite

In order to avoid reducing God to history the axiom needs to be thought with an authentic phenomenality of infinitude. The axiom that the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity aims to overcome the definition of transcendence as what escapes our grasp, what is just out of reach and does not want to be known—what flies away like a gathering of fairies when some rough human stumbles upon the clearing. The transcendental interpretation can only think the finite infinitude of the world-earth horizon that infinitely recedes into distance. So long as God is received within an a priori horizon, the trinitarian axiom fails in its object to overcome the scission between the phenomenal thing and the thing-in-itself and to the contrary masters the thing in a phenomenal immanence: what is reduced and adequated to consciousness, seen beforehand, preserving, secretly, the polarity that sustains the pure immanence of consciousness-being. The impregnable thing-in-itself, though dismissed as a meaningless incomprehensibility, is nevertheless present as a shadow tailing whatever shows up as the comprehended and grasped thing: If the horizon of world is an infinite horizon, what distinguishes reception of the Trinity from experience of the world?

As Levinas already saw, the totality of world is not a sufficient horizon to account for a real relation with the Other. The infinitude of God would necessarily disrupt the world's order with its eschatological advent: "Eschatology institutes a relation with being *beyond the totality* or beyond history, and not with being beyond the past and the present…It is a relationship with *a surplus always exterior to the totality*, as though the objective totality did not fill out the true measure of being, as though another concept, the concept of *infinity*, were needed to express this transcendence with regard to totality, non-encompassable within a totality and as primordial totality."[90] Already for Levinas, the "beyond" is not the noumenal thing-in-itself, but the way the infinite indwells the finite: "This 'beyond' the totality and objective experience is, however, not to be described in a purely negative fashion. It is reflected *within* the totality, *within* experience"[91] [emphases are those of Levinas]. In his reading of Levinas, Derrida argue that the conditions of the possibility of receiving the other coincide with the conditions of the other's impossibility for me.[92] But this impossibility, as I am demonstrating, is an absolute disruption that nevertheless is received not passively, but as the absolute activity of anamorphosis. It is only in this total affection from another which coincides with the total act of the affected one that the infinite is received absolutely.

Such a paradoxical absolute activity/absolute passivity is true of the reception of the infinite because it must be received as a whole. Where the finite can be broken into parts and known in part, the infinite gives its whole self or it is not given at all. When considering the givenness of the infinite, the correlation would hold true while maintaining the "in-beyond" grammar: received perfectly yet without requiring a reduction to consciousness, thus to finitude and nonactivity. With respect to the infinite mystery that gives itself, there is always more to be received not because it was initially given incompletely, but because that which is received is immense. Yet at the same time, the whole thing is really and absolutely received.

[90] TI, 22-23.
[91] TI, 23.
[92] Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1978), 79-153.

Yet since the whole cannot be fathomed by the mind, the receiver only receives it to the measure of her own tolerance of this excessive plenitude. As the strength of the receiver increases, so the given increases also: "so much reduction, so much givenness."[93] The infinite is "beyond" not because it is transcendent (whether phenomenologically or metaphysically) but because it is infinitely given. This is a "beyond for me" because it is identical to the infinite "in me" of radical alterity, the "in" increasing with the ego's capacity to receive, but not to the diminishment of the beyond. The "beyond" increases in the same measure as the "in." The correlation of the economic Trinity to the immanent Trinity is absolute precisely because it is the infinite that is not only correlated to itself, but is itself absolutely correlated to the receiver in the act of reception. With respect to this perfect infinitude, the receiver undergoes anamorphosis, but "undergoes" it precisely as a free act. The affection of the trinitarian correlation gives the absolute correlation of the flesh. If the appearing and what appears remain perfectly correlated in the case of God, it is only because they do not reduce to consciousness, but rather reduce consciousness to a flesh that finds its identity in God. As with originary alterity, this identity is not an assimilation or ontological passivity because it expresses the correlation of affecting and affected (III, §3).

The affecting can be identical to the affected, and thus absolute because the union brought about by the givenness of the infinite is so intense that it brings about an identity without assimilation: the superlative "in" is received in the infinite difference between the terms. In the case of saturation, one always receives the whole self of the phenomenon, and it is precisely in the wholeness or indivisibility of what appears rather than in its adequation (to consciousness as the appearing term) that the correlative identity is accomplished.

This analysis implies a critique of Rahner's understanding of man's transcendental openness or a priori capacity for God. Yet it is a manner of critiquing transcendentalism that is

[93] RG, 203; RD, 303.

clearly not in the line of Barth's critique of "liberalism" and of the analogy of being. Barth's critique annihilates the place of any meaningful human action for the sake of a God who alone works all things. By contrast, the reason transcendental openness to God must be rejected is for the sake of thematizing real human action without which any attempt to protect God's otherness utterly fails. Real human action cannot be understood via an a priori receptivity, which would already determine what that human action is or should be and would thus nullify it as personal action. Real human action can only be understood through an anamorphosis in response to some fully saturated appearance and thus in the double agency of God and man. Only in this light does God's freedom from history truly emerge. In other words, God as God emerges at the same time as human freedom from a priori determination also emerges. Divine freedom is expressed in the very moment where human action is understood anamorphically, not according to fulfilling a preexistent possibility, an intrinsic openness. God is an intimate other more than he is an interior space.

A priori openness could not account for the dynamic nature of this correlation without abolishing one of the two terms into the relation itself. This is because the correlation in the transcendental horizon depends upon *adequation*, whereas the "absolute" of the correlation of the infinite to the gifted depends upon the *wholeness* of the reception of infinitude, a wholeness only manifested as the anamorphosis which is at once the free act of the finite being, and her total reconfiguration by the advent of God. Where theological liberalism was constrained by the presupposition that only that which is commensurate to the human mind is able to be received by it, the phenomenology of givenness ruptures this constraint. It does not reduce all reception to that of the object, the *ordo rationis*, and the univocal system of the a priori.

How Przywara overcomes Immanence

I now wish to ground Rahner's trinitarian axiom in a structure of reception drawn from Przywara's creaturely metaphysics, particularly his principle *Sosein in-über Dasein*, essence in-and-beyond existence. What the creaturely in-beyond does for Rahner's axiom is to offer a nontranscendental hermeneutic, providing an "in" that is not reducible to the kind of openness or possibility of the creature for God that determines God in advance, providing a "beyond" that is not a self-contained "immanent" God (transcendent according to metaphysics). The "in-beyond" is the dynamic transfiguring principle of the middle that, on the one hand, maintains at once God's freedom and proximity, and, on the other, posits the human being as at once wholly other than God, yet in a continually self-transformative journey into God who remains beyond her.

Przywara provides a way to think of the relation of consciousness to being that breaks out onto a third term in and beyond the world-consciousness dialectic. Przywara avoids the conceptual idolatry of totality because, though he wants to start with the broadest metaphysical categories, ontos and noesis, he does not correlate the one to the other in a perfect adequation, but instead thinks them as two starting points rhythmically oscillating, mutually supporting, and ultimately directed towards a telos (Truth, etc.) that lies beyond the correlation of ontos to noesis, and thus beyond the structuralism of idealist thought (existence moving towards essence) or the efficient causality of realism (essence moving towards existence).[94] Thus for Przywara, the two starting points of being and consciousness do not result in a closed system of duality, but break open towards the *philein* that is "ever new."[95] I want to use Przywara to correct Rahner, anachronistically, because Przywara's metaphysics offers something that Rahner misses and which can be appropriated into Marion's logic of iconicity, which ultimately is essential to my reading of Rahner's axiom.

[94] AE, §3, 132-154.
[95] AE, 324-328.

Przywara bases this "breaking out" of any totalizing system in three moments, which for him constitute Thomas's understanding of analogy. In the first moment, he sees that Thomas leans towards describing analogical relation in terms of a given natural order rather than in terms of an order restored by the redemptive action of Christ. This emphasis ensures that the *what* of the universe is as real as possible: the universe is an all in itself. In the second moment, Thomas says what seems to contradict what he says in the first: that, at this point, the universe is "fashioned by the grace of the intellect."[96] The *how* of form resides only in intellect as such. An ideative universe is opposed to the first moment's real universe. The universe, in the first moment, was opposed to the noetic act in order to "constitute itself in the noetic act formally and reflexively, in such a way that it appears as essentially a real universe."[97] So in the third moment, Thomas says that because the universe is fashioned by the intellect, it subsists in the order of Truth. The inwardness of the intellectual fashioning is thus refracted back outward towards the nonsolipsistic Truth in which "things" (ontic and noetic) subsist. This is not a reversion to the first moment's objectively real—as if brute fact were more real than truth—it is rather a springing forward towards the artifice which is both origin and end beyond world and intellect. While "spirit is turned towards the world inasmuch as the world is constituted 'as' world in the spirit,"[98] this suspendedness in Truth as its own order leads to the destruction of all relation in the mode of the *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*. Truth is situated in the analytic-synthetic activity of the intellect. The world (given natural order) is only world in the spirit (noetic order). So truth circles forward from a pure ideology of consciousness to the real beyond consciousness-world in the third moment, which, as Truth itself, is wholly other than mind and the a priori adequation of the first two orders, *rem et intellectus*. The objective world's "real as possible" is not only the "as real as possible" of the first moment but also "the real as the possible" where the real of the first moment is already

[96] *"sua abstractione intellectus facit istam unitatem universalem"* (De anim. a. 3, ad 8), AE, §7.6, 272.
[97] AE, §7.6, 272.
[98] AE, §7.6, 272.

merging into the noetic second moment by means of the *adequatio* to the possible and away from the real. But the third moment disrupts this enclosure, making Truth itself a transfigurative Truth that we participate in but cannot determine beforehand by possibility nor do we merge into it through an adequative union. The third order, in Przywara's interpretation of Aquinas, breaks out of the idealist a priori totality not towards a posteriori knowledge of the objective world, but towards active participation in the beyond. Przywara wants to show that "every closed system of mutual relatedness is exploded by an '*above-and-beyond*.'"[99] Thus relation to God (as Truth itself) is only consummated in the third moment, which is not given as a correspondence.

I would argue that Przywara's model sheds some light on how to understand Marion's "intimate alterity." It is an interiority that is primarily but not wholly idealist. It is nonobjective yet it is not without realism because it is an intimate *other* (not a universal, a genus, or a possibility). Neither the first order ontic world nor second order noetic possibility, intimate alterity circles forward to the third order, towards the impossible-in-the-world. I would then describe the impossible as the exteriority, the realogy of the other in me. It is primarily realist but not wholly. The other in me is not a predictable thing appropriated to myself. Its manifestation involves active hermeneutical receptivity. It is not merely the possible made actual (the correlation of the first two orders). Intimate alterity must be hermeneutically received precisely because it is unconditioned and nonadequative, exploding objective space. That intimate alterity is both realist teleologically (towards a real end) and hermeneutical originarily (given in an active receptivity) means that it gives both itself and the receiver who receives it. I find my end (and myself) in the other insofar as I let her give herself to me (Chapter III).

[99] AE, §7.6, 287.

In a lecture entitled "Givenness and Hermeneutics," Marion argues that without reception being hermeneutical, givenness would dissolve into the purely realist horizon of the world of objects:

> …givenness and the *es gibt* disappear when they are devaluated into a pure and simple production of things (that is, of objects already constituted and with unequivocal meaning) and it is on this condition that they probably prohibit an opening toward an interpretation. But this condition of prohibiting hermeneutics exactly coincides with the time of the *disappearance* of givenness, and not at all with its *appearance.*[100]

Marion is particularly arguing against accusations of a naive realism. The givenness of the third order is not about letting an *object* give itself for it also gives the one who receives it. It appears only as response to what is given from all eternity. It is impossible because not determined by space-time. Reception's hermeneutical requirement prohibits a complete adequation of the given to possibility, and breaks out towards the third order of Truth as a desired telos, for hermeneutics is the anamorphic reception. The infinite gap between the Truth and the world-mind correlation would require not only hermeneutical response (the *negativum* of response converted into the *positivum* of action) but also radical generation, born indeed from attentiveness (to the otherness of the other), but expressed radically as the *positivum* of action welling up from the abyss of the [im-]possible. What I want to designate as "transcendence" in this case is precisely and only the absolute future: that which is not possible now, but becomes actual through and beyond responsal, kenotic, self-giving action. Again, this is precisely not by means of the active spontaneity of the a priori ego imposing its will on the world and determining it according to its own possibilities. Rather it is born out of a commitment to the Good (Truth, Beauty), an unconditional assent to the unconditioned.

[100] GH, 25. Marion is responding to criticism such as those of Jean Greisch: "L'herméneutique dans la 'phénoménologie comme telle': Trois questions à propos de Réduction et Donation," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 96.1 (1991). And Jean Grondin, "La phénoménologie sans herméneutique" in *L' herméneutique de la pensée contemporaine*, (Paris: J. Vrin, 1993). For a more thorough engagement of Marion's thought with hermeneutics see Shane Mackinlay, *Interpreting Excess: Jean-Luc Marion, Saturated Phenomena, and Hermeneutics*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.

Przywara aims to develop a doctrine of analogy as a formal relation of creation. But his analysis of Augustinian analogy has obvious similarities to Lacoste's analysis of the vigil of liturgical dwelling. For Przywara, "the word that best captures Augustinianism is 'night'…in all its ambiguity: the dusk and the dawn of the day: between evening and morning."[101] Przywara's sense of the night has two aspects: vigilance and paradox. This night is the "night following upon Good Friday: the immersion in the absurdity—the 'non-sense'—of a God put to death by His creation. But at the same time it anticipates the "super-sense" of Easter, "creation redeemed and brought into God by the death of God." The paradox, "non-sense" as "super-sense," is thus revealed through vigilance, which is at once "the acutest consciousness of the abysses that have been torn open" (a real night of living the absence of Holy Saturday) and an anticipation that, as hope, already has what it looks for: "the night that is already day." [102] The paradox is revealed *as* vigil and the vigilance is what breaks through to the paradoxical presence.

> It is the night in which the abyss of the creature (*quid est profundis hoc abysso?*) and the groundlessness of God (*ut inventus quaerentur, immensus est*) are unfathomably one. The word "night" thus indicates that the Augustinian analogy breaks through in both a downward and an upward direction: downward into the abyss of the creaturely, which—beyond an "ever greater dissimilarity"—is almost a "contradiction"; and upward into the immeasurability of God's incomprehensibility, into which the creature is enraptured, such that — beyond even the "so great a similarity" of "exemplarity," one must almost speak of a "cessation into God." It is the mystery of Augustine's favorite phrase from the Psalms: ***adhaerere Deo.*** "To be suspended *in* God" means that the one who is suspended has only an "abyss of emptiness" beneath him. But then it means that for just this reason he is completely surrendered to Him "in" whom he is suspended. The ground whereon he stands is none other than that "wherein" he is suspended: he "stands" "beyond himself." …[I]t is precisely in this "sinking into the groundless" that a "180 degree turn" is made. For what is decisive is that the night of "godforsakenness" is the night in which "God is all in all."[103]

This "godforsakeness" as "God all in all" is not a mere paradox of language. It is existential reality at its limit where hyperbolic relation manifests as nonrelation. To take vigil for the

[101] AE, §7.5, 268.
[102] AE, §7.5, 268.
[103] AE, §7.5, 268-270.

parousia of the God who "is not" but for whom we wait is to take the perspective of God, not by taking his point of view from his side, but by dwelling liturgically in the night of nonrelation.

Przywara's creaturely metaphysics as the grammar of Rahner's principle

If we read him through Marion, Przywara's adequation of knowing and being is broadened to the correlation of reduction and givenness. Przywara's philosophy still operates as a transcendental system, but this broadening puts the receiver in play through the reduction to givenness. Thus, it immediately breaks apart any being-possibility adequation. Indeed, anyone who has read Przywara will know that Przywara himself leaves no totalities intact. But it is clearer and perhaps ultimately less destructive if we think Przywara's principle broadened with respect to Marion. One might even inscribe Marion's terminology within an originally Przywarian formula in order to make this broadening more clear. Przywara's original formulation is as follows: "The epistemology that this method in practice employs is one that presumes a complete adequation between knowledge and being: so complete, in fact, that knowledge is nothing other than being brought to expression."[104] I would modify it in this way: "The epistemology this method employs presumes an absolute correlation between reduction and givenness, so absolute that reduction is nothing other than givenness brought to manifestation."

Marion's terminology both broadens and makes more precise Przywara's formula in a way Przywara in his time could not have done. First, being is broaden to givenness because a thing or event does not first have to be in order to be given. Knowing is not then bound to possibility, that is, to the mind's own horizon. Second, knowledge here falls under the method of "reduction," precisely. It is neither deduction nor inference, for it aims to go back to the thing itself, not to its causes nor to a proof of its being, but only its unconditioned self-

[104] AE, §1.3, 122.

givenness. Thus the receiver is also reduced in receiving the given. The relation to the third order towards which the taut middle springs up is not a relation via causality but mutual self-gift towards the other in hyperbolic relation. Only by means of the anamorphic reduction can knowledge be the given itself brought to manifestation. Third, we are speaking more precisely of an "absolute correlation" rather than a "complete adequation." The given does not have to be measured by or equal to the receiver, nor even be similar to the receiver in any way in order to be received. Nor does the receiver need to be similar to the given in order to manifest it. In fact its reception from itself (according to givenness) says precisely that its self-manifestation exceeds the receiver who manifests it. It exceeds to such an extent as to be wholly other, that is, to come from itself. To truly come from itself, it thus also must give the one who receives it by receiving oneself in it so that it is not predicted or foreseen by the receiver.

When it is God that is the given, the gift increases to the measure I am reduced. Because, for Marion's reduction, the correlation gives the one who receives it, the ego cannot determine being. Rather the infinitude of the given determines the ego. It is the very completeness of the correlation as a "taut middle" that breaks beyond mere adequation. Givenness increases as reduction increases. I would even want to say then that the crossing of its originary otherness and originary auto-affection that I analyzed in III, §3 corresponds to the suspended tension of Przywara's *Sosein in-über Dasein* which is given necessarily, if paradoxically, in the very affectivity of the flesh. The auto-affection of flesh expresses something like Przywara's essence-in-existence, ("my flesh allows itself to be affected without end by the things of the world; and it can do so only because it reveals itself to be affectable in itself, and thus affectable first off by itself and in itself").[105] The originary alterity of the flesh is equivalent to essence-beyond-existence, which is an essence only as much as, paradoxically, it

[105] EP, 13.

is not in fact me, nor is it other than me in such a way that it antagonizes me or does me violence. It is essence or gives essence precisely as much as it is personally related to me, as a beloved, and another flesh.

Coming before Montagnes's revisionary interpretation of Aquinas on analogy, Przywara still favors analogy of proportion, following the traditional (Cajetanian) interpretation. But givenness overrides the rhythmic back and forth between ontos and noesis of Przywara's proportional analogy with an analogy of reference (*attributionis*) expressed in the pleromatic self-givenness that reduces and disrupts the receiver. Yet this "reference" to the infinite maximum becomes an infinite minimum to the point that the image itself is free to such an extent that, like God, its action creates. For Przywara, "God's maximum proximity to the creaturely is the greatest liberation of the creaturely for active, free self-movement…At the greatest extent of its giving, it shares even its ability to give…even sharing its property of being 'the cause of all good.'"[106] Creative free action thus exceeds the directly referential relation to such a degree that it makes the indirect relation of proportion again decisive: as God creates, so man creates. The "nearest likeness" of man-the-image to Christ-the-true-image is a likeness so great that man, like God, is self-causing in the sense of a self-giving that alone makes a self appear. This minimum of reference to God shows itself as a maximum of proportionality: just as God creates new beings so man, the image, creates new energies and forms. It is a distance so great that it expresses a likeness (self-causing, aseity reflecting God's aseity) by means of utter non-likeness (*self*-causing): man as "a world (*minor mundus*) and as an All (*quodammodo omnia*)."[107] In other words, to be human is to be no longer determined by God, but to be in the mode of hyperbolic relation to God, thus related to him only in the economy of the image, which exceeds the economy of similitude.

[106] AE, §6.7, 230.
[107] AE, §7.6, 301.

If creation *ex nihilo* says that creation is not an emanation of God, there is no particularly human participation except as imaging God's very excess over relation which is his incomprehensibility in self-giving so that the giver entirely disappears: the capacity to create out of nothing. No doubt such an *ex nihilo* character of human creativity is radically unlike God's. For one thing, this creation actually coincides with who the ego is (though it is not a self-making), where for God, creation does not coincide with who he is since he is not other than himself. It is the kenotic self-givenness of the image that re-establishes the relation (always belatedly). Relation here is the yes-saying of the image's own capacity to create through self-giving (the immemorial newness of the creature which leaves its mark on the world and which mark, both here and in eternity, could not have been, had that creature, this human creature, not been). The way I am developing Przywara's metaphysics shows that relation is only completed and accomplished through human self-giving from herself. But because it is only accomplished in the *hyper* of the relation, this radical aseity does not preempt God's primacy and the primacy of grace as it would if relation were being thought according to a comparative and thus competitive logic. To be human rather than merely animal involves a pleromatic self-givenness so far as to create what was not possible— that is, to create in Przywara's words, echoing Paul, as "God's co-laborers" by which we fill up "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the church" (Col. 1:24).[108] Relation is only accomplished in an absolute self-giving in which I receive myself at the same time as I manifest the impossible.

Thus, in my reading, Przywara's rhythmic back and forth of the in-and-beyond is superseded by the "in" *as* "beyond" and vice versa. The interiority of God in the human person is revealed as the human person exceeding relation to God. Or, the intimacy of divinity is revealed as the "beyond" of doing the impossible. Or, intimate alterity is revealed as being so

[108] AE, §7.6, 294.

deeply affected as to be changed so radically that no cause intervenes. It is only anamorphosis that can describe this in-as-beyond. The "in" is that the change of location is wholly manifested as radical response to the other, so as to affect the I as a whole. The "beyond" is that it is a free action not determined by a priori relation even if the other always precedes by its excess and thereby affects the whole, again expressing the "beyond." Receiving is free self-giving.

That receiving is expressed as active and free self-giving and that this reduction increases givenness rather than completing any adequation is attested to by Jesus' exhortation in Luke 6:38 and the parallel account in Mark 4:24 and Matthew 7:2. I want to cite the Lukan text for the sake of the language of saturation it employs and its situation as an economy of the gift: "give and it will be given to you; good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back—δίδοτε, καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· μέτρον καλὸν πεπιεσμένον σεσαλευμένον ὑπερεκχυννόμενον δώσουσιν εἰς τὸν κόλπον ὑμῶν· ᾧ γὰρ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν." This language of oscillating, shaken together, vibrating, spilling out, pressed down, overflowing is the language of saturation. Here receiving back is not an accumulation of things, as if Jesus were talking about exchange, or the interest on an investment. Rather, it concerns the increased reception of the *mysterion* that expands the soul through the soul's own self-giving: the more one gives, the more is given back. The good measure given back will not only be measured by the measure with which you give, but is pressed down into that measure and still overflows it. To give saturates the giver as a gifted who receives both more of the gift and more of herself the more she gives. On the one hand, the gifted realizes her finitude through giving, which not only exhausts one possibility by converting it into actuality, but also chooses against all other possibles that could have been realized and therefore exhausts every possible not only the one actualized. On the other hand, in choosing against possibility and for a singleness of will—in which alone she can find a unified identity—there

emerges a perpetual overflowing of the impossible into the gifted: a received infinitude through choosing *against* infinite possibility and *for* the sole devotion that purges away all impersonal might-have-beens for the new-in-every-moment of the response to a call that does not exist among the world's impersonal possibilities. There is an excess of receiving by means of self-giving. The received gift is in excess precisely of the receiver's own self-giving since the received is infinite and the self-giving is finite. Giving alone could measure the receiving, except that the infinitude of the return gift overflows any measure. To give gives the ontological relation. What we receive (infinitude) is prior to the giving (finite) because it exceeds it in such a way as to expand and sanctify the human giver. Further, the measure that Christ speaks of is not something that determines in advance since it is a finite measure measuring the infinite return gift. Rather than the measure being something that adequates the received to the measure itself, the measure is a self-giving that expands as it receives. It receives infinitude fixing itself in its finitude. The measure is therefore measured by what it receives more than it measures it.

I will look at the Markan text to confirm and strengthen this reading: "Βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε. ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν καὶ προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν." In my translation: "See what you hear. In the measure you measure it will be measured to you, and more will advance towards you." The fact that one "sees" what one "hears" is usually obscured by translations that aim to lessen the paradox. The RSV translates it "take heed to what you hear." But to leave Βλέπετε as "see" opens up rich interpretative possibilities. The first and most obvious meaning is equivalent to the previous verse, "He who has ears to hear let him hear" (23). Even in this injunction, having ears to hear is not identical to *really hearing*. You must hear what you hear, that is, attend to it. One cannot just passively receive something audible in order to hear. Rather, one must convert the audible into a visible: to hear with attention so as to manifest. The injunction Βλέπετε τί ἀκούετε, thus concerns a phenomenolo-

gy: it is quite precisely about converting a logos into a phenomenon. Marion remarks on this verse (which he translates "Look after how you listen"[109]) that "comprehension, then, does not depend only on *what* one hears, but first of all on *the way in which* one listens to it." He claims that the correct mode of listening is in the "posture of the witness."[110] While this reading is not terribly original, it should be noted that he is not merely saying that one should listen to what one hears (with active hearing: "Pay attention!"). Instead one should "look after" *how* one listens to what one is already not just hearing, but listening. Marion's reading thus suggests that the text commands a hermeneutical listening involving the transformation of the whole self rather than a naive obedience to some predetermined content. It involves a transformed mode of listening as much as receiving a content.

I want to push beyond Marion's reading towards a second interpretation. It is not insignificant that the other passages (Luke and Matthew) speak of "the measure you measure will be measured to you" in the context of an injunction not to judge ("lest you be judged"). Apparently, Mark is doing something different since he does not link measuring to judging. I think Graham Ward is correct to see that Mark particularly wants to use the aphorism as a hermeneutical principle since it is not in the context of judging.[111] For Mark, the act of reading his gospel is a soteriological act, so long as one conforms oneself to its measure through the act of discerning interpretation. At the same time, however, it may be the case that in the injunction to "see what you hear," Mark is indeed saying something about judgment.

To illustrate what I mean, we will look at what Nicolas of Cusa understands in another context as the coincidence of seeing and hearing. In *De visione Dei*, Cusa describes the icon whose gaze follows a monk who gazes upon it as the monk moves back and forth in front of it. While the gaze seems to follow him exclusively, this all-seeing iconic gaze also follows at the same time another monk who is moving in the opposite direction. This monk also feels it

[109] The French of the Gifford Lectures hasn't been published.
[110] GR, 79.
[111] Graham Ward, "Christology and Mimesis," in *Christ and Culture*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

to be exclusively devoted to him. In order to know that the gaze also follows another monk, the first must hear what the second is telling him: that the all-seeing gaze is following him too. Thus what the second monk says about his experience of the icon also reveals the divine intention. The first monk thus "sees" the divine gaze in the other monk through hearing what he says—that he too reveals something of the divine perspective.[112] The phenomenon of a gaze manifested in two different places in two different persons at the same time can't enter into mathematical spatialization, for it breaks the rule of non-contradiction. The first monk can only know this coincidence of opposites by believing what he hears from the other, and "unless he believed, he would not apprehend that this was possible."[113] In this case, if to be before the icon (anamorphically, so that it sees you) is to take the divine perspective, one must further *hear* the other's voice in order to *see* that she is also seen by the divine gaze and thus that she also manifests the divine. Since this phenomenon contradicts analytic possibility, what one then "sees" through *hearing* the other manifests a given that is not possible.

What is given in this case contradicts the principle of non-contradiction by which being-possibility is manifested. In short, I only *see* the divine gaze as divine (i.e., contradicting possibility) by *hearing* the other and believing her. She becomes for me a theophany, precisely because her word is crossed by the Word and does not offer a merely worldly position. Thus I would argue that to see what you hear is precisely a claim about judgment. It means to recognize the iconic status of the other and of what she tells you such that in what you hear you might discern a phenomenon, that is, a theophany. This confirms that "the measure you measure" is a hermeneutical principle concerning how to judge the text as a life-giving text, as the Word of God that sees you and penetrates into the heart (to which only the impossible has any access) where it is capable of bearing fruit. What is being manifested is the body of Christ as a communion of wills, no perspective being reducible to any other, but no perspec-

[112] Hoff, 30-31.
[113] See Hoff, 30-31. *De visione Dei*, 3.

tive standing alone as a finite monad in the worldly horizon. In this way seeing what one hears entails being saturated with the impossible.

If the first interpretation involves active listening and interpreting and the second interpretation involves the way hermeneutical listening might convert the impossible into a manifestation, we can now outline a third interpretation. In a certain sense, this verse, 4:24, is the description of 4:22 from the side of conscious reception. In his Gifford lectures, Marion uses verse 22 to show that that which is hidden, the mystery, intrinsically and of itself advances towards revealing itself (and thereby becomes a phenomenon).[114] "For there is nothing hid, except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret, except to come to light—οὐ γάρ ἐστιν κρυπτὸν ἐὰν μὴ ἵνα φανερωθῇ, οὐδὲ ἐγένετο ἀπόκρυφον ἀλλ' ἵνα ἔλθῃ εἰς φανερόν." The measuring that increases as it measures describes the ever increasing manifestation of the mystery. While Luke describes the saturation of the relation of the measuring measurer to the immeasurable gift in terms of overflow, Mark describes it in the προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν of v. 24: "more will advance towards you." Here, the saturation of the gifted is explicitly about the gift's infinite approach, mirroring the advance of the mystery into phenomenality in verse 22. If 22 describes the objective economy of the *mysterion* (i.e., givenness), 24 shows that, despite its self-giving from itself, the mystery only manifests insofar as actively received through measuring (i.e., reduction). The self's measure, however, does not determine it since it continues to advance and overflow human measure. The hidden surplus keeps on manifesting the more one gains the capacity to receive it. Mark does not explicitly put this saying in the context of giving or judging, but solely in the context of phenomenality and hermeneutics.

It is only in the gift economy that relation is saturated. Receiving only overflows giving, not exchange. Without giving, there is no excess of receiving and indeed no relation. The "beyond," which is the excess of the return gift, simply *is* the excess of self-giving. The

[114] GR, 75ff.

"beyond" is the movement towards the surplus of what is already "in" but cannot be circumscribed. The "in" does not point to a beyond as a signifier of a signified points to some elsewhere. It enacts the "beyond" insofar as the "in" is "in" as an excess. For which reason the ego is transfigured in its contact with what is infinitely other than it. The correlation abolishes the iconoclastic impulse that leads us to attempt to get beyond a signifier to a signified. The "beyond" is not so much signified as dwelt in so that it stretches the one who receives it the more it is received. I argue that it is within this grammar that the reception of the Trinity can be thought in such a way that Rahner's trinitarian axiom does not reduce God to history.

The Trinitarian Dynamic of the Correlation

Marion distinguishes between Heidegger's understanding of truth as *aletheia* and his own understanding of truth as *apokalypsis*. Marion argues that in *aletheia* (truth as the disclosedness of Being[115]) the more the truth is revealed the more it is received. In *aletheia*, the truth becomes more universally accepted and acceptable the more we uncover it. In *apokalypsis*, by contrast, the more Truth is revealed, the more it becomes a stumbling block and a folly.[116] Where *aletheia* is universally persuasive in the possibilities it presents, *apokalypsis* provokes decision, not among possibilities, but in the face of the impossible. Not revealed except through the Son, God appears according to the iconic logic of *apokalypsis* in which the Father is forever approaching us in the person of the Son. To see Jesus as the Son is to see the Father, but because to see Jesus as the Son is to see him as the expiation for sin and its slavery to necessity, one must also confess oneself as a sinful one and thus be recognized by the Father as forgiven. One must decide to be for the impossible or against it. Between the revealing of the mysterion and its suppression, one must choose.[117]

[115] Heidegger first develops this concept of truth in *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (San Francisco: Harper, 1962), §44.
[116] GR, 64-68.
[117] GR, 30-60.

Marion's development of the economy of *apokalypsis* in his Gifford Lectures is one of the most interesting possibilities opened up by his reduction to givenness. As Marion describes it, *apokalypsis*, even though it indeed contrasts with *aletheia* as a mode of knowing, is not juxtaposed to reason. It does not repeat the old debate between reason as human knowledge and revelation as a divine self-revealing in which man is a passive spectator. In my view, Marion's analysis implies that the problem with *aletheia*, at least Heidegger's construal of it, is not that it is too human to provide access to God, but that it is in fact not human enough. *Aletheia* as the disclosure of being lacks access to interiority since it does not affect the ego, for Dasein is its shepherd. Thus Marion's phenomenology of *apokalypsis* would actually turn out to be quite radical—it is only in the economy of *apokalypsis* and not in *aletheia* that man's whole being is at stake, and which consequently alone reveals God in himself. Undoubtedly Marion never explicitly reads *apokalypsis* as particularly human, but within my reading of originary auto-affection as hyperbolic relation, it should be interpreted in this way. It would then to some degree converge with Heidegger rather than radically oppose his concept of truth (see V, §§6-7).

Mystery is embedded in the world, but it is not of the world, for it is given. It is not the case that the reason it is not to be understood as a reserved noumenon is that everything can be reduced to consciousness or experience. Rather its very self-manifestation is itself the mystery. That which is a *mysterion* is not the reserve behind givenness. Givenness itself is a *mysterion*. To dissolve the mystery is to block its manifestation, resolving it into an object. The Greek sense of a *mysterion* is not merely a cognitive category, but is substantially a *mysterion*, defined, according to Marion as "that which cannot, or rather *must* not be said, what must be *kept quiet*, what is known only by the initiates of a confraternity…" to which the biblical concept adds that "the *mysterion* comes from God and not from other initiates; God is in charge of uncovering it to whomever he wishes, and to whosoever can (and wills to)

receive it, in order that, as such, this *mysterion* can be 'made known to all nations' (Rom. 16:26)."[118] Since it is the mystery of the Kingdom of God that is approaching and "is near" (Lk. 21:31), the *mysterion* comes as an event: "That it comes near to all without all seeing it, expecting it, or, above all, willing it, confirms its phenomenal status: quite precisely, it is an event, or in other words, an unforeseeable, unrepeatable phenomenon, held to be impossible up until the very last minute and, once actual, it still remains impossible, in the sense that we are not successful in understanding it entirely as an object."[119]

The traditional way of making the distinction between immanent Trinity and economic Trinity presumes an access to the self-revealing God by means of *aletheia*. The concept of mystery held by Marion only permits an access to God by means of *apokalypsis*. The mystery positively gives itself and advances of itself towards manifestation. The concept of the thing-in-itself, like an impregnable keep holding at bay the onslaught of an enemy, was built to withstand the attacks of *aletheia* that would fully lay it bare and thus lay it waste. The mysterion that reveals itself according to *apokalypsis* does not build its incomprehensibility as a fortress—a mere noetic nullity or a nonsensible noumenon. It sends the incomprehensible forth as the infinitude of its gift.

> The *mysterion*, at once hidden and yet already indicated as able (and having) to be detected, does not constitute the opposite of the *apokalypsis*, nor the obstacle that would resist it; instead, it defines the background, the reserve of the unseen, the ground that is recognized after the fact and in contrast to that which cancels it, illuminates it, and consecrates it, the *apokalypsis* itself.[120]

This principle of manifestation is not merely an epistemology of revelation. It is an ontological principle that manifests the "new man" from his hiddenness with Christ in God: "no one yields himself to the manifest narrative if he cannot first be made manifest himself."[121] The economy of *apokalypsis* thus touches directly on the question of analogy. It should be seen as

[118] GR, 61.
[119] GR, 62.
[120] GR, 75.
[121] GR, 78.

a revision of the tradition of the analogy of being rather than a Barthian or nominalist critique of analogy. *Apokalypsis* manifests what is always already there as hidden: the mystery which is Christ in you, who himself "makes the *mysterion* of peace that he recapitulates entirely visible and manifest, for the first time, and once and for all (Rom. 6:10)."[122] But, at the same time, the logic by which the interiority of the Christ is received escapes the metaphysical figures of the analogy of being insofar as the intimate relation remains *impossible* even when it is realized.

Even though the secret of "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27) in some sense always already exists "from the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4) as "the mystery that was hidden throughout the ages" (Col. 1:26), there can be no predestination grounded in the relation (whether a universalist guaranteed relation or a Calvinist double predestination—guaranteed relation and guaranteed nonrelation). Hyperbolic relation cannot act as a ground that guarantees, for the relation emerges as free choice. Loving manifests. Hating suppresses to the point of rendering unintelligible: "he becomes all the *less* comprehensible for those who do not *want* and are not able to accept the radically new point of view that the uncovering of the *mysterion* imposes."[123] This impossible relation is only actualized in the body. It could not show itself among abstract a priori possibilities. The body is so much covering for what is really going on underneath. It is thus *only* actualized if an anamorphosis, a shifting of one's viewpoint, takes place. This movement of conversion literally *is* this absolute identity with Christ because the anamorphosis gives this identity *as* the soul's free self-movement towards its superlatively intimate other.

If the phenomenological program has always been to "come to the point where that which is phenomenalized does not repeat, or double the *in-itself* of the thing itself, but renders the thing manifest *as such, and completely,*" Marion asks "*what phenomenon* has ever,

[122] GR, 74.
[123] GR, 80.

without remainder and without reserve, respected the phenomenological program? What phenomenon has ever *accomplished* it 'to the end, *eis telos*'?" Only the phenomenon of the Christ who "loved his own until the end" (Jn. 13:1) "*shows itself absolutely* because he, and he alone, *gives himself absolutely.*"[124] If Christ alone manifests himself completely and to the end so as to complete, as it were, the phenomenological correlation, and if the given is only received through an irreducibly human, hermeneutical act that alone can manifest it as given, then I would argue it follows that it is indeed Christ's humanity and not his divinity in itself that perfects the phenomenological correlation without remainder. Thus it is humanity as such that completes the manifestation of divinity.

Now we can return to Rahner's axiom reframed within Marion's economy of the *apokalypsis* of the *mysterion*. *Mysterion* as *apokalypsis*, advancing into presence of itself, cannot reduce God to historical existence precisely because it does not come according to the rules of *aletheia*. It resists the reduction to the universally persuasive and thus determination in history by an ego. Again, this is not by reservation but because of the superlative interiority of the "in" such that it always remains "in" as "beyond." The economy of *apokalypsis* describes this "in" as "beyond" because it is expressed through the anamorphosis of the receiver who, in her very movement towards the *mysterion*, actualizes it as a phenomenon, a phenomenon which was impossible according to the universal rationality of *aletheia*.

The resistance of the immanent Trinity to manifestation just shows that givenness and appearance have been conflated. The logic of *aletheia* still holds sway. But if we replace the immanent Trinity with the *mysterion* as the "what" that is given and we think *apokalypsis* in place of the economic Trinity as the appearing of the immanent Trinity, then the two are bound in an absolute correlation according to the logic specific to *apokalypsis*. *Apokalypsis* is only received by a receiver anamorphically just as the Christ—who completes its logic as a

[124] GR, 77.

perfect trinitarian manifestation without remainder—though he was the form (*morphe*) of God does not reveal God by claiming equality as something to be grasped (adequation seized in *aletheia*). He instead follows the economy of the icon by taking the form (*morphe*) of a slave, born in the likeness (*homoiomati*) of men and recognized in the appearance (*schemati*) of man. He converted the *mysterion* that he heard into a manifestation, which is to say, he became obedient, having listen attentively, performed an anamorphosis of himself before the form, even unto death on a cross. But this absolute humility to the point of a death without glory coincides with God highly exalting him (Phil. 2:7-8). It is the descent into utter unlikeness to God that reveals Christ's divinity according to the iconic economy of anamorphosis, equality to God not by means of a common substance, but by radical self-gift.

We must reframe Rahner's axiom within the logic of *apokalypsis*. Instead of the immanent Trinity as the reserved thing-in-itself and the economic Trinity as the given and phenomenal thing, now the immanent Trinity corresponds to the horizon of givenness (*mysterion*) while the economic Trinity corresponds to phenomenality (*apokalypsis*). We have already seen that appearance does not always reduce to consciousness (the icon's counter-intentionality) or to history (the event) and that sometimes the given does not appear, but is nevertheless given. Sometimes this given without appearing transfigures the visible. One might then be able to imagine the Trinity according to its own givenness and the absolute nature of the correlation understood as the correlation of the self-manifestation to the self-givenness of the Trinity. The appearing of the economic Trinity is thus inseparable from reception of it while reception does not determine its givenness.

Conclusion

Rahner's axiom shows that the manifestation of the Trinity is a real indwelling of God himself in us. With Przywara's grammar now understood by the anamorphosis, the "beyond"

which identifies the immanent Trinity is marked by its affecting a change of position for the receiver via the "in" of the economy. Rahner's axiom then says that the "in" is the "beyond" and the "beyond" is the "in." This is because the relation is not one of similitude but of anamorphosis. The intimate is not God as an a priori possibility of subjectivity, but is itself the "impossible for us." It is the very interiority of the immanent Trinity in us that excludes similitude (a copy of the Trinity) to us. God's transcendence is not excluded, but rather is given only in the manifestation that is this radical intimacy. That the icon (Son) of the Invisible (Father) is *a se* as person means that humans as "in the icon" are also in some sense *a se*, self-given without implying autonomy. Rather self-givenness is only accomplished in relation. The active self-movement which is the relation guarantees, at the same time, an absence of a priori relation.

The "beyond" of God is the *plenum* of the infinite otherness of the Trinity. Its transcendence as the wholly Other is not that of one who keeps his metaphysical *an sich* to himself, but the transcendence of the overflowing of self-gift, transcendent by excess and thus not a transcendence opposed to immanence. As a result of its plenitude and the perfection of its self-giving, the "in" of the economic Trinity is so radically and perfectly interior to consciousness that the one who receives the economy interiorly also passes beyond it—in a way that mirrors God's passing beyond the receiver—to the point of its own free self-giving beyond God.

CHAPTER V

Intimate Alterity as Teleology Without Similitude

In the creation account of Genesis, each of the animals is said to be made "according to its kind." Man, however, is an exception. He is said to be made "in the image and likeness of God" (1:24-26). Marion argues from this text that, since man is not made according to kind, man is the animal that has no kind: man is the animal without essence, the animal that exceeds the horizon of Being. Marion turns to both Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa to authorize these claims. Gregory argues that the icon must resemble its archetype in every aspect, and therefore the human being must be incomprehensible as God is incomprehensible.

> The icon is perfectly an icon only so long as it is missing nothing of what is known in the archetype. Now, since incomprehensibility of essence (τὸ ακαταληπτὸν τῆς ουσὶα) is found in what we see in the divine nature, it must necessarily be that every [icon] keeps in it too a likeness with its archetype. For if one understood the nature of the icon, while that of the archetype transcended comprehension, the contrary character of what we see in them would betray the deficiency of the icon. But since the nature of our mind, which is according to the icon of the Creator, escapes knowledge, it keeps exactly its likeness with its lord by keeping the imprint of the incomprehensibility set by the unknown in it.[1]

Thus insofar as the icon has an essence, it is like God's essence, unknown and unknowable since, as Marion writes, "that which is fitting for God (of whom no name, no image, and no concept can claim comprehension) is also fitting for man."[2] It is Augustine's reading of Genesis that Marion draws on when he claims that, where the other animals are said to be made "according to their kind," ["secundum genus suum" or "secundum suam similitudinem"], in the case of man, the image and likeness of God replaces the genus. Man's incomprehensibility, his lack of definition, is the privilege of what it is to be made in God's image:

> [M]an constitutes a creature par excellence and even particularly excellent, precisely because he does not have a kind or species proper to him, therefore does not have a

[1] *On the Making of Man* XI, 3, PG 44, col 156b Quoted in SP, 259; ALS, 349.
[2] PU, 15.

> definition that would appropriate him to himself. Man is defined by the very fact that he remains without definition—the animal properly without property.[3]

Man exists as man neither according to his genus ("*secundum genus suum*"), nor as a being that is "like" himself ("*secundum suam similitudinem*").

Since man is not like himself nor made according to his own genus and since that which replaces the genus is the image of God who is neither a genus nor contained by one, man is removed from any correspondence to what adequates to a generic form or essence.

> It is not a matter of keeping or losing the image of God as a content (as if *created in the image of God* can count as a definition as categorical as *rational animal*, *animal endowed with language*, or *animal that laughs*), but of referring the image *toward* that *unto which* it is like…. It appears only as this movement *toward*, and only this *intentio ad* keeps a likeness. Man bears the image of God instead and in place of kind, species, or essence inasmuch as he resembles him. But he cannot except absurdly, pretend to resemble him as a visible image is like a visible model, indeed as an intelligible image is like an intelligible model…. It must be that man resembles God otherwise—which means both in another way and by remaining in alterity.[4]

Neither God nor the *imago* stands in as a new definition, but secures the freedom from any single definition, which in claiming a non-perspectival absolutism would immediately become totalitarian and bring about an end of man:

> …to claim to define what a man is leads to or at least opens the possibility of leading to the elimination of that which does not correspond to this definition. Every political proscription, every racial extermination, every ethnic cleansing, every determination of that which does not merit life—all of these rest upon a claim to define (scientifically or ideologically) the humanity of man; without this claimed guarantee, no one could put such political programs into motion. Even the worst of modern tyrants needs reasons and concepts…. Determining the humanity of man thus amounts to making an end of him.… For every definition imposes on the human being a finite essence, following from which it always becomes possible to delimit what deserves to remain human from what no longer does.[5]

Only this godlike incomprehensibility protects human beings from the control of political and ideological definitions. The image of God "holds the place…of any and every definition of man."[6]

[3] SP, 254; ALS, 344.
[4] SP, 255; ALS, 345-46.
[5] PU, 13-14.
[6] SP, 253; ALS, 344.

This sort of anti-essentialism can be seen as a refusal of conceptual rigor in favor of a mystical unknown, the kind of ineffability inserted to halt rational argumentation for the sake of a radical individualism. Incomprehensibility as a negation of any definition can leave us with a unsatisfactory apophaticism. This refusal of definition can be read as ensuring a purely negative sense of mystery or it can accomplish an absolute deconstruction of identity resulting in a formless and purposeless indefinability.[7] Marion and Nyssa's accounts of incomprehensibility seem to lack an embodied understanding of what incomprehensibility is. The thinking here can tend towards a quasi-nominalistic refusal of universals. Further, a purely negative and disembodied incomprehensibility fails to differentiate man from other incomprehensible, mysterious things in the same way that Rahner failed to distinguish the difference between the mystery of God and the mystery of the world, simply slipping in a content under an undifferentiated façade. In order to get beyond this pure negation that abandons man, unanchored, on the sea of limitless possibilities and pure indefinability, I will direct Marion's thesis away from the absence of a concept, towards an examination of what it is about the human that makes her give herself in such a way as to lack a genus, or perhaps exceed it.

I want to look at this incomprehensibility, like the incomprehensibility of God (Chapter IV) as a power, an excess of self-gift over any finite definition or negative limit. If God does not withdraw in such a way that his incomprehensibility is constituted as a negative limit on the noetic grasp, neither does he function as a negative limit on the possibilities of man. Now that we have a positive sense of God's incomprehensibility, we can apply this positive sense of incomprehensibility to the incomprehensibility of the image. If the image replaces the essence, we cannot say that the human's lack of essence means that she has no purpose. Lack of essence is not lack of direction. Therefore it is not a lack of reason. I want to show that

[7] In other words, Marion's incomprehensibility will appear quite differently than Derrida's sense of "indeterminate messianicity," which is also related to Derrida's own reading of Augustine and what he calls "circumfession." See John Caputo, "The Hyperbolization of Phenomenology: Two Possibilities for Religion in Recent Continental Philosophy," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, ed. Kevin Hart, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2007).

absence of essence is not a claim about a content or lack thereof. Rather it is a claim about relation and ways of relating. It has a positive, even saturated, content.

My way into explicating the phenomenon of the human as the animal without essence will be through a Freudian account of mindedness. In this light I will want to talk about the human as the minded animal to distinguish it from accounts of man as the rational animal, which I argue cannot give a full account of the phenomenon of man.

§1. The Icon of the Incomprehensible

Before I analyze the economy of the image, I want to look briefly at the phenomenological evidence Marion gives for the incomprehensibility of the human person in which the self finds itself to be intrinsically unknown to itself. For this phenomenology of the self, Marion stays with Augustine, in whom we can uncover two aspects of the self's phenomenalization as incomprehensible: originary forgetting and lack of control over one's own self.

Memoria as Mind: Incomprehensibility as Originary Forgetting

As is well known, when Augustine attends to his own mind, he finds he has no access to himself in the way that he has easy access to the world.[8] By thinking himself, he does not find answers, but becomes "a huge question to himself" ("*Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio*").[9] It is not a matter of discovering that the mind is deep, affective, and complex in contrast to a relatively simple and rationalistic concept of mind. He is not plunging into the depths of the mind. Existential depth is not enough to reach the "huge question" of the self. The "huge question" is a matter of coming up against the unknowable as such:

> Man's ignorance of himself cannot be overcome by a more exact investigation or by a more profound interiority. The more the certainty of existence permits the mind to en-

[8] For a more detailed account of Augustine on the self and on *memoria*, see Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[9] *Confessions* IV, 4, 9 also X, 33, 50.

> ter into its being, the more the endless traversing of this field leaves it inaccessible to itself, impenetrable, like an abyss: "Grande profundum est ipse homo."[10]

The existent self has no access to any essential self whatsoever. For Augustine, the play between the existent self and its unknowable interior becomes absolute.

Marion notes that, for Augustine, *memoria* constitutes the mind itself – "*animus est ipsa memoria*."[11] *Memoria* does not designate a faculty of mind, but "I am identically my memory."[12] *Memoria* precedes and exceeds consciousness and does not fall under the categories with reference to consciousness: either the subconscious or the unconscious. Here memory does not refer to the memory of something past, but the memory of the immemorial, that which was never present: "I have kept in memory the image of the forgotten, but not that which I have forgotten; and I can only conclude from this that my memory, my very inner being, escapes me." *Memoria* cannot refer to "that of which I can no longer have any consciousness, therefore to the unconscious" because "the concept of the 'unconscious' presupposes that of 'consciousness,' which can itself appear only on the basis of Descartes's *ego ille*, therefore in strict contradiction with what Saint Augustine thinks with the term *ego* (or *mens*)."[13] The principle from which mind as *memoria* arises is the immemorial.

The existence of my mind, "imposed incontestably," keeps my own nature radically inaccessible to me because of its infinite profundity and its exteriority to the ego:

> Great is this power of memory, my God, a vast and infinite secret chamber…. And myself I do not grasp all that I am. My mind is not of sufficient scope to possess itself, and so where is that which it does not grasp of [its] self? Or else [is this place found] outside itself and not in it?[14]

Finally then memory as mind means that it "encompasses infinitely more than what my *cogitatio* can conceive" and, most significantly and paradoxically, "it ends up finally by *not*

[10] SP, 66-67; ALS, 105.
[11] SP, 69; ALS, 108. *Confessions* X, 14, 21.
[12] SP 69, ALS, 108.
[13] SP 78; ALS, 120.
[14] Confessions X, 8, 15, 14, 166; SP, 70; ALS, 109.

remembering itself."[15] Oblivion is the immemorable par excellence, which "keeps the memory of that which it cannot by definition remember."[16] That we have forgotten the very forgetting shows that it was never a phenomenon of consciousness. If we knew that we forgot (as we remember that we have forgotten a name) then it would not be an immemorial forgetting. Unknowing is sealed within an inaccessible past.

If *animus est ipsa memoria*, and my soul is my flesh (Chapter III), we can conclude that *My flesh is itself my memory*. Both flesh and *memoria* give the self in such a way as to obscure access to it, such that it only has access to objects of the world: "Like the body (in fact here the flesh), *memoria* subverts the ego and strips it of access to itself (and to the *self*), alienates it essentially from its essence."[17] To be flesh is to be *memoria* in such a way as to have immemorially forgotten oneself. Thus, as Plato says, crossing the Lethe into this world is to be embodied by forgetting, to body forth as the trace of the immemorial.[18] The flesh is the Lethe, that river that flows out of the immemorial past and gives us body as an original forgetting. Embodiment as flesh is to dwell within the immemorial. "*Memoria* passes beyond the reach of the cogitatio because, like the originary impression of time, it precedes it and makes it possible—not just *like* the originary impression since it operates precisely *in the role of* originary impression: that from which come the ego and its *cogitatio*, in an originary and radical passivity."[19] The soul-body composite is the memory of what never had any presence, of a past that was never present and is therefore strictly immemorial. The mind, or *mens*, gives itself as the relation of *memoria* to what is strictly immemorial, not merely deep but the inaccessible other side of spatiotemporal existence. The immemorial is forgotten without leaving any trace of the forgetting, that is any knowledge that one has forgotten. The forget-

[15] SP, 70; ALS, 109.
[16] SP, 78; ALS,120.
[17] SP, 74; ALS, 114-15.
[18] On this see Chretién, *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped For.* Trans. Jeffrey Bloechl. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 33-34.
[19] SP, 77; ALS, 118.

ting of forgetting is inscribed in time as the flesh. Precisely because the flesh is constituted as a memory, there must be something anterior to the self in order for the flesh to be given as a memory. But this anteriority is not given to presence, and is not in time. It is therefore more anterior than the mind's depths. The most interior thereby breaks open to the most exterior, most inaccessible to the mind that has no problems grasping worldly exteriors, but fails to capture this interior alterity, even to the point that "I become for myself the very place of my exile outside myself, since the most intimate in me, *memoria*…bears on the memory of what was never present nor represented to me—the immemorial."[20]

That the self is identical to *memoria* means that the ego has no conceptual knowledge of itself:

> *Memoria*, such as Saint Augustine develops it to its extreme, no longer concerns what was present to my mind in the past and could become so again in the future—in the literal sense, the *re*-presentable as re-*presentable*—but what in me remains inaccessible to me and uncontrollable by me (what I forgot, my forgetting of what I forgot, and even my forgetting of this forgetting itself), and which, despite or *because* of this, governs me through and through. It is indeed a matter of this: without *memoria* I am not, but with it, which by definition I do not comprehend, I do not comprehend myself—I have no presence to myself, and I forget *myself*.[21]

Marion concludes that if the noetic order of the mind can't comprehend its ownmost (*memoria*), consciousness would have to exceed the mind's immanent rationality in order to think itself.[22] "*Memoria* opens me onto an immemorial that I cannot, by definition, rejoin but one without which I will never be myself. The sole path from self (existence) to self (essence) would consist, for the *mens*, in rejoining the immemorial by a thought that itself transcends itself."[23] Thus the human is incomprehensible because it only arises as the memory of what by definition cannot be comprehended, exiling itself from its principle. This exile from the origin by means of embodiment as *memoria*, which is the forgetting of forgetting, is one aspect by

[20] SP, 79; ALS, 121.
[21] SP, 78; ALS, 121.
[22] "[I]f *memoria*, which contains the secret of my mind (*abditum mentis*), goes beyond what my *cogitatio* and my *mens* comprehend, then I will have to think beyond my own thought if I ever want to think myself." SP, 80; ALS, 123.
[23] SP, 82; ALS, 125.

which to think man's incomprehensibility and will help us to think the meaning of the absence of genus.

Hoc Monstrum: Incomprehensibility as Lack of Control of the Self

The second aspect of man's incomprehensibility that Marion develops from Augustine is the ego's incapacity to take itself in hand. "I become a question for myself, indeed an aporia for myself, because I discover that I cannot order my own prayer and thus my own perception correctly, which is to say, voluntarily; if my own prayer and perception, which define my innermost depths, escape my control, then they make me become a question to myself."[24] Why can't the I that I am order the things that I do? The very desire to control the self erupts in the incomprehensibility of a self now split between thinking or willing ego and rebellious acting *monstrum*. The mind will not obey itself, cannot go back to its origin to control its desire or know itself masterfully because the flow away from the self towards the world is too powerful. *Memoria* is the place from which desire flows. The rush of desire overwhelms the conscious self. It is overwhelmed not merely with subconscious desire, but with desire for an immemorial immanent to the phenomenon itself.

If originary forgetting shows that the ego cannot *know* itself, its incapacity to control its own desire demonstrates that the self cannot *be* itself. The possibility of self-reflection, or objectifying of one's own self, inscribes an alienation of the self from its own being. What we examine when we examine the self is not an *I* at all, but a *me*, the object of its own gaze, while the being of the self remains elsewhere: "The mind gives a command to the body and the body obeys immediately. The mind commands itself and there is resistance…. The mind commands the mind to will and there is no other but it itself, and yet it resists. Whence this monster?"[25] Insofar as this lack of control erupts in its own phenomenon "*hoc monstrum*"

[24] PU, 6.
[25] *Confessions*, VII, 9, 21; SP 65; ALS, 103.

(literally a showing, thus a phenomenon), it contains the seed of what I want to develop as the uniquely human incomprehensibility and the way in which we can talk about man as the animal without essence. What is this *monstrum* monstrating? In both cases, incomprehensibility is expressed positively, not as inscrutable depths, but as a phenomenon: first, the bodying forth of the immemorial as *memoria*; and, second, the incomprehensibility of a split phenomenon in which mind cannot take itself in hand and cannot adequate to its own being.

§2. The Genus, the Image, and Teleology

What does originary forgetting (flesh as *memoria*) and the mind's lack of capacity to take itself in hand have to do with absence of either genus or essence? In order to answer this question, my argument will involve two stages. First, we must broaden our understanding of what a genus or essence is beyond the merely superficial placeholder it appears to be. In this regard I will invoke Aristotle's notion of final causality. I will show that the image replacing the genus in man is not a purely negative claim about indefinability, but is in fact a radical and positive teleological claim. Second, I will employ Freud's concept of mind, which enables us to arrive at a deeper understanding of the Augustinian *mens* in a way that makes sense of Marion's anthropology of man as the animal without essence.

I will argue that in order to make sense of Marion's claim that man is the animal without essence, we need to understand essence primarily as a teleological term rather than in its other senses without which in-formed matter cannot be intelligible or even existent. For Aristotle, inasmuch as the ousia of an animal is its form (*morphe*), ousia is the final cause of a living organism and is not just the underlying permanence of a nature.[26] Aristotle argues that, in the case of living things and parts of living things, we cannot properly know what it is without knowing its final cause or function. For example, we cannot know what an eye is by

[26] *De anima*, ii, 4, 415b8-22.

simply knowing its material and efficient cause. It is not a sufficient explanation to say that the eye forms from this and that material process, for such explanation does not tell us why it becomes an eye. To know what an eye is, we must know its function. The final cause of the eye is sight, and it is towards this purpose of seeing that the material cause gathers matter into the form of an eye. Aristotle makes the same argument for living organisms as wholes. The proper way to explain an animal is the product that lies at the end of the process, which is the fully formed animal itself: "And since nature is twofold, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of that for the sake of which."[27] That which defines what the individual substance is, i.e., the genus, is the final cause of the animal. The function of a cow is to do what cows do: eat grass, drink water, moo and reproduce other animals that do the same thing. The telos of a calf is to become a cow. In other words, the final cause of a cow is to do cowish things and to do cowish things is identical to being a cow. The genus as a telos is a certain power, a virtue towards becoming what it is, converting its possibility into actuality.

Essence is not merely an explanation from the outside, but describes the way in which action is motivated, the end towards which action tends that gives it coherence as a whole. Thus, if the genus is a term that identifies a telos towards which the organism becomes—as towards an ousia that guides actualization—I am arguing that incomprehensibility understood as the lack of an ousia is not a simple negation of an adequation to a concept, it is not a mere lack of the possibility of explanatory knowledge or heteronomous rules. Incomprehensibility is the lack of a generic, or natural, telos for the human. In the case of organisms, for Aristotle, it is "generation for the sake of ousia, not ousia for the sake of generation": existence tends towards essence.[28] But, for Marion, it is the privilege of the human to exceed ousia which means it will always fail to be comprehended by means of ousia because it is not directed

[27] *Physics*, ii, 8, 199a30-34.
[28] *Parts of Animals*, i, 640a18–19.

towards ousia. In Aristotelian terms, the human's excess over ousia would mean that it exceeds the type of final cause fit for organisms.

Incomprehensibility is not a purely conceptual negation and lack of definition. Incomprehensibility manifests itself as another kind of telos and a certain way of being motivated. In light of Aristotle, I want to show that we can move towards a deeper phenomenological account of this absence of ousia, no longer as the incapacity to name properly or have a proper concept, as is often what Marion himself stresses in his work. The absence of ousia is: not being directed towards some (de)finite end, hence the *lack* of essence. This lack is expressed positively as something that defines and denominates every aspect of man. It is the positive experience of being directed towards some in(de)finite end. The lack of essence does not merely signify an absent object, but is the positive expression of the human as human in the enigma of human longing. Incomprehensibility signifies surplus more than lack. If this positive directedness without definite end is a correct account, there should be specific aspects of the particularly human that show that being a fully functioning adult human is not itself a telos in the way that the genus is for other organisms.

In order to make sense of the distinction between the animals made according to essence and the one made according to the image, we must interpret essence in its function as a telos. Taking Aristotelian final causality as decisive in regards to what is according to genus allows me to separate from the philosopher by means of thinking a different structure of relation to the telos that accounts for the image. In other words, it is not simply that one telos is replaced with another, towards which we would be directed in an analogous way. The whole structure of relation must be re-imagined.

§3. Mindedness and Absence of Genus

What is the difference between the human and the other animals that would make it proper to say that man is the animal without essence? Only the essence understood as a telos can make sense of this difference. Yet the traditional Aristotelian definition of man as the animal endowed with reason would not be able to make sense of the claim that man is the animal without essence. "Rational animal" gives an essence to man in which we can determine what is human activity precisely to the degree it corresponds to that definition. What does not fit that definition is excluded as nonhuman or less than human. In the Aristotelian account there is a decisive split between action motivated by reason and action motivated by passion, the lower being animal, the higher being human, the former directed towards the definition, the other striving in some baser direction.

Here I provisionally broaden the Aristotelian definition, using Freud, from man as the rational animal to man as the *minded* animal. Freud's insight was to see that, for the human, mindedness goes all the way down to the most basic animal urges: our desires for nourishment and sex. Freud is able to broaden the concept of mind in this way because he saw that the human mind is not fundamentally rational. For Freud, mind is fundamentally restless and it is this restlessness that separates it from other nonminded forms of motivation, that is, separates it from the nonminded animals. This is where Freud develops the concept of drive, which is a restless motivation, and contrasts it to instinct. The difference between drive and instinct is in its way of relating to the world, and thus, I will show, has a different type of telos. Freud showed that for the human even the most basic aspects of being an animal do not operate instinctually, but are directed by drives. For Freud, human sexuality is a drive rather than an instinct because it does not express itself as a rigid behavioral pattern. For Freud, "[T]he sexual drive and the sexual object are merely soldered together."[29] The drive is merely

[29] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey, (London: Imago, 1949), SE 7:147-148. Quoted in Lear, 89.

"soldered" to its object because it can detach itself from any particular object and fixate on another through transference, sublimation, leaps and associations. The drive allows the mind to be creative through these nonrational operations. The human sex drive, for Freud, could be detached from its natural end and re-attached to other objects because of the restlessness of drive-directed motivation. More basic to mind than rationality is its detachment from its object, its capacity to rove from one thing to another and its capacity to remain solidly fixed on a thing detrimental to the organism's wellbeing. The unity of drive and its object is always unstable and artificial. Freud saw that the mind qua mind is restless, not rational and that restlessness is what separates mind from instinctual, generic behavior. By contrast, to the drive, which is merely soldered to its object, instinctual behavior has an intrinsic unity with its object. For cows, the desire to eat grass cannot be displaced towards a desire for metaphysical knowledge nor can the sexual instinct be displaced towards an inordinate appetite for grass. Where instinct is rigid, the drive is fluid.

It is essential to Freud's concept of mind that the drive-aspect goes all the way down to our most basic urges such that there is nothing left for instinct. Only in this way can mind be mind all the way down, for, as Lear argues, we only need the concept of mind when "we need to account for an organism that isn't just rigidly performing instinctual behavior."[30] Otherwise we still have Aristotle's split between rational action and animal passion. Before Freud, no one used the concept of mind for animal urges. But within a Freudian context, we need the concept of mind all the way down, not just for the rational superstructure. Thus instead of taking up the Aristotelian distinction between the animal urges and rational action, I am taking up Freud's distinction between minded, drive-directed motivation (which is all human motivation) and action motivated by instinct (which describes the action of all other animals, at least all nonminded animals). This definition is at once more animal and more

[30] Jonathan Lear, *Open Minded: Working Out the Logic of the Soul*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 88.

distinctly human. It is more animal insofar as Freud's concept of mind goes all the way down to take basic animality (sexuality, etc.) into its frame, yet it is more distinctly human and separate from the other animals insofar as "rationality" was merely added on to animal sentience while Freud's concept of the particularly human thing we call mind categorically changes everything about the way human animals relate to the objects of the world. Freud's distinction between instinct and drive gives us a better account of the human difference that is compatible with Marion's and at the same time corrects it towards a more teleological account. This is not a distinction between complex and merely mechanical motivation, but between ways of relating to the world. I am arguing that we need to talk about the minded animal rather than the rational animal because minded motivation is broader than rational action, and gives a more adequate account of the phenomenality of the essentially erotic directedness of human intentionality towards the world.

The "image" is not any particular content, additional feature, or the possibility of adequating to possibility. The image and the absence of essence is this noninstinctual way of relating to the world. If the genus is the final cause of the organism, instinct is the efficient expression of that cause. An animal approaches its genus by instinct through which it becomes what it is. The instinct is the mode through which a genus is expressed. The cow is intelligible as a cow through doing what cows in general do and it does these things because its instinct is to want that towards which these actions intend (whether it learns by mimesis or knows from birth or some other instinctive way). Instinct and genus go together as an efficient cause and final cause. Instinct, that term vaguely designating the mysterious movement of animal life, if it means nothing else, always has to do with how an animal is directed towards its genus and finds its purpose there.

Absence of rigid instinctual behavior is the absence of a generic end. The mind as drive-directed cannot find fulfillment or satisfaction in its appropriation of the world. The

human being does not fulfill herself through doing what humans in general do. For man, the world does not function as the efficient expression of a generic end. No worldly thing can satisfy drive in such a way that a telos is efficiently expressed in the movement towards that thing. In Freud's account, mind manifests as mind not because it is always rational, but because it is always restless, never attaining a fixed unity with a worldly object in the way an instinct would. Roughly speaking, instinctual action cannot but take the world as the horizon of the manifestation of its telos, where drive-directed motivation is free of the horizon of the world because its relation to world is tenuous and unstable even if, as "soldered," it attains a certain fixity. The drive as the enigmatic expression of mind breaks free of the "in general" as such because it is merely soldered together with its object where instinct is related to its object by an exact efficiency.

In phenomenological terms, instinct is an intentional aim that finds an adequate fulfillment in possibility. The instinct is inseparable from the external stimulus that actualizes it. Instinct is both the mode and the content—the action actualizes the genus. The drive separates the motivation from the content in the same way that the image breaks away from the genus. Marion writes concerning the image: "We should not be misled into assimilating the image to a content of the likeness, for it provides less a content than a container, in the sense of a place where the likeness is at play in its varying degrees."[31] The drive is a pure form without content, the content of which is soldered to it. Instinct, by contrast, is form and content of the animal: cowishness adequately brought to expression. The drive is an intentional aim that adequates to nothing, but can be bedazzled by any object in a way that instinct cannot. Instinct expresses the being and the possible being of the animal: existence moving towards essence and essence instantiated in existence. The instinct effects what it signifies, like a performative statement. It instantiates the genus as final cause.

[31] SP, 256; ALS, 347.

Thus, absence of essence is: not having a nature that functions as a telos. A natural telos is expressed as doing what the kind in general does. The particular instance of the kind relates to the world instinctually. Since drive-directed motivation expresses the possibility of not doing what humans in general do, drive expresses the absence of a generic telos. The human is the animal that does not have a nature only in the sense that she is not guided by a nature, at least in the end, since her nature is transfigured all the way down as drive. Man is therefore the animal that does not know who he is or how to live. This incomprehensibility to himself is not merely the depth of the mind, which, theoretically, could become more known and thereby overcome in knowingness. Rather, the incomprehensibility is given and immanently on display: mindedness as such. This incomprehensibility is displayed as a phenomenon because in the human the being-possibility correlation is disrupted. In fact, the correlation of being to possibility becomes the essence of sin—to take the possible as a telos, determining being absolutely according to possibility.

The human telos, not adequating to the genus, is both in and beyond existence as human. No doubt the mind still expresses itself as a body in a world, but it bodies forth in a different way than as bodies that fulfill a genus. Jonathan Lear writes that the drive "is one of the primordial ways in which mind represents its body to itself: namely, in its elemental forms of directedness and motivation."[32] It ruptures the essence-existence correlation insofar as minded desire is merely soldered together with the desired. Insofar as minded desire is not a pure expression of instinct (thus of existence fulfilling itself in essence), the in-beyond is not merely the infinite approach of existence towards the ever beyond of essence. It does not merely restate the logical contradiction for composite beings of a perfect merging of existence into essence. The in-beyond is no longer this lack, this tantalizing of desire as the imperfect desires the perfect. My end is a surplus of my own givenness towards another beyond me but

[32] Lear, 88.

intimate to me—intimate to such a degree that it takes the place of the genus, essence, or self as that towards which I *am*. But in this paradox, an identity other than the other, in short, a self, arises precisely as my pleromatic self-gift, or drive, towards the other. Man *is* in the approach towards what he is not and what could not count as his ideal essence. Man is the animal who does not move towards an essence. Man *is* in the erotic advance.

In this way I have aimed to describe man's transcendence of the order of nature starting from the phenomenon of man himself, and freed from determination by natural forms of teleology. In this way, my concerns echo those of Rahner:

> It might be asked whether the scholastic concept of "nature" as applied to the "nature" of man does not still owe too much to the model of what is less than human (in the train of archaic philosophy with its orientation towards "physics"). What is signified by the "definition," and hence the circumspection, of man's "nature," if he is the essence of transcendence, and hence of the surpassing of limitation? Is it meaningful at all in such a perspective simply to assign to this "nature" an end perfectly defined materially? Not as though the remotest doubt were being thrown here on the fact that man has a nature and that this in itself has an end assigned to it. But these must not and cannot be conceived in such simple terms as the mutual order of a pot and its lid or of a biological organism and its fixed environment…. However universally the formal ontology of nature, end, etc., may extend, these concepts can only be used in the particular matter of each individual grade of being in a highly analogical way.[33]

For the minded creature, genus cannot function as a telos because it has broken away from the rigid instinctual behavior that is the way genus actualizes itself in the animal. Mindedness is the expression of the economy of the image. Minded motivation is without genus and thereby incomprehensible in the way that God is incomprehensible. The incomprehensibility particular to the image is its lack of generic telos, and this "lack" now appears as a surplus: an excess over genus because of erotic directedness. The human being still has a telos. The "perfecting limit" for man, which is a positive, gathered limit is not in the realm of the possible which adequates the particular (*ens*) to the universal (*noema*). The perfecting limit arises as a double gift—that of grace from the side of God and that of the newness of the person on the side of man. While both essence and image are terms to denote a directedness-towards, the image

[33] Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, 317.

does not function like an essence functions because the relational structure is altered in the case of mindedness. The essence is the directedness of a thing towards itself, by which it is like itself and fulfills a generic end. In the case of animals, it is expressed as instinctual motivation. Mind, by contrast, is directedness towards radical alterity, both receiving the radically other, and creating alterity by what it does. In this sense, mind as such comes according to the horizon of its own givenness because it ruptures the horizon of being in which generic ends hold sway, even if mind is often entranced and seduced by being and its generic ends.

§4. Restless Mind: The Drive and Hoc Monstrum

Nongeneric telic motivation is accompanied by an understanding of mind as fundamentally restless. There is undoubtedly more than a superficial commonality between Augustine's understanding of the restlessness of the heart (*inquietum est cor nostrum*[34]) and Freud's restless, drive-motivated mind. Indeed, both Augustine and Freud's accounts of the human as the restless animal contrast to the Aristotelian definition of man as the rational animal precisely because they see mental functioning as exceeding comprehensible, determinable action. Here it is no longer a matter of whether will or intellect is "first," but that it is intrinsic to the self-showing of mind that the unity of intention and object, or desire and desired is a fragile unity that sometimes falls apart.

Augustine argues against a two wills theory, which always implies two minds or two rationalities. It is not as if two entities are at war in one soul. Rather the weakness of will causes a split by shortage "into an empty willing (without power) and an uncontrolled power (without willing)," as Marion puts it. "This single will wills without having the means for what it wills because it does not will so much as it yields to its desire, because it does not will

[34] *Confessions*, I, 1, 1.

so much as it lets itself go in desiring."[35] For Augustine there are not two wills opposing each other. The conflict results from a weakness where one cannot will "entirely and unreservedly," as is well-known concerning Augustine's theory of the will and his understanding of sin as a deficiency of willing.[36]

Unlike the Aristotelian and Thomistic understanding of sin as an ignorance, in the Augustinian understanding of the will, there is a sense in which the will wills evil in full knowledge, not for a lack of having reasons for doing the good. It delights in doing evil for the sake of its depravity (even if, at the same time, it enacts this evil because it sees it as a good, thus implying ignorance of the true good). For Augustine, willing the evil does not have to do with an absence of adequate reasoning, at least in the modern sense of a reasoning that is neutral and therefore separate from desire for the good. It does not have to do with only possessing reasons to do what is against the good, which could be countered with providing enough facts. Evil willing is a deficiency of the one will, which is also a lack of the knowledge of the good towards which desire and knowledge is teleologically directed. The will splits into two because it fails to will. My actions tend toward sin because I fail to will fully and thus fail to will: "This combat between two wills proves simply that the will no longer resides in a state of willing at all. Its sickness comes from the fact that it no longer has reason or, above all, will to will."[37] For Marion, it is precisely "metaphysics" that "will always conceive the evil resolution as a moral fault of the mind [*l'esprit*]," (i.e., an ignorance), whereas Augustine thinks sin as an "*aegritudo animi*, a sickness of the spirit [*l'esprit*], which can no longer will anything, not even will willing, except to will nothingness."[38] Marion's reading of Augustine here seems somewhat idiosyncratic given that Augustine does indeed identify ignorance as an

[35] SP, 171-72; ALS, 237.
[36] *Confessions*, VIII, 9, 21, 14, 52.
[37] SP 180; ALS, 248.
[38] SP 179; ALS, 247.

aspect of all evil action.[39] Presumably, "metaphysics" imagines evil as ignorance precisely because it correlates being to possibility in such a way that all that is required in order to be just (that is to exist in the correct way) is to adequate to a priori possibility. In other words, all that is required for good action is to adequate to what can be known and which knowing suffices to do it, thereby placing willing underneath knowing (once one knows, then one wills) rather than thinking knowing and willing together. For Augustine, by contrast, it is not secret causes (a second will) that are causing the will to evil, but a lack of willing coinciding with a lack of reasons. Thus in Marion's reading, "Deficiency of cause causes [the will's] deficiency."[40] The tendency to evil cannot be overcome by more reasons, sufficient in themselves, but only by more power: not more adequation, but the coincidence of more willing with more knowing.

Not only does the mind do what it has less good reason to do than not to do, but also it does what it does not want to do. "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom. 7:15). It is this split of willing from doing that I wish to examine as manifesting the one phenomenon of a mind where knowing coincides with willing. If it is not the mind or will that splits, what exactly is divided? Augustine knew his own mind better than to reduce its actions to rational, sufficient causes. The mind cannot be taken into hand not because it lacks enough reasons, but because of an excess of the will over any determinable system of reasons or causes. Intrinsic to mindedness is the immanent disruption of rational functioning.

Augustine, as we have seen, knows that when the human soul (*animus*) does not do what it commands itself to do, "there is no other but itself, and yet it resists." Thus he wonders: *Unde hoc monstrum*.[41] Indeed, the question must not only be asked "Whence comes this monster," nor even as Marion emphasizes, "Whence this showing (*monstrum*)?" but more fundamentally, "What is this showing showing?" Or "What is it giving?" For Marion, the

[39] *De libro arbitrio*, I and III.
[40] SP 180; ALS, 248.
[41] *Confessions*, VII, 9, 21; SP 65; ALS, 103.

monstrum "consists in that the mind refractory to the mind that gives it a command is *not* an other, different, but remains one and the same mind, the sole mind—namely, a mind that it itself cannot even command. What is the meaning of this failure of command, except that this mind has not mastered itself and is not such that could take itself into hand—in other words, comprehend itself?"[42] Though Marion is here emphasizing the surplus of the will over knowing, the monster, which signifies also a disorder, is at the same time, an ignorance, at least an ignorance of itself, and therefore of what it is and what it should be.

But besides this lack of capacity to comprehend itself, is not the mind manifesting its own structure? That is, isn't this a showing that mind sometimes expresses itself as the breakdown of form-matter unity? And this is what I would identify as what splits in the deficiency in willing. It is not two wills that emerge. It is rather a split in the form-matter unity of the minded body. Matter is sundered from its form (*animus*). This *monstrum* is undoubtedly an expression of mind, for mind refuses to attach to objects as an end, but would rather disintegrate itself and choose nothingness. In this case, the I that commands is not identical to the whole phenomenon of the self. The I is split from the matter that it cannot control. The will that wills is separated from the matter that resists and which resists precisely because it is not inert matter, or even ensouled matter, but minded matter. Minded matter resists the mind that guides it.

St Paul likewise identifies the self with the will: "if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me" i.e., it is not I who do it because I do not want to do it, which implies the premise that my wanting is myself.

> What I do (κατεργάζομαι) I do not understand. For I do not do (πράσσω) what I want (θέλω), but I do (ποιῶ) the very thing I hate. Now if I do (ποιῶ) what I do not want (ποιῶ), I consent to the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do (κατεργάζομαι) it, but sin that dwells within me… for the desire (θέλειν) to do the good is present at hand, but not the doing (κατεργάζεσθαι). For I do not do (ποιῶ) the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing (πράσσω). Now if I do

[42] SP 65; ALS, 103.

> (ποιῶ) what I do not want, it is no longer I who do (κατεργάζομαι) it, but sin that dwells within me. (Rom. 7:15-20)

In this passage sin is not some other force, a contrary will that opposes the self's will. Rather, Paul is describing the disintegration of doing from willing that takes place when the will recognizes the law to be good. This disintegration is brought about not by sin, but by confession. In the will's assent to the law, as long as the body's action remains evil, the relation between the form (will) and matter (movement) has disintegrated. It is not that the relation is itself unintelligible, but that the two terms of the relation, the form and the matter, are now each showing something else, contradictory to the other, making the phenomenon of the self incomprehensible. The matter is doing what the form resists. This falling apart of form and matter is not at all negative in this case, but leads Paul beyond a mere submission to necessity (sin) and towards recognition of the good. This falling apart takes place through the soul's assent to the good. Here the self (as existent) has no capacity to accede to itself (as hypostasis, will) even if it desires and therefore knows the good that it yet does not express adequately in matter, which moves in another direction. The will to the good is not disembodied will, so it is also expressed in matter in some way. The way it is expressed is as the resistance to sin. More precisely then, the will to the good is manifested as the very breakdown of form-matter unity: the breakdown between the matter's movement towards sin and the will's assent to the good. Thus mind reveals itself as a third beyond the breakdown of form and matter but acting as what causes the breakdown at the same time. On the one hand, sin is no longer integral to the self so long as one wills towards the good rather than towards necessity, yet, on the other, sin continues to be phenomenalized as a de-formed matter, a defective form, a deficient action, that the will resists, however weakly. Even though it is weak, the will resists in such a way that the matter can be re-formed towards "the good that I want." For Paul, sin is not an aspect of the "inner man" so long as it is not willed, so long as it is confessed as sin. Confession does not make a whole of the soul-matter composite, but results in its breakdown.

What is important here is that this irrational structure (doing what I do not want to do), which disintegrates form from content, is not coming from another rationality or another will. It is not the case that less-good reasons are triumphing over better reasons and an unconscious animal will over the intellectual apprehension of the good. If this were so, we would fall back into an understanding of incomprehensibility as a mere lack of access to its reasons, which lie hidden in the unconscious. This is quite clearly not the case because the incomprehensibility is not hidden, but is immanently on display. Incomprehensibility is the very disunity of form and content displayed in erotic intentionality. This disunity is immanent and not coming from elsewhere. It is purely visible as a *monstrum*.

This interpretation allows us to see that the mind's resistance to itself is not like two entities competing or as if non-intellectual or irrational will simply wins out against cool, unmotivated reason. Instead this is the manifestation of one phenomenon: the breakdown of rational operation by means of a surplus over adequation. "Rational animal" is too narrow a description of the human, for intrinsic to mindedness is immanent nonrational expression, which stretches the rational functioning in new ways. Mind would have no capacity to grow and change without these akratic processes.

That the irrational is not the outburst of a mere passion or the result of competing rationalities means that we must reduce this phenomenon ("*hoc monstrum*") beyond any rationality, even a rationality that would simply be hidden away in the unconscious or deep mind. Here the phenomenon would definitively not be reduced to the kind of irrationality of an arbitrary will or irrational *experience*. The reduction to the givenness of this phenomenon leads to whatever precedes this disintegrated yet originary unity of willing and knowing that expresses itself most robustly in its nongeneric motivation.

What Absence of Genus is Not

The Aristotelian distinction between matter and form, even matter-soul is not a sufficient explanation of the human body. The human mind expresses itself as body in a different way than a non-human organism expresses itself as body. Absence of genus signifies the way the human mind gives itself as body. This has to do with how it relates to the non-self, the world, others, and God. I have shown that there is an intrinsic unity between other organisms and their environment and social interactions for which reason their final cause can be said to be the species. The efficient cause is the instinctual action. (Calling it instinct does not necessarily reduce it to mechanism so long as the final cause is still governing over the efficient expression even if we do not know exactly *how* these causes are causing the action, that is, even if the word "instinct" is standing in for a lack of knowledge.) For the minded animal, there is no longer this intrinsic unity of natural efficient action as the expression of a natural end. The genus can no longer operate as an end insofar as the mind is drive-directed.

Thus the soul (*anima*) is not the form of the *human* body, or at least not a sufficient explanation of what or who is being expressed as body. The soldered-together nature of the relation between the mind and its desired object results in the other taking the place of the self, and therefore the place of the form, by means of overwhelming the mere desire to fulfill a need. Thus it is the radically other that gives the ego to itself rather than the instinctual intention towards an object that expresses the genus. This radical other is therefore more intimate to the self than any worldly other could be. Drive-directedness identifies the body with what it loves and thereby deconstructs any absolute correlation of the body with its own form. The body correlates rather to Truth itself, the immemorial third order beyond the possibilities of form.

The reason this is not an expression of a genus is that the desired object is both desired in excess of the needs of nature—perhaps to the point of addiction and sometimes to the point

of love—and also that the object itself is excessive, flooding any adequation to a genus. The relation is so fragile precisely because it does not depend on adequation to a genus and thus does not depend upon any adequation between the ego and the object. As Marion points out, Augustine says as much:

> The 'striding of the soul' [*pes anima*] is correctly understood as love—which if it is perverse is named desire or concupiscence, but if it is straight, love or charity. That is, love puts it into motion as that toward which it tends. For the place of the soul is not found in some extension or other, which the form of a body would occupy, but in delectation, that in having attained itself through love it rejoices.[43]

§5. Aequalitas, Similitudo, Imago

Before Augustine, the Church Fathers did not link the image to similitude.[44] Seeing likeness as a predicate of inequality, they saw man as being in the likeness (*similitudo*) of God but not in his image and viewed Christ as the image of the Father but having no similitude to him. This understanding is linked to the debate concerning whether the Son is *homoiousion* (of a similar substance) or *homoousion* (of the same substance) with the Father. According to their logic, if it is an image, it is not a similitude, because the image (Christ) is not similar but equal to the prototype. Human beings, by contrast, were not "images" but were merely "like" God in some way that did not entail equality. *Similitudo* (*homoion*) marked the difference reserved for humans (other than God yet in some way similar), while the *imago* was reserved for Christ because it entailed equality.

Augustine links *imago* to *similitudo*. He is able to make this move by adding analogical participation to the way the image relates to its prototype.[45] In his early work *De diversis quaestionibus*, Augustine shows a human being can be the image of God because the econo-

[43] SP 160; ALS, 222-23. (trans. mod., Commentary on the Psalms 9, 15, PL 36, 991.)
[44] On this question, see Gerald P. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Image*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[45] Boersma, 194-200.

my of the image does not imply equality but can participate in varying degrees.[46] Augustine says that every image implies a likeness, but not every likeness implies either equality or an image. He uses a mirrored reflection as an example of an image that is similar yet not equal to the original because "many things are lacking in the image that are in the thing that it is expressing."[47] (Already what Augustine is defining as an image differs from Gregory of Nyssa's account, for whom the image must reflect every aspect of the original.) Augustine gives further examples of the way the image and similitude are not mutually exclusive, or particularly determinative for each other. Two eggs of the same kind of bird are equal to and a likeness of each other without being an image while two eggs of different birds bear a likeness without either equality or being an image. For Augustine, since similitude no longer implies inequality, Christ can be said to be similar to God insofar as he is the image of the Father. Man is both similar to God and an image of him without being equal to him, while Christ is the image of, the likeness of, and equal to the Father. Augustine brings humanity into the economy of the image by freeing *imago* from *aequalitas* and linking *imago* to *similitudo.*

I mention Augustine's development for two reasons. First, it shows that the economy of the image has not always implied similitude, and so it is not an unprecedented thesis to think the image without a logic of similitude. In fact, nonsimilitude is the more ancient way of thinking the image starting from Christ as the *eikon tou theou* (Col. 1.15). Second, as I will show, Augustine's insight by which he brings humanity into the economy of the image has less to do with linking up the image and similitude than with freeing up the image from equality. I would even argue that the link of the image and similitude is tenuous and unnecessary. Augustine's distinction shows that *imago* does not entail *aequalitas*, but he still assumes that the unequal image implies likeness. Similitude governs over all the relations for Augustine because he is thinking relation by comparison—comparing one thing to another. In other

[46] *De diversis quaestionibus,* Q 51.
[47] *De diversis quaestionibus*, Q 74.

words, Augustine is making too much of his metaphors, which necessarily makes the image, as a mirrored reflection, unequal precisely because of its passivity. While he wants to show that similarity does not imply inequality, the primary result is the thought of the image as participating in the prototype according to degrees—from equality to various degrees of inequality, as if inequality merely consisted of a fraction of a whole. I would argue, however, that the important thing that Augustine accomplishes is to free *imago* from *aequalitas*, by which the human person can be taken into the economy of the image. Once the human person is taken into the economy of the image, it is in fact possible to free her from the relation of similitude, for the image signifies a hyperbolic relation rather than equality or similitude. It surpasses the comparative relation of similitude for the superlative relation of hypostases. As in the Trinity itself, any iconic relation is a unity without confusion, but such a unity does not necessarily imply equality (as it does in the Trinity).

The reason a theologian like Victorinus rejected the term *homoiousios* is that, according to Aristotle's categories, likeness and unlikeness are predicated of qualities, not substances. A thing is either of the same substance as another thing or it is of a different substance.[48] Undoubtedly the reasoning applied here to prove Christ's substantial sameness with God applies also to prove the substantial and therefore complete difference between created and Creator. Yet the absence of similarity and dissimilarity also manifests for qualitative predicates when the terms become saturated thereby exceeding comparative relation. If the image does not imply equality, what it does imply is hyperbolic relation. Hyperbolic relation, insofar as it exceeds the categories, would exceed similitude insofar as "things are called *similar* and *dissimilar*" by virtue of the category of quality.[49] Equality of the divine persons is one manifestation of such a hyperbolic relation. What essentially enables Augustine to place man within the economy of the image is not an emanationist similitude, but the freeing of the

[48] See Pierre Hadot, "L'Image de la Trinité dans l'âme chez Victorinus et chez Saint Augustin," *Studia Patristica* 6, (1962). 409-442.
[49] Aristotle, *Categories*, 11a15-19, p. 17.

image from *aequalitas* such that other hyperbolic relations, other than the equality of trinitarian persons, could appear by means of self-giving. Because of this, I do not wish to go back to the pre-Augustinian account of the image which is without similitude only because it is Christ alone who is the image whereas the creation is so many emanated unrealities. Rather, I wish to maintain Augustine's development of man as image, but to use the hyperbole of the iconic relation to loose it from the emanationist logic of similitude. After all, *aequalitas* of the persons is only obtained in the Godhead by perfect self-giving and not as a determining precondition, for equality with God is not something that can be grasped (Phil. 2.6). Couldn't the unequal image surpass similitude by means of the excess of relation where neither the category of quality nor the condition of equality obtains? What defines the icon is never the condition of equality, but only the possibility of the return gift, which in the case of the divinity equalizes and in the case of humanity divinizes.

Since an ousia cannot be participated except by being the same, why would allowing a nonequal image mean that we should re-link the image and similitude? Doesn't similitude still contrast with the image insofar as the image entails a hyperbolic relation (even if not resulting in equality) in the face of which similitude claims at once too much and too little? Too much because it claims a certain adequation to God; too little because mere similitude cannot attain the depth of intimacy and free activity that are only attained identically in hyperbolic relation. With respect to the divine persons, it was never in fact equality that freed relation from an emanationist similitude, for if it is equality that separates the Son from other terms related to God, then it is precisely the degree of difference rather than a radical ontological abyss that separates created beings from their source. Within such a framework, it would not be impossible, at least in theory, for the unequal image to increase towards equality. If similitude entails the possibility of a usurpation of the divine prerogative, as we have seen in IV, §1, God is only loosed from this usurpation through making the image more active, by increasing the

relation of the image to the point of nonsimilitude, which only after the fact arrives at a type of proportionate likeness: man as a microtheos. In fact, what I have been arguing is that Augustine's very own formula *interior intimo meo, superior summo meo* is what, in man, frees the economy of the image from a logic of similitude. With this formula, Augustine already surpasses himself.

§6. Life as Principle: Restlessness as Desire for the Vita Beata

In Marion's reading of Augustine, Life as principle replaces the principle of Being. If metaphysics is the study of being qua being, Marion "overcomes metaphysics" with a phenomenology describing the way beings participate in Life, a principle that exceeds Being. The reason Life surpasses Being is that it is an erotic and immemorial principle. I will now show that replacing the Greek definition of man as the rational animal with the biblical, psychoanalytic, and Augustinian definition of man as the minded animal enables me to ground the economy of the icon (understood as minded body) in the principle of Life. Since the Life that grounds restless mind is an immemorial Life, I will demonstrate that to show that *Life* comes as first principle is to show that *the impossible* comes as first principle.

Augustine finds that he not only lacks access to himself, an incomprehensible abyss and a huge question, but also he does not possess his own life and must receive it from elsewhere. This lack of possession of one's own life is especially the case for the minded animal because drive-directed motivation cannot be fulfilled in a generic end, which would at least aim towards nature's end, even if this natural life isn't possessed of itself. If Being is determined by the correlation to possibility (universals, the noetic) and is thus a rational principle (the condition of nature and its forms), Life is nonrational. It does not oppose rationality, but exceeds its determinations as the impossible, the gift par excellence. Sometimes beings are hostile to Life, closing in with their own rational self-sufficiency, barricading

themselves against the gift. As soon as we receive Being as a gift, givenness exceeds the rationality of Being. The excess of givenness is the excess of Life.

The understanding of mind as a rational thing limits access exclusively to the being-possibility correlation. It is the restlessness of mind that gives access to Life. Where Descartes establishes the ego through the cogito, to arrive at self-certification, Augustine founds his anthropology on the unconditional desire for the *vita beata*. It is not bare life that is the principle. The principle of Life is only discovered in the desire for the happy life, life as enjoyed. It is impossible, Augustine says, not to want to be happy. Human desire in its directedness towards the pleasurable is never mere desire to fulfill a need, but desire to be happy. This desire for the happy life becomes a first principle because all want it. Marion says that the desire is unconditioned because there is no human existence outside of the desire to be happy. To live is to desire the *vita beata*: "The desire for beatitude is not added on, as an option, possibly taken or not, to the desire to live; the connection between wanting-to-live and the desire for beatitude turns out to be analytic *a priori*."[50] Yet there is an aporia in this universal and unconditioned desire for happiness. No one has experienced the *vita beata*, yet all desire it. Augustine writes,

> It is a wonder (*mirum*) that while one finds among all men one and the same will to lay hold of and to keep beatitude, there exists a variety and diversity of wills aiming at it—not that somebody does not want it, but all do not know it. . . . How then do all love so passionately what all do not know? Who can love what he does not know? . . . Why do all love beatitude when all do not know it?[51]

This suggests that, even as it is always already known—for it is the principle and origin of desire—beatitude does not exist as one of the world's possibilities. The *vita beata* is immemorial, outside of and preceding conscious knowledge or anything that can be experienced. Mind expresses itself as restless, not fulfilling itself adequately in an object, because it bodies forth as desire for the *vita beata*. What makes mind restless is this desire for the good life, that it

[50] SP, 85; ALS, 129.
[51] *De Trin* XIII, 4, 7, 16, 280ff

cannot access experientially, but which "inhabits us like the immemorial, the closest and farthest away, inasmuch as it happens in and through our desiring."[52] Beatitude is imposed with the intimacy of the impossible.

This principle, known without conception or representation, and which we desire above all, is only "accessible in another mode than the noetic."[53] Desire for the *vita beata* moves towards the nongeneric, what cannot be accessed by the forms of this world. Restless mind wants access to what is not possible, what is immemorially known. It is only restless mind, not rational mind, that finds its principle in the impossible, the *vita beata* which it cannot know as one of its generic possibilities. Restlessness is the enfleshment of the knowledge of the *vita beata*.

The human mind, particularly as restless, embodied mind, is directed towards this Life, which is, strictly speaking, not of this world, being neither ontic nor noetic. *Memoria*, or the flesh, is itself an originary desire which enfleshes itself as a desire for the immemorial. The immemorial as an unconditioned principle precedes and gives the flesh to itself. The *vita beata* as principle is embodied in the world as desire, which exceeds knowing "to the point that it is the *mens* and the *cogitatio* that are inscribed within the *vita beata*."[54] Since the *vita beata* is immemorial, desire is not "*for* the principle" but *is* the principle. The immemorial gives the *mens* as its bodying forth, the *mens* as *memoria:* the flesh of the immemorial.[55] Desire is the principle in its interplay between *memoria* as minded body and the immemorial as its nongeneric, nonworldly end. *Memoria* is the "place of the *vita beata* and the path of desire."[56] This is not a raw, undirected desiring, but precisely the desire for the nonworldly good. It is a rational desire insofar as it is "for the good," but it is not for the world's rational

[52] SP, 87; ALS, 131.
[53] SP, 94; ALS, 139.
[54] SP, 89; ALS, 134.
[55] SP, 89; ALS, 134.
[56] SP, 92; ALS, 138.

objects since drive-directed, restless desire is for what radiates from the things of the world—the *plenum* of the good.

Desire as principle subverts the originary status of the ego insofar as its intrinsic erotic directedness means that an immemorial precedes the ego:

> [C]ontrary to appearances, desire does not arise first from me so as to aim at its object but is enacted in or rather over me, weighs on me, and invades me, even if I neither comprehend nor possess its supposed object, or rather precisely *because* I do not possess it, attain it, or even comprehend it. Desire is imposed on me of itself, at its initiative, and never at mine. I cannot decide to desire even if desire can make me decide to do my all to fulfill it.[57]

The *vita beata* "precedes [the ego, the *mens*] as the objective of its desire,"[58] but it does so in a much more radical way than worldly objects of desire, which, precisely because they come over me at their own initiative can never put the ego into play. Here I want to draw out the radical difference that Marion does not draw out between the ego's failure to actually achieve egoity and the selfhood that occurs in immemorial desire for the good life. The *vita beata*'s precedence is radical because it is not known beforehand, theoretically, but is only known, afterwards, immemorially.[59] It therefore puts a self in play as what actualizes its impossibility — converting the immemorial into a flesh (the minded body) — so that it, the immemorial, becomes known in the flesh. Drive-directed motivation is desire for the immemorial good. Generic motivation does not surpass predetermined possibilities and so does not arrive at a self.

The mind's restlessness disrupts the being-possibility correlation, for its principle is immemorial. Desire for the immemorial is unconditioned precisely *as* disrupting this correlation. The ego was understood as "unconditioned" foundation of theoretical truth because it was a transcendental and abstract condition of the appearance of objective truth. When desire for the *vita beata* becomes "unconditioned," it does so for non-theoretic truth. Desire for the

[57] SP, 83; ALS, 126.
[58] SP, 89; ALS, 134..
[59] SP, 93; ALS, 138.

vita beata is unconditioned in a completely different sense than the Cartesian or transcendental ego. When self-givenness is applied to desire for the happy life, i.e., as the "unconditioned desire for beatitude," there is no mediating, abstract, unconditioned ego that functions as the condition of the possibility of objects—unconditioned for the sake of mediating between the actual and the possible. Instead, there is a real I fixed by desire into a principle or into the flesh of the principle without a mediating third term: only and precisely thus is it said to be unconditioned.

The rupture of the ontos-noesis correlation towards a third order at once rupturing and rational frees truth from determination by a third term (the *adequatio*) that would govern the relation. The "unconditioned" nature of this given is not a matter of a freedom from mediation of a self where the "real" gives itself purely. Rather, it is a matter of not needing a third, external term (possibility) precisely because we are speaking of incommensurable orders that could not adequate in the first place, the one is immemorial to the other that nevertheless embodies it. Each of the two terms would have to be active from their own order to bring about the relation, but no third can intervene "between": whether the a priori condition of a relation or even relation as a condition. This mutual self-giving of incommensurable terms is the essence of the "unconditioned," where impossibility passes directly into actuality without possibility's predetermination. Only the desiring ego mediates the given. And it only mediates in abandoning itself to the gift. Thus the one who desires must act (that is, interpret) in order to phenomenalize what it receives immemorially.

I am thus reading the immemorial as the impossible in its activity as principle of drive-directed, erotic mind. The immemorial is not worldly, but appears as the minded body itself, the minded body at its origin where the immemorial expresses itself as *memoria*. It is in the world as beyond the world. We can lead drive-directedness back to the desire for the *vita beata*, that immemorially lost paradise in which desire is perfectly united to the good — its

life. With respect to restless mind, Lear notes that "the permanent possibility of falling apart" is required to maintain the concept of a differentiated unity.[60] For animals, this possibility of falling apart is death, while drive-directed mind has both death and eros as its [im-] possibilities. Erotic motivation expresses its desire for the *vita beata* precisely because it can always lose its end, which cannot be had as a possession and actually disrupts the being-possibility unity. The unconditional desire for the *vita beata* is a fragile unity: it is "desire without possession rather than possessive certainty, and *life* (as happy life) rather than being."[61] This fragile unity is what separates human desire categorically from instinctual action and what makes it more originary than the possessive certainty of the Cartesian ego that, inasmuch as it is certain, fails to achieve a real egoity and excludes the possibility of growth. As the principle of drive-directed motivation, Life gives itself in a fragile unity of desire and what it desires. Its desire, which is Life itself, is not a thing it can attach to, but disrupts its attachment to things. That the immemorial attracts and that the drive is "merely soldered" to its object is to say the same thing: no object attracts the will itself, which can only be attracted by Goodness, Beauty itself. In short, God alone is desirable, yet attraction to God is not disembodied or a movement towards pure spirit. This desire creates something worldly. In him, I find my *vita beata* and embody it as my flesh.

If the unity of form and matter, will and action, can break down originarily, that is, in such a way that the breakdown is not for a reason or from some other locus of willing, but is fundamental minded expression, it follows that the flesh is not adequately described as a form-matter composite. I would contend, then, that the flesh expresses its very enfleshment in the possibility of the breakdown of form-matter relation, not in its unity. Since the very composite unity can be disrupted, my flesh must exist through an origin that exceeds this composite and that leaves its trace in this disruption. Drive-directedness that expresses itself

[60] Lear, 89.
[61] SP, 101; ALS, 149.

in this disunity, when reduced to its self-givenness, leads back to Augustine's account of the immemorial. The breakdown inherent to drive leads back to the immemorially lost *vita beata* and the desire for the irrevocably lost unity of desire with its desired. The mind is tirelessly picking up the pieces of a lost unity, but what it re-assembles is not the original garden, but the new man, hypostatically united to God.

Impossible Ends

According to my reading, the minded body is the phenomenon of the *vita beata*, given as such an excessive erotic desire that it disrupts the simple correlation of instinctual action to a generic, worldly form. That the human person only finds her true end in God is a statement essential to the mainstream of the Christian tradition. What has been a subject of debate at least since the late middle ages is whether desire for God is a natural or supernatural desire. Is the desire for God intrinsic to what it is to be human, or is it added on by God, as a supernatural grace, like the end to which it is directed? If the desire for God is added on to natural human existence, then the human being has a twofold end: the end in God does not prohibit the coherence of a "pure nature," that is, an intraworldly economy between desire and its telos – natural human desire directed towards natural ends. But this means then that the desire for God is extrinsic, not naturally part of what it is to be human. Henri de Lubac, with whom Marion studied informally in his student years, makes one of the most well-known twentieth century arguments against the concept of "pure nature" and instead argues for the naturalness of the human desire for what is beyond nature:

> [Natural desire for the beatific vision] is in me as a result of my belonging to humanity as it is, that humanity which is, as we say, "called." For God's call is constitutive. My finality, which is expressed by this desire, is inscribed upon my very being as it has been put into this universe by God. And, by God's will, I now have no other genuine end, no end really assigned to my nature or presented for my free acceptance under any guise, except that of "seeing God."[62]

[62] *Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), 55.

De Lubac is arguing against the neo-scholastic and Cajetanian view that "pure nature" works according to its own self-sufficient telos and that the desire to see God is supernatural, added to a natural telos.[63] In the Cajetanian view, nature operates according to a univocal correlation between desire and desired. Supernature is likewise univocal, albeit on a higher plane that is in no way intrinsically related to nature.

Taking the possible as the limit of natural desire, Suarez, who is exemplary of the pure nature tradition, repudiates the relation between the orders that would disrupt the coherence of the natural order:

> The natural appetite is efficacious in its own order; whence it does not extend beyond what is possible to nature.
>
> Likewise: That which is not possible is not a good in the order of nature: but the appetite tends to the good; therefore the natural appetite tends only to what is good in the natural order.[64]

In this view, the human person has two ends, one perfectly fulfilled in the order of natural essences, and one fulfilled in the divine order. This second end is neither natural nor naturally desired. According to this theology, "an end cannot be given freely for a definite being, existing here and now, unless there had first of all been a different end for him that was objectively, concretely realizable."[65] The aim of this view is to preserve God's freedom from nature and thus the freedom of the gift that cannot be merited or expected as a right.

Yet I will demonstrate that the duality of ends arises more fundamentally from the presupposition that the end of any natural appetite is determined by and correlated to possibility (insofar as possibility is a power): "The innate appetite is infused in the natural potency; but in man there is no potency to supernatural beatitude; therefore there is not such innate appetite."[66] "It is repugnant that an end be supernatural with respect to pursuit [*consecutio*] and

[63] See *Mystery of the Supernatural*, 140-166.
[64] *De ultimo fine hominis*, disseratio 18, sectio 2, n. 11 (ed. Vivès, vol. 4, p. 154).
[65] *Mystery of the Supernatural*, 68.
[66] *De ultimo fine hominis*, dissertatio 16, sectio 2, n. 11 (ed. Vivès, vol. 4, p. 154).

natural with respect to appetite, since the natural appetite is found only in natural potency."[67] The end, for Suarez, is understood to be the actualization of a potency within the same order (that of natures). This fulfillment of desire in a possible object is what we have seen to be the case in instinctual behavior and in the objective correlation of being to possibility. The particular instance becomes itself by actualizing a potency. The pure nature thesis is posited for the sake of correlating being to possibility.

In contrast to this position is the one I have been developing on the basis of Marion and Augustine. What I am arguing is that if desire is unconditionally for the *vita beata,* which is itself immemorial, the object of desire is not a possibility or potency of man, who rather is teleologically directed beyond himself and towards the impossible. Man does not move towards an essence in which he accomplishes himself. Rather, his telos as a minded drive-directed telos is a life in which he subsists but to which he has no access by his own powers. Mind naturally desires what is immemorially lost, thus strictly impossible. The desire for the immemorial entails a relation of incommensurables: natural desire to its supernatural end. Being fixes the world in a permanent existence that oscillates between actual being and possible being. But life can be lost, on the one had, or, on the other, can make what *is not* to be. Like the relation of drive to its object, life holds a tenuous, insecure relation to what lives by it. This permanent possibility of falling apart is what opens it beyond possibility. Life is a principle that is radically incommensurable to those who draw their life from it. The principle is beyond in such a way that it is unknown to theory (which depends upon the ontos-noesis correlation) and is inaccessible to natures (possibility or powers). Desire for what is beyond nature is not extrinsically added on, for mindedness as such affects the animal all the way down so that the natural desire of the minded animal is for a supernatural end.

[67] *De gratia*, Proleg. 4, c. 1, n. 8 (Vivès, vol. 7, p. 181).

My reading of what Marion means by "man is the animal that has no essence" has taken him in a de Lubackian direction. Connecting his thesis to a Freudian concept of mind, I have argued that it is a teleological claim: that, as drive-motivated all the way down, the human animal is "naturally" directed beyond a natural telos, and even lacks a natural telos since mind leaves no instinctual substratum directed towards intraworldly ends. Mindedness as such exceeds any intraworldly end. It only finds its rest in the beyond nature par excellence: God. Mind as fundamentally drive-directed and erotic disrupts any possible "pure nature." Further, I have demonstrated that the priority of the given displays its priority by disrupting nature and expanding it. In this way, Marion's phenomenology of givenness, Augustine's concept of mind as *memoria*, and Freud's concept of mind as drive-motivated restlessness oppose the neo-Thomist understanding of nature and supernature and corroborate and develop de Lubac's position concerning the supernatural. Only the fact that the desire for the "beyond nature" is a natural "intrinsic" desire ensures that the supernatural comes freely from itself and is not simply another world with other possibilities that imposes itself extrinsically upon our nature and its intrinsic natural end. This would be a violent disruption. By contrast, the disruption of the given is not a violent imposition because, though it is impossible for the being, its advent is what allows a minded being to grow into what is beyond its powers, yet is at the same time a fulfillment of who she is.

But ultimately I want to proceed beyond a simple de Lubackian account and argue for a synthesis of de Lubac's position with the one he opposes. I am doing this in light of a deeper account of the phenomenality of minded motivation. Thus, rather than a single supernatural end, naturally desired, or a twofold end, one natural, naturally desired, and the other supernatural, supernaturally desired, what I have argued thus far implies a twofold supernatural end intrinsic to the single natural desire. On the one hand, restless mind always finds its end only in God, but on the other, mind is also directed towards ends actualized in the world. But

because its way of relating to world is transfigured all the way down *qua mind*, man's way of relating to the world is not towards a natural generic end, but towards a supernatural end that is nevertheless in the world. The end in God and the end in the world are both "supernatural" because mind entails a directedness towards the impossible.

Drive-directed motivation, as much as it still attaches to objects, never permits the object to be an efficient expression of an end. World is not an end for mind in the way that it is for nonminded motivation. The drive opens distance between the ego and any worldly object, which cannot of itself act as an end. Thus the expression of the image that the drive signals is twofold. First, it expresses itself as desire towards God because objects no longer efficiently express an end. Drive may not ensure this desire for God, but at least it prohibits the horizon of the world from closing in on us as the only horizon that we can live towards (IV, §2). Second, such drive-directed transcendence of inherence in the world means that humans relate to world in a way that reflects the creative distance of God. In other words, the image is a way of relating that enables the human to transcend the world of necessity (possibility-being).

Drive implies that the human being has a capacity for what would satisfy her and which acts as her principle. But it is the kind of capacity that by no means implies that she already possesses, even in possibility, that which could satisfy. The satisfaction of desire never comes as a possession but always immemorially. The capacity is not the capacity to possess. The capacity is itself the desire and this desire is towards what is on the far side of *memoria*. Drive-directed desire is the capacity for the *vita beata*. The drive is not a participation in *vita beata*, but the longing that gives it body. "The longing that surges from this 'depth' of the soul is a longing born of a lack, and not arising from 'the beginning of possession'" (de Lubac).[68] This is the case because drive is marked by the merely "soldered together" nature of its relation to its worldly object. What it wants is the good beyond nature radiating from the

[68] *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 84.

object and to which it has access by means of the hyperbolic relation to the *vita beata*, which it embodies. The longing is "born of a lack," which is a lack in the sense of incommensurability to the end, not the lack of any *thing* or attribute, or a deficiency of givenness. The lack is an excess of givenness. It is only a yearning of the whole being towards what is infinitely beyond it. Only realized in the impossible yet enfleshed encounter with the other, erotic desire actualizes itself in a supernatural end.

Now we can see more clearly why Marion wants to replace the principle of Being with the principle of Life. If Being as principle entails a relation by similitude, Life as principle entails a hyperbolic relation by desire for what is not—the *vita beata* that indwells us as we dwell in it. We can see that Life is not just another term for Being insofar as it is received through the logic of *apokalypsis* and thus of anamorphosis rather than through the logic of *aletheia* and Dasein, for erotic encounter manifests the impossible. Relation to the *vita beata* only emerges through the anamorphic response that converts the immemorial into the body, the impossible into the actual. The flesh is incommensurable to its principle, but is nevertheless unconditionally related to it as its most intimate [im-]possibility. The Being of beings, by contrast, is always there as the possible par excellence. It grounds the very possibility (and actuality) of thinking myself. Desire for the *vita beata* in the very act of desiring what is impossible brings it about: it bodies forth as the memory of that which never had any presence. It bodies forth as restlessness, bringing about the supernatural in the world.

Teleology and Impossibility: Analogy as Perfecting Limit

The impossible can be understood as a development of Aquinas's understanding of analogy as "perfecting limit" expressed in the maxim: "*gratia (fides) non destruit, sed supponit et perficit naturam (rationem)*." If Thomas thinks analogy as a perfecting limit and we have thought "perfecting" (telos) as beyond the horizon of being and "limit" as an excess

and an infinite givenness, we must completely reimagine what sort of relation analogy entails. The concept of the horizon is a concept of a limit. But the limit in this case is not like a wall between two domains within a univocal continuum such that where one is the other is not. It is not the case that the horizon is somewhere and not somewhere else. We do not only come into contact with the limit when we are on the edge of one domain. The horizon is everywhere and we always live the limit. The horizon is not only receding into distance, but is the origin of contact, an origin that is a gathering, a source, a wellspring. The horizon of givenness as perfecting limit does not operate as an end in the way a nature operates as an end. The givenness received in a hyperbolic relation is not the maximum expression of an essence towards which existence is directed.

The limit is a call that is not received by a merely adequate response. It is a call that is heard only in the response, a call that is only received *as* the response, and thus only received in self-gift towards the call to which it responds, the superlative relation in which the response is not similar to the call but is wholly other than the call. As erotic, the call produces a response other than what it says (III, §1). Insofar as the principle is beyond form and matter, the end of man is not in the happiness achieved through the health of the body, the unity of form and matter. Man may find a certain happiness in things of the world, but his true end is in God, and his true completion is accomplished in a greatness that exceeds this attempted adequation of essence and existence. The end of man surpasses entirely that desperate bourgeois goal of a healthy existence of the body. One might invoke not only Nietzsche, but especially Dostoevsky to suggest that it may be the case that it takes a certain "derangement of the organism"[69] to receive the grace to rise to the ability to bear the truth — to see the divinity or the devil. This is the case because the impossible breaks through precisely as the disruption of rational unity. Reason's function is to integrate, after the fact, this given into the

[69] Henri De Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, trans. Edith M. Riley, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1949), 280.

whole so as to stretch out what the whole is. Faith (reception of what you cannot comprehend but can only witness to) does not destroy reason. It perfects it with a perfection that is beyond the mind's own possibilities, but nevertheless given to it. Reason is stunned by the given and left reeling. But this given limit is its own perfection. It stuns because it is beyond essence arising as the intimate other. Mind only comes back to its own so far as it can handle the nonrational disruption and not refuse or suppress it. Mind must rather evaluate the given, and assume it into the realm of world. Only by becoming actual in the receiver does the given become possible. Sometimes worldly happiness, the unity of form and matter, being and possibility can prevent the end from appearing.

The impossible is a real term prior to the possible. It is an end intrinsic to drive-directed desire. The actualization of the impossible is the completion of this desire in the immemorial desired. What is characteristic of this end never given as experience is that it is converted into actuality directly without losing its "transcendence," that is, without becoming a purely immanent end. Its "in" is always expressed identically with its "beyond" insofar as it brings about the new. The end is actualized through self-gift, which creates new possibilities in its erotic encounter with the other. Love strictly speaking is not of this world, but is itself the impossible par excellence because it creates the new and is only received in hyperbolic relation. The image, therefore, as the incomprehensible, is she who does not conform to the already of this world and its forms, but renews the world by making the impossible actual. Analogy as perfecting limit is the maximal presence of the impossible within us.

Erotic Truth and Nongeneric Motivation

Memoria (understood as the minded body) and its aim towards what *is* not (the *vita beata*) opens man to what is beyond the confines of possibility. Never a possibility of the

mind and never even possibly possessed (all desire the happy life, but none possess it), knowledge of the impossible can only be received—like the body itself:

> [T]he immemorial is nothing like an objective, an object, or a being and belongs no more to the world than to space. Without object, unworldly and utopic, the immemorial does not escape just our finite thought but in fact *all* thought inasmuch as thought is intentional…it nevertheless remains that thought, when it does not comprehend what it would like to aim at, can at least still think itself on the basis of what it cannot comprehend, but which comprehends it.[70]

Despite the objective, dative nature of the ego as the gifted, receiving, when it comes to the immemorial, is the very activity of the flesh itself as its yes-saying to Life. Life as principle requires the affirmation of life in order to access its knowledge, where Being is accessible precisely in its neutrality as universal, determined by the ontos-noesis correlation. "Life (precisely because I do not possess it but receive it from elsewhere) gives itself only on condition that I receive it in each instant, therefore without stop or limit, in the situation in which I desire it also and necessarily as *happy*…. When life is substituted for Being, it is already a matter of beatitude, intrinsic to desire and therefore unknown by Being that neither desires nor could desire."[71] Being, as what correlates to the noetic-universal, is neuter. It is known in the act of disclosure of *aletheia*, which makes it universally transferable knowledge. Since the *vita beata* can only be known in the radical yes-saying of erotic directedness, what it knows arrives in the mode of *apokalypsis* rather than *aletheia*.

Marion critiques the two modes of truth that, for him, reside fully within consciousness because here even what the mind knows does not affect it. The first is propositional truth: a statement is true or it is false. Truth is "correctness of assertion. It predicates something of something so as to arrive at the correspondence of the concept with the thing, 'adaequatio rei et intellectu'."[72] A concept adequates to its object or signifies it successfully. Here there is always a third term that governs over the thing and the concept that the mind (re)produces,

[70] SP, 82-83; ALS, 126.
[71] SP, 86; ALS, 130.
[72] SP, 129; ALS, 184.

namely, the adequation itself. As examples of this view, Marion quotes Descartes, "There can be no truth or falsity in the strict sense except in the intellect alone," and Kant, "Truth or illusion is not in the object, insofar as it is intuited, but in the judgment about it, insofar as it is thought."[73] These views correctly say that truth resides in the intellect insofar as they model truth on non-contradiction, which is a purely noetic principle since contradiction only exists in the concept (I, §4). But this reduction of truth to non-contradiction contradicts the view held by Thomas Aquinas, for whom the order of truth exceeds that of *res* or *intellectus* (IV, §2). Further, it excludes the three orders of Pascal for whom love's rationality exceeds the rationalities of being and mind (II, §3).

Truth as predication, Marion argues, leads not to the thing itself but to the knowing mind, "which constitutes it by saying it. …I make the truth by rendering possible the adequation between the concept and the thing, that is to say, by making a judgment about it."[74] Here in order to make truth, one must set oneself at a distance. "I make it, it does not make me" and it "does nothing to me."[75] The self is unaffected by the truth precisely because it is the transcendental condition of the appearance of truth. This truth can attain only to objects, forms or natures. Because the self is untouched, this truth actualizes the alienation of the mind from the world. The mind knows the world as the object of its gaze, which ultimately means it only knows its own gaze, the noetic, universal order as a final horizon. Undoubtedly the purely active ego, which does not attain egoity, is not in fact that far from the other extreme within the predicative model of truth: the purely passive ego that simply conforms to the real object.

Heidegger, in response to the way objective truth obscures vision, hides Being, and puts beings in reserve, proposed a second mode of truth: truth as the disclosure of Being, truth as *aletheia*. In this figure, "[n]ot only does the thing phenomenalize itself, and phenomenalize

[73] SP, 129. Descartes, *Regulae ad directionem ingeneii* VIII, AT X, 396, 3-4 (English trans., 1:30); Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 350, A III, 234) (English trans., 297).
[74] SP, 129; ALS, 185.
[75] SP, 129; ALS, 185.

itself without reserve, but above all it phenomenalizes itself without arising from a synthesis or a constitution, solely on the basis of itself."[76] Already for Heidegger, "[o]ne can no longer alienate the truth of the thing from the thing itself, in the way that would be imposed with its determination by the correctness of the statement and logical adequation."[77] While Heidegger wants to overcome the primacy of beings over Being, Marion argues that truth as *aletheia*, the disclosure of Being, is not ultimately much different than propositional truth insofar as it does not impose on me as much as it presupposes me as Dasein. It does not do something as much as it simply says something about something. Therefore, it maintains the privilege of a certain being over Being since it "does not put Dasein into question for the radical reason that Dasein itself puts truth into play as one of its figures."[78] In other words, a determining third term, like that of the *adaequatio* still rules over the manifestation of truth, such that the ego still determines phenomenalization. What is critical here is not that the ego become entirely passive as if idealism should be overcome in realism. Rather, the ego must be affected in order for there to be a real, concrete encounter with the Truth. The third, mediating term must give way so that the two terms can actually relate in a real relation. Thus Marion proposes a third figure of truth: the erotic figure of truth.

For Marion, as we have seen, the ego is identified not by its thinking but by its desiring and therefore by the other that affects it. The other exceeds objectivity because it precedes the ego and gives the ego to itself. God, as the Other par excellence takes the place of the self: "if I am (what, therefore) there where I love, then that becomes my *self* more interior to me than my private ego. Now what I love is named God; therefore, I find myself there. Put otherwise: God appears as the place of *self* that I want and have to become."[79] Another way of saying this is that the other takes the place of the self because desire is not towards an essence.

[76] SP, 130; ALS, 185.
[77] SP, 130; ALS, 186.
[78] SP, 130-131; ALS, 186.
[79] SP, 97; ALS, 143.

Desire is not generic and does not fulfill itself in generically motivated action, such as instinctual action: "I am not from myself nor in myself because I am no longer essentially who I am but what I love—my distance to the place of [my] *self* is defined by my distance to what I love. The *cogito, sum* is carried away toward the *interior intimo meo*."[80]

To understand erotic truth, we must distinguish erotic directedness from phenomenological intentionality, instinctual action, and other forms of becoming that move towards an essence or knowledge of an essence. These express the adequative mode of truth. Erotic truth is a form of truth that is transfigurative because it affects the ego while the first two figures of truth do not. Marion's account of this God who is found *interior intimo meo*, therefore in place of any essence of the self, does not always give us the clearest description of the directedness towards alterity. Still, his phenomenology of anamorphosis gives us some clues as to how such erotic directedness would manifest differently than directedness towards an essence.

In order to better understand the directedness of the image, I want to further tease out this difference, which comes down to how different teloi function. Any telos, whether an essence, or a telos beyond essence, cannot be perfectly accomplished. This failure of existence to perfectly coincide with its telos is a rule definitive for finite existence. But this rule operates in quite a different manner depending on the kind of telos we are talking about. An essence acts as a perfection, an ideal form, towards which imperfect existence is directed. As a particular instance, the existent always approaches the essence without ever arriving. Nothing can perfectly instantiate an essence. The generic end is always imperfectly accomplished. Although the nongeneric end like the generic end cannot be achieved by the existent, it is no longer because the ideal form eludes existence, for we are no longer aiming at an ideal form. Rather, it is because the telos is at once radically incommensurable to the existent and infinitely given. It is therefore beyond the world of possibility or necessity in which generic

[80] SP, 98; ALS, 144.

ends are actualized, albeit imperfectly. Essence does demand a type of incommensurability with respect to existence, but, as the ideal form, essence is precisely the means by which things of the world are measured to be excellent. It is therefore not a radical incommensurability.

Essence is the possible par excellence even if it is not possible to realize. It measures the degree of actuality of beings. Essence is the horizon of the world. Nongeneric desire, by aiming at the other as such, the "otherwise than being," does not even attempt to adequate to the end. It finds its end in the alterity of the other, which it does not assimilate into the accomplishment of an essence. It is the logic of anamorphosis that instantiates the non-generic telos. The mind receives the telos by altering itself, indeed differentiating from the telos in which its motivation finds its motive and reason. Existence moves towards an essence as an end. The image remains in alterity and differentiates from its end. Its end is not accomplished in the efficient expression of an essence. Like the existent's movement towards the essence, the image does not accomplish its telos. But unlike the imperfection of the existent, the reason the image does not accomplish its telos is not because the telos is an ideal limit. Rather, the image fails to accomplish its telos because its telos is the other as such. In receiving the other, the image differentiates and maintains the distance of alterity because of the hyperbole of the relation. In short, a completely different relation operates between the minded flesh and its nongeneric end than that which operated between existence and essence. There is undoubtedly a link between this analysis and the doctrine of the Trinity that opposes the Greek understanding of the relation of the (perfect) One to the (imperfect) many. Relation gives identity not by dissolving difference but by increasing difference to the point of requiring a real term beyond ousia that can be both utterly different and always in relation: that of *hypostasis*.

The trace of the divine comes not as an ideal form, but from beyond the form. The sign of its advent is the stretching of the form. The form of the human can only be identified

with the nongeneric desire towards what it loves in the particular. It only accomplishes its identity therefore in the stretching of form accomplished in the return gift: the measure you measure will be measured to you with such a saturated return that it stretches the measure. For the human person, what motivates is not a generic end, but another more intimate to me than I am to myself. Form (as desire) expands as it gives itself, but the relation is only accomplished and expanded in a mutual self-gift between the terms of the relation.

Not directed towards an essence, but towards an intimate alterity, eros manifests the impossible in its accomplishment. The minded flesh is not determined by any instinctual desire or natural end. She is fixed as a flesh only by what she loves. Erotic truth "is the figure of truth in which, in order to manifest itself, truth would have to be loved and in which hatred would suffice to cover up this manifestation, love and hate thereby assuming a resolutely *epistemic* (indeed phenomenological) function, that of making visible and therefore intelligible the manifestation of the phenomenon."[81] It is too simple to talk about "choice" here as a selection among possibilities (to be "for this" and "against that") and as if eros were not already compelled. Desire at once comes over me, and yet is a free choice. It is not a freedom to choose among possibilities from a neutral position, which is, after all, a poor sort of freedom insofar as the will does not really want any of its options wholeheartedly. It is free, rather, because it creates possibilities according to anamorphosis: "either refuse the truth so as not to have to bear it and to remain what I now am, or accept it and make it incumbent on me to become other than what I now am." The excess with which eros and its truth bears down upon me leads to the ordeal of truth: "either flee it so as to avoid its pain, or confront its pain so as to see it."[82] "*Deum nemo non habere, sed eum qui bene vivit, habet propitium, qui male, infestum*—No one does not have God, but he who lives well, has him as gracious, while he

[81] SP, 131; ALS, 187.
[82] SP, 118; ALS, 170.

who lives badly has him as an infestation [or renders him unsafe, insecure and disturbed by this insecurity]."[83]

I am arguing that this radically incontestable Truth coincides with radical freedom precisely because the desired Truth is immemorial. Truth as *vita beata* is impossible and can only be brought into being *as* flesh and *through* anamorphosis. While the fact that it is the immemorial necessitates that it is "imposed incontestably," its immemoriality also implies that it can be suppressed through hatred. It is not imposed incontestably in the way a logical proof can be incontestable. It is an "imposed" relation, but it is also a fragile one because it only exists in and as the anamorphosis. Its fragility means I must in some sense "make" it in order for it to be. In this way, that it is imposed (immemorially) also means the one who receives it is radically free—must make it in order to receive it immemorially. Truth must be willed into existence. The choice involved is not a matter of choosing the true proposition when the false also presents itself. It is a matter of willing the truth into existence through assent, that is, through commitment to the Truth. We all know the truth incontestably through the unconditional desire for the *vita beata*, but it is a matter of being faithful to the truth that faithfully abides within us.

§7. The Freedom of Hyperbolic Relation

Since truth imposes itself not as first order ontological fact or second order possibility, but rather as third order impossibility, willing the truth is not to accept it as one accepts a possibility. Rather, willing the truth is to create the truth, measured by the measure the will wills. To highlight the radicality of this ordeal of truth, we can put it next to Marion's reading of Nietzsche:

> When Nietzsche postulates that "the will to truth is only a means of the will to power," he does not mean, as some imagine, to submit truth to power, indeed to eliminate

[83] SP, 118; ALS, 170. *De vita beata*, III, 19, 4, 256.

> it thereby; he is rather trying to think the essence of truth more radically than as a representation or even a manifestation—to think it as what thought thinks only by *creating* it: "The 'truth' is not something that would be [already there], and would be there to be found or discovered—something which is to be created." What does *create* mean here? Obviously *to will.* But what in turn does *willing* mean? Willing *wants* to say, and when the will says, first and essentially, it wills. What does it will? Its own will rising forever in power. Up to what power can the will rise by creating truth? As far as it bears it: "'How much truth does a spirit *bear* (*ertägt*), how much truth does it risk (*wägt*)?'—that is what would be for me the appropriate measure of value." And bearing…depends only on the scope of the "dionysian yea-saying"—in other words, on love.[84]

Erotic truth demands the decision to be for it or against it, not because of some arbitrary division between those who understand and those who do not, but because of the hyperbolic nature of truth, encountered as the intimate other which one receives to the degree that one wills, and which is embodied as the will willing. Erotic truth takes the status of first principle:

> if the truth could make itself loved or hated not because he who first knew it could *then* desire it or refuse it by his optional commentary but because knowing it would *intrinsically* imply either loving it or hating it. In this case love could open as a condition of its possibility, truth—love making truth, instead of a (as in common usage) truth making (the possibility of) love.[85]

In this case, only love makes truth because only love encounters the immemorial and bears it into being.

Its capacity to stretch form and to create possibility is what makes love so decisive that it determines the ego:

> The lover loves so radically that loving decides everything about him and first of all his being. Accordingly, to reach himself, he does not have to master an *ousia*, (supposedly his own, though he perhaps does not have one), but reach what he loves; and to know himself, he does not have to be preoccupied with knowing *himself* but with knowing (or at least identifying) what truly is decisive for him—namely, what he loves in truth. More intimate to me than any equality of the *self* to itself thus turns out to be the distance of the lover to what he loves. Whoever travels this distance knows himself because he knows the other *self* who resembles him more than himself—a self more him than he himself.[86]

[84] SP, 136; ALS, 137. *Posthumous Fragments*, 7 [24] and 9 [91], in Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Colli-Montinari, 8:1.311, and 8:2.49.
[85] SP, 114; ALS, 164.
[86] SP, 96; ALS, 142.

The distance of the lover to his end in his beloved is an infinite space, unable to be crossed by deciding for a possibility or for a being. Only the othering-in-relation of anamorphosis traverses this distance.

Marion continues to emphasize the passive formation of ipseity: "I have nothing—better, I *am* nothing—that I did not first receive, beginning with they very *self* who receives. The ego comes from the given *self*, and not the *self* from the ego's self-consciousness."[87] But if we do not interpret the distance of self to the gift as a natural distance, but an infinite distance, this passivity hardly can be about extrinsic possibilities enacted upon the ego. "I am not when and each time that I decide to be by deciding to think. I am each time that, as lover and as gifted, I let the immemorial come over me, as a life that does not belong to me and that, for that very reason, inhabits me more intimately than myself."[88] There is an implicit active element such that if I am not constituted through myself (*ens per se*) but rather through another, it is nevertheless the case that I am given *from* myself (*ens a se*) as the image, for I must "advance into the distance" where I can receive the other and thus also receive myself.[89] It is this possibility of passivity *and* activity that conditional relation excluded and that hyperbolic relation overcomes. The reason for Marion's emphasis on the passive nature of the reception of saturated phenomena is his desire to show that saturated phenomena cannot be determined beforehand by possibility. My reading of the reception of saturated phenomena increased to hyperbolic relation means that saturated phenomena cannot be received except through a radically active receptivity. Otherwise, a purely passive account would remain within the logic of similitude where the receiver simply takes on the form and receives the impression of the given, albeit suddenly and overwhelmingly. But this is a model that pays little attention to the logic of eros (IV, §1) nor to the active, linguistic, and hermeneutical element of any saturation that could saturate the self to such an extent that it would give the

[87] SP, 99; ALS, 145.
[88] SP, 100; ALS, 148.
[89] SP, 98; ALS, 144.

self itself. The flesh is active to such a degree that only self-giving brings about what could not be accomplished otherwise: the correlation of the gifted and what the gifted gives, precisely the felt feeler (flesh) augmented into a gifted giver (icon). The trace of the divine received as gift from the beginning is simply the fact that the self-giving ego brings about the new, stretching the form of the self beyond necessity or possibility by radically giving itself.

Thus, I would argue that we need to read Marion's analysis as demonstrating less that the self is first of all passive in the form of an objective me, but that the self only emerges from the third order truth which is beyond any subject-object grammar (III, §3). His phenomenology of the gifted begins to make sense when we conceive it as a mutual self-giving where I receive myself from what gives itself to me, but also I only receive the other by actively bringing about the impossible, *advancing* into distance. The advent of the other that I love is not therefore a pure interruption in a Barthian sense, which would exclude an active self-giving, and any need of preparation from the side of the ego. Nevertheless, it cannot be accounted for by the spontaneity of the a priori ego and its dependent intentional structure (III, §1). This is precisely what the concept of hyperbolic relation defines. Maximum relation — receiving yourself entirely from what you receive — is only accomplished in the minimum relation of free self-giving, which is the only means through which I receive the other with such a maximal interiority as to receive myself — such maximal passivity that the radicality of the passivity (self-receiving) breaks out as a radical activity (self-giving). The logic of the icon is the logic of free self-movement within the economy of desire and a yea-saying towards the immemorial *vita beata*, which is perpetually created through the very assent that gives it body as a flesh.

Since there is "so great a separation between God and creature that between them exists no common genus whatsoever," the lack of generic, spatial difference means that "the

radical positivity of a radical unity declares itself" (Przywara).[90] The "in" of what is beyond genus—the intimate—explodes towards the "beyond" of the impossible. In the words of Nicholas of Cusa:

> Hence, you must be elevated, by means of profound meditation, above all contrarieties, figures, places, times, images, and contradictions, above [all] alterities, disjunctions, conjunctions, affirmations, and negations. Thereupon, you, a son of Life, will be transformed into Life by means of being elevated beyond all comparative relations, all parallelisms, and all rational inferences—elevated unto pure intellectual life.[91]

Nongeneric unity with God is expressed without generic alterity: as dwelling in the intimate space of impossibility. If finite agencies are mutually exclusive, this is not the case with infinite agencies. The minded agency always also enacts the infinite agency of God, but only through the active self-gift which reveals the priority of the infinite over the enacted finitude. The enacted finitude (flesh) is passive towards the infinite in the sense of always being affected and drawn to what it desires. The infinite here puts the finite into play. But flesh therefore also only comes into itself as active self-gift. The infinitude of God over the finite agency of man makes the finite agency in some sense infinite. The divine agency is infinite because God is pure act with no possibility. The human agency is infinite because not directed towards an essence or another finite end. The divine is infinite as a perfection, the human is infinite because it is the type of finitude that makes itself concrete by excluding possibility through actualizing the impossible. In man, self-giving and self-receiving arrive at egoity by ascending to the third order in which the impossible (*vita beata*) is made actual as flesh. Divine and human agencies are not only noncompetitive, but further human self-giving participates in the act of creation because of the hyperbole of the relation to God. If we cannot create matter and cannot disrupt form and its patterns arbitrarily, we can nevertheless bring about what was not by means of our love which participates in the immemorial, third order erotic Truth, making it actual precisely as the intimate encounter of the flesh.

[90] Przywara, 215.
[91] Nicholas of Cusa, *De filiatione Dei,* 4, 71. Trans. Jasper Hopkins, *A Miscellany of Nicholas of Cusa*, (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1994), 349-350. Also see Hoff, 14.

Thus the gifted does not merely receive the gift passively but gives itself beyond itself. Truth as erotic both affects the ego (passive ego that receives the truth) so far that desire becomes a principle and generates the new (active ego which creates the truth). This active aspect is not insisted upon in order to fortify a "self" against pure determination by the other. Rather, it is simply that loving is what is truly decisive and loving is always radically free, for the lover wants nothing other than his total devotion to his beloved. With love it is precisely the inverse of habit: the more slavish the devotion, the more freedom is accomplished, even the more selfhood and difference.

I have introduced the concept of hyperbolic relation in the erotic and iconic economies as a coincidence of opposites (maximum and minimum relation) that occurs in the space of the Heideggerian identity, the belonging together, that I looked at in the introduction to this study. This coincidence happens in the space of identity because this is the space in which the icon enters, such that it precedes and exceeds being-possibility. This is not only the space of the advent of God, but it is also the space of the advent of man. In fact, it is where man coincides with his divine origin in a maximum relation that is not a blending or a passivity or a usurpation since it coincides rather with the minimum relation of free self-giving. In other words, by increasing relation to hyperbole, I have shown that the impossible is not only the sign of God's prerogative, but it also marks the prerogative of man.

Insofar as that which precedes the being-possibility correlation comes as the impossible it disrupts identity as a pure belonging together in two directions. First in that it is the space of God's advent and intimacy with us. Second, that since, on the side of creation, human beings correlate to the divine impossibility (maximum relation manifesting as the minimum relation of a radical freedom that generates the impossible), man exceeds the correlation of being to possibility by bringing the impossible into existence. This is the reason the erotic figure of truth has converged with Nietzsche's will to truth. In this way, Marion's

challenge to Heidegger that at first appears Barthian, coincides again with Heidegger's understanding of the task of thinking, but now in a christological mode, that is with the vertical coincidence of opposites that enables the horizontal *τὸ αὐτό*,which is the belonging together of thinking and Being. What Marion alters is the mode of manifestation: *apokalypsis* rather than *aletheia*, for man cannot bring the truth into being *by* his own powers, but only insofar as truth is *identical to* his own powers and thus maximally precedes them. For in the phenomenon of the will "and in it alone, the possibility is equivalent to the actuality, since the will is carried out as a power, therefore in the role of possibility."[92] Here the correlation consists precisely in the assent to what exceeds the possibility-actuality correlation of the will willing, which is thus constituted in a grace that expands the will as it creates truth. This is why Marion inscribes the Nietzschean concept of truth into the Augustinian formula of the *interior intimo meo*:

> The truth of the third order, which manifests itself only as loved, is therefore no longer accomplished except insofar as I am willing, insofar as I will it. In this sense the Nietzschean principle that truth results from the will finds a clear forerunner: more original to the truth than itself is, it turns out, the will to truth, or more exactly, the will *for* the truth. For it is not a matter of willing it, in the (supposedly plain Nietzschean) sense in which the will to power would establish it starting from and with a view toward its own rise to power, but of letting it itself advance in manifestation, by wanting to support its manifestation and in the measure of this resolution.[93]

The will willing coincides, hyperbolically, with the not-other that comes over it as desire for the truth. Enacting impossibility consists in converting *cupiditas*—which is a desire to possess the desired and is expressed as a directedness towards nature—into *caritas*—which reverses the direction of desire from a reaching out to grasp as a possession into a being possessed by the other so far that he gives me to myself insofar as desire becomes a free weight that gives me weightiness as what I am. From a directedness towards nature, we become free by directing our desire towards what is worthy of love. The soul becomes free by going against the grain of nature: "Love may indeed be explained as a weight, provided that we mean a free

[92] SP, 163; ALS, 227.
[93] SP, 164; ALS, 228.

weight: free first from the constraints of matter, second from the limits of nature, and therefore, in the end, perfectly voluntary…. [I]n the case of love, *pondus* must become voluntary and therefore set itself free from natural (and material) determinations…"[94] Augustine explains this freedom from nature in that, according to the order of nature, we prefer angels to men, while, according to the law of justice, we ought to prefer good men to bad angels.[95]

In this account, human freedom has arisen insofar as radical passivity coincides with radical activity, thus reconfiguring what Marion has said about saturation by thinking it through Nicholas of Cusa's coincidence of opposites. Freedom here is not through limiting relation, but through increasing it. Only relation increased to hyperbole enables real freedom because only the hyperbole expresses an intimacy with the impossible.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the psychoanalytic concept of drive describes the motivation of the animal "without essence" because it expresses the kind of motivation that aims towards a nongeneric end. This end is nongeneric not in the sense of directed towards a particular as opposed to a universal. It is nongeneric by means of surplus. In short, restlessness mind, expresses a nonadequative relation to the world, which consequently disrupts the horizon of world and its form-matter correlation. Further, restlessness has its principle in the immemorial rather than in essence. Restless mind embodies the *vita beata* and brings about the impossible. Rather than essence moving towards existence or possibility moving towards actuality, restless mind is constituted as the impossible for us (*vita beata*) manifesting as the actual for us (the flesh) through the desire that both comes over us and that we actualize through our own activity towards nongeneric ends. In this way, iconic participation manifests as a directedness without similitude to its principle: its intimate and immemorial other.

[94] SP, 268; ALS, 362.
[95] SP, 267; ALS, 361. *De civitate Dei*, XI, 28, 35, 122.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have argued that relation does not require similitude and that nonsimilitude is not only a feature of poor or logical relations, but also of what I have defined as hyperbolic relations. After situating my argument within Marion's analysis of conceptual idolatry (Chapter I), I explored the possibility of a relation of radically incommensurable terms on the basis of Aquinas's concept of real relation and with respect to the saturated phenomenon of the event (Chapter II). Here I introduced the concept of hyperbolic relation. I argued that the human relation to God surpasses similitude and its comparative relations by means of the superlative interiority of the God *interior intimo meo.* I further developed this concept of hyperbolic relation in light of Marion's concept of the saturated phenomenon of the flesh and of enfleshed self*, l'adonné*, capable of receiving such excess (Chapter III). I argued that man is infinitely distant from God not through absence or poverty of relation, but through the superlative intensity of the union given as radical affectivity: where originary auto-affection and originary alterity coincide. I demonstrated that if we think relation within an analogue, non-digital space, the intimacy of contact between orders does not abolish distance but explodes similitude through the superlative interiority of the other term.

Analogy based on contact between incommensurable terms led to thinking hyperbolic relation within the economy of anamorphosis or call and response (Chapter IV) through which I showed two things. First, I argued that we can make sense of Marion's economy of the icon as a logic without similitude insofar as the icon entails a relation through anamorphosis. Second, by thinking reception as anamorphosis I demonstrated that a completely given God is not reduced to a worldly horizon by such a radical immanence. Rather, his total givenness reveals him precisely as the one who contradicts the worldly horizon. Finally, I examined the phenomenon of the human person as the image of God in light of the *interior intimo meo* as

hyperbolic relation (Chapter V). I made sense of Marion's thesis that man is the animal without essence by showing that essence is functioning as a teleological term and that the incomprehensibility particular to man is his nongeneric telic motivation. He receives himself only in his directedness towards alterity rather than towards an essence. The absence of similitude to an essence reveals itself as a maximum of relation to the Other (God) which coincides with a minimum relation of free, nongeneric self-movement. As a consequence I suggested that the human person has a twofold supernatural end: to *receive* the impossible (that is, to find her end in God) and to *enact* the impossible in erotic directedness towards the world. Thus, while Nicholas of Cusa deployed the coincidence of opposites as a hermeneutical principle for locating the God who, by necessity, exceeds the world's possibilities, I have developed an ontological coincidence of opposites: the paradoxical way of being for the animal that abides according to the image.

It is through increasing the relation beyond similitude that I have avoided the dialectic between a Barthian alterity and a univocal a priori interiority. Increasing relation from a comparative to a superlative has allowed me to speak not only of relation without similitude, but also of analogy without similitude. I thus argued that Marion's logic of the icon functions according to such a view of "analogy without analogy" and that this is where his distancing of himself from the *analogia entis* leads. In this regard, I have shown that Augustine's theo-anthropo-logical principle (*interior intimo meo*) merges with Cusa's coincidence of opposites and escapes heteronomy (nominalist or essentialist) to the precise degree that it operates within Aquinas's grammar of real relation but beyond Aquinas's concept. I have thereby radicalized real relation from an adequative similitude to a relation of incommensurable terms: the paradoxical coincidence in which maximal relation *is* minimal relation. Since I have constructed relation in a non-virtual way, I did not need to abolished modern developments towards freedom and personal identity in order to speak of relation. Instead I have

restructured freedom and identity in a post-nominalist mode that avoids the virtual, competitive relations of subjectivism and objectivism. In order that relation does not become a totalitarian determination, we cannot throw off relation to God for the sake of autonomy, but must risk pushing relation to its extreme where maximal relation is radical freedom.

Thus my analysis has intervened on the debate concerning analogy in an entirely new way, cutting across the old division between metaphysically construed alterity and ontological participation. Instead I have expressed analogy as the relation of incommensurable terms which safeguards alterity by thinking it as radical immanence. Analogy as a coincidence of opposites leads to two consequences. First, it offers a way to escape thinking God's interiority to us as a possibility for us—he is immanent only as the impossible and therefore more near than he could be as a possibility. Second, human action itself is not determined by possibility, but is itself a performance of the impossible precisely due to the hyperbole of the relation to the *Posse ipsum*. As hyperbolic and impossible in itself, this relation by definition exceeds the being-possibility correlation.

My development of hyperbolic relation poses two essential challenges to Marion. First, Marion only develops the way in which we might *receive* saturated phenomena. He develops *l'adonné* as little more than the receiver, who receives herself in what she receives. Indeed, what his analysis decisively shows is that saturated phenomena cannot be reduced to the horizon of the object nor determined by a subject and therefore does not submit to the a priori conditions of possibility. But because of the paradox of the superlative relation, I have tried to develop the way in which we might *give* saturation, and give it radically from ourselves. In short, the received other is originary and affecting the self all the way down with such a total affection that this radical passivity coincides with radical activity One only receives oneself from what one receives insofar as one gives oneself from oneself. I began to develop this concept of the self in the last chapter, but it needs to be developed more fully.

Despite the claim for radical freedom, this is a deeply kenotic understanding of the self (and therefore of freedom), taking its inspiration from the hymn of Philippians 2. As such, the Christological implications need to be examined in more detail.

Second, I would like to return to the theme of the first chapter: the idol. Hyperbolic relation, insofar as it exceeds the being-possibility correlation of metaphysical similitude, occurs in the space of Heideggerian identity and therefore, for Marion, in the space of the iconic advent. Man finds himself in the gap of the belonging together united hyperbolically with the God without Being who enters through this gap. If maximum relation is the minimum relation of free self-movement, Marion's figure of the ego, *l'adonné*, has the privilege of exceeding the being-possibility correlation and thereby bringing about the advent of the impossible. While I explored this at the end of Chapter V, I would just want to point out that it challenges the idolatrous determination of the painting and other forms of human creativity, which instead always contain iconic elements. Obviously, as we have seen, Marion is not thinking the idol in a simplistic and purely negative fashion, but I am suggesting that the newness that something like great art brings about acts as more than a narcissistic mirror because according to hyperbolic relation the human will coincides with the divine will without assimilation. In short, the free act of the human person, as herself and not as a likeness of God, manifests the divine in the world, brings about what would otherwise be impossible.

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