

**THE TESTIMONY OF THE FRUIT: EVENTS PILED UP FROM THE  
THOUGHT OF JEAN LUC MARION**

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**Abstract**

This work is part of the phenomenological proposal of Jean Luc Marion, considering the criticism that he makes of Husserl and Heidegger. After entering the fundamentals of its phenomenological proposal, 'as much reduction, as much givenness', we will be able to get closer to understand the call that this generates and its phenomenalization through the response that piles up in our flesh. With what is proposed by Marion, we hope to find a possibility of approaching indications of the philosophical thought of Christ on the role of the third party and his testimony. The work focuses, therefore, on the traces left by the thought of Christ, which can be outlined starting from an escape from the Greek thought.

**Keywords:** Jean Luc Marion, phenomenology of donation, event, witness, fruit.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

God practices like us, with us, the logic of erotic reduction, according to the same ritual and following the same rhythm as we do, to such an extent that we may even wonder if we do not learn it from him and from no one else.

God loves in the same sense as we do. Jean

Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, p. 254.

Philosophy has given us, as a communally exploited gift, the possibility of thinking about everything that manifests itself to us. This beautiful tradition, like a healthy academy, is defined by thinking and experiencing what is presented to us. The following research deals with the thought of the French phenomenologist Jean Luc Marion. He, who is still active, offers us a broad reflection on the whole philosophical tradition. We could even say that he does not seek a break with a particular author, but rather proposes to rethink philosophy as such. In the face of his wide-ranging dialogue with tradition, we are offered a broad possibility of entering his thought: phenomenology, aesthetics, Cartesian thought or even, because of his Christian faith, through theology. We will briefly approach the respective criticisms he makes of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. This is solely to achieve our goal: to approach, by means of Marion's proposals, an outline of Christ's thought. Marion's criticisms, therefore, will help us to better understand the context in which the phenomenology of donation arises, and, in this way, we will be able to approach its two main theses: donation is understood starting from itself and it is given as a saturated phenomenon. Having explained Jean Luc Marion's thought, we will try, within our possibilities, to approach what he understands by the phenomenalization of the gift from its convocation. It is this convocation which, according to his philosophical proposal, is only phenomenally as far as it is responded to and validated by the judgement of the witness. Temporality, therefore, is equally affected and defined by the occurrence of the gift. Thus, in the same way, hermeneutics will interpret the given if it is universalisable. Our article, therefore, has the chapter entitled 'The gift' as an introduction to Jean Luc Marion's thought, as his proposal is not so widespread as to assume knowledge on the part of the reader. Then, the chapter entitled 'The Witness' presents the role of the flesh in the donation of phenomena. Thirdly, we intend to go into how these phenomena affect our existence, which is why we can speak of the phenomena 'piling up'. Without pretending, in the first three chapters, to correct Jean Luc Marion, we will expose his thought to approach our objective, which will be presented in the conclusions. We believe that by outlining Marion's thought we will be able, as he proposes and indicates, to get out of dualism and open ourselves to the thought of the event. We do not intend, therefore, to present different hypotheses in the same article. On the contrary, by proposing Marion's hypothesis, we will propose our own hypothesis: the thought of Christ is a thought that can be approached philosophically - not religiously or theologically - starting from the judgement of the fruit. This reflection, more than a critique, is a continuation which testifies.

The French thinker's proposal, but which, like all interpretations, reflects what we have piled up in our own flesh. Thus, we could say that the following reflection arises from what Marion has given us, but exploited and interpreted, to bring us closer to the thought of Christ. Regardless of one's adherence to Christianity, we believe that the event of the Son of Man has transmitted to us a thought which, because of Greek reasoning, has been relegated to oblivion. This is why our aim is purely philosophical, as we are looking for clues to outline the thought of Christ. We hope to follow in the footsteps of the French thinker and thus come closer to a verbalisation of the thoughts of the Word. Despite the constant prejudice against thinking philosophy from Christianity, we believe it is possible. Scripture, far from being a religious testimony, is posited as the writing that testifies to God's happenings with humanity. This is why, we repeat, our objective is fully philosophical, even if we must dialogue with theology. Basically, it is faithful to Marion's thought: the gift in a single sense.

## 2. THE DONATION

The phenomenology of donation proposed by Jean Luc Marion is presented and based on a serious, respectful, and philosophical critique of the thought of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. These two greats of phenomenology are the ones that Jean Luc Marion tries to continue without abolishing, to surpass and maintain (2010, p. 152) his philosophical proposal. By briefly introducing ourselves into the thought of the German thinkers, we can approach Jean Luc Marion's proposal.

Jean Luc Marion identifies himself within phenomenology. He announces himself as a continuator of phenomenology, but transforming it - or rather, recognizing it - as first philosophy. This is why he continues the work of Edmund Husserl. About him, Marion points out:

Nothing is exempt from intuition, and therefore nothing escapes its reconduction in the full light of presence; neither the sensible, nor the essence, nor the categorial form itself; nothing will henceforth remain invisible, since a mode of intuition pursues and haunts each object like so many modes of presence (2011, p. 35).

Intuition, according to Marion's reading of Husserl, is what rules everything like a king. There would be nothing invisible or unpredictable since *e v e r y t h i n g* given is previously intuited by the subject. The metaphysical constant, where the presence of the entity plays a primordial role for the knowledge of the true, is repeated in Husserl. True knowledge will continue to be *adequatio*, but no longer of the intellect with the thing itself, but is "realized when the signified objectivity is given in the strict sense of intuition and is given exactly as it is thought and named" (Marion, 2005, p. 14). The subject, in the end, does not know any more.

than his own intuition: he signifies and conceptualizes what comes to him as given. This is because of the adequacy of the noema with the noesis. "Everything is linked by essential relations, and particularly the *nóesis* and the *nóeme*" (Husserl, 2013, p. 308). It is the correlation between *nóesis* and *nóema*, that is, between the intentional act with the intentional thing, which, for Marion, repeats the oblivion of donation as such. We will refer to Marion's proposals later.

Marion adheres to Heidegger's critique, albeit with some reservations. It is Heidegger who gives us the possibility of thinking between phenomenon and manifestation.

As a meaning of the expression "phenomenon" the following must therefore be retained: that-which-is-shown-in-itself, that which is patent. Phenomena" are then the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light, what the Greeks once identified, purely and simply with *τα ὄντα* (the entities) (Heidegger, 1997, pp. 51-52).

What can be 'brought to light' is the entity. Although, of course, it is not only the tangible, but everything that can be said - including, of course, thoughts. We would say, to introduce us to Marion's critique of the German thinker, that Heidegger identifies the phenomenon with the entity. Despite this, is it the phenomenon that manifests itself? The answer, according to the reading of the young Heidegger, is no. The phenomenon needs manifestation. The phenomenon needs the manifestation, but it is not the manifestation: "Although the "manifesting" is never a showing itself in the sense of the phenomenon, nevertheless, manifesting itself is only possible based on the showing of something" (Heidegger, 1997, p. 53). That-which-shows-itself-in-itself is, therefore, that which is announced to us, which presents or tells us the hidden, the unrepresented or the unsaid. The phenomenon is not a manifestation, but the manifestation needs the phenomenon to manifest itself. For this reason, we would say that the phenomenon manifests *manifestability*, presents the unrepresentable and, in this way, reveals - or unveils - the veiled. Thus, according to Heidegger, truth would not be adequacy but *ἀλήθεια* (Heidegger, 1997, pp. 55-57). These are Heidegger's reasons for trying to overcome Husserl. There is no noetic-noematic correlation, but a de-occultation through openness to the being that gives us the phenomenon, and thus phenomenology would serve as a method for ontology.

Jean Luc Marion's reading is close to both. He announces himself as a continuator of phenomenology but redefining its limits. His principle 'as much reduction, as much donation' is mainly based on two theses. "First, the thesis that the horizon of phenomenality determines it not only beyond objectivity, but also beyond being, to the point of donation itself" (Marion 2005, p. 11) and, secondly, "the thesis that certain phenomena comply with donation to the point of exemplifying it as saturated phenomena" (Marion, 2005, pp. 11-12). The first thesis deals with the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. First, it opposes the father of phenomenology, because the noetic-noematic correlation is still trapped in the paradigm of modernity: it is the *ego* that determines the margins of what is given. In his attempt to get out of the

metaphysics, Husserl repeats the same paradigm. The knowledge of the phenomenon is given based on an *adequatio* between object and consciousness, but the gift of the phenomenon itself is relegated and subjected to the reign of intuition. "Intuition inspects everything and respects nothing; it fulfils the theoretical demand with a strange mode of barbarism: the unleashing of presence" (Marion, 2011, p. 35). Everything that is given is given to consciousness. It is consciousness that intuits and thus correlates its prior knowledge with what is given at that moment to be able to really approach presence - albeit a presence that ultimately emerges from the subject. Thus, Marion proposes that Husserl's thought of 'returning to things themselves' meets its own end by anchoring itself to the object itself and thus forgets to think donation from its donability. This is why, in referring to Heidegger - while mentioning that he does not read Husserl adequately (Marion 2011, pp. 96-102) - he highlights his attempt to think outside the object. Despite this, he proposes a reconsideration of the reading of the 'shepherd of being'. First, and we believe the most important, is the necessary anteriority of *Dasein* with respect to *Sein*. "*Dasein*, since it brings being into play in it, cannot but bring itself into play, and therefore cannot be said to be other than "in person", just as it cannot bring itself into play other than as a self" (Marion, 2011, p. 149). The analytic of *Dasein*, where phenomena come into play according to their phenomenality - or, in other words, where manifestation is according to its manifestability - attempts to phenomenally what, according to its own proposition, is not phenomenon. In his desire to get out of the *ego* conception, he centres everything ego-centrally. This is why Marion states: "he is the entity for whom it is a question of his being, which is to say for whom being is always his own" (Marion, 2011, p. 149). If Heidegger's attempt was to eliminate all constitution of manifestability, he finds himself in failure by repeating the meaning of existence starting from the subject itself - albeit, this time, under a different name: *Dasein*. The tautology that presents *Dasein* as identifying itself, starting from itself, as the one that can understand the meaning of *Sein* should alert us: it can cause a conceptual idol (Marion, 2010, pp. 47-85) and, above all, privilege those entities that understand the meaning of being and forget those that fail to do so. Secondly, Marion is critical of the function that Heidegger assigns to phenomenology.

While for Husserl phenomenology made ontology obsolete because it is concerned, instead and better than ontology, with the being, for Heidegger, phenomenology falls under the title of ontology because it moves from entities to being. (Marion, 2011, p. 75).

Whereas for Husserl the object and its reduction led to the subject's intuition of the object, for Heidegger phenomenological reduction offers a method to ontology for the study of being. Heidegger thus relegates phenomenology to phenomenally the unphenomenalizable or, in other words, to thinking the unthought, to saying the unutterable and to presenting the unseen. Faced with this, we can say, along with Jean Luc Marion, that Heidegger's project puts an end to itself, and it seems legitimate to us to ask, along with the French thinker: "Where and when does Heidegger decide, or rather see the ontological card of phenomenology being decided under the gaze of thought? Why and how does Heidegger

comes to recognise as "*the fundamental phenomenological question*" the question "*What does it mean to be*" (Marion, 2011, p. 73). The answers to these questions undoubtedly give us much food for thought and reflection on the role of Martin Heidegger in our thinking. They enable us to think about his authority to confront philosophy and indicate that it has made a mistake, to such an extent that we should return to the original. In the same sense, they help us to think about how we understand philosophy, whether as a heritage that we exploit in community or, rather, as something solitary and isolated. They are also useful for us to announce the possibility of, once and for all, approaching Jean Luc Marion's first thesis.

Even the gift itself means, in very simple words, to eliminate causality from all phenomenality and to approach a phenomenology starting from the gift that is given according to and from itself, that is, the gift happens as gift and not according to our intuition or according to being. This is because "nothing given appears without giving itself or becoming given according to the fold of the gift" (Marion, 2005, p. 52). The possibility of approaching thinking from donation itself is embodied in our lives more than we realise. When something important happens in our world, we can only mention the *data* presented to us; what causes the event as such never appears except in the data it gives us. The event, therefore, con-vokes us and is only phenomenally by responding, the gift being the one that redefines our margins to 'vocalise' the response. The convocation, in this way, is vocalised based on the vocation that pro-vokes. Thus, each donation enables us to think and re-think the given. Each stigma left by the given gift is a possibility that increases, that makes our world richer. This is because there is no *apriori* hereafter or hereafter, but there is an event of the gift itself, which, in giving itself, gives us the possibility of escaping from the reign of intuition and the empire of being.

He tears himself away from the possibility of a rough voluntarism that constructs, from his ego-ism, an ego-latry that only he can understand and live, because he forgets the 'with' of constructing - this means that, by forgetting the other, only his own intuition remains, which institutes the world from its own reflection. Also, he frees himself from the whole chain that subjects him to be pierced and destined by something that is alien and incomprehensible to him, by something that leads him with a blindfold to see the non-visible; also, he frees himself from the possibility of finding himself in a non-privileged thought by not understanding being, which can have, as a final solution, an exclusion from the world. Only understanding the phenomenon from its donation will allow us to open our thinking to the advent of the donation itself. We can see how healthy this Marionian proposal is for our thinking. When a lover gives a gift to her lover, the object given does not signify the gift itself. The lover receives the object, but what is healthy is that he receives the object as a re-presentation that gives it its meaning, which is to say, the gift. Outside the object and outside that which would make the gift and the donation itself possible that which would destine the lover to give something to her lover, being replaceable and dispensable. Because if there is one thing, we can say about the gift given, it is that what is being given is not the gift itself, but it is the love that is given, happening as such, and that affects.

as proper to those in love. Such a gift, therefore, opens to the lover a world that he cannot fully grasp or define - he does not feel loved by the object, but understands that the object is given as a datum of the event of his lover's love for him.

By speaking of datum, which is to say, of that which presents itself to us as a trace or path, we can come closer to thinking about the second thesis: 'certain phenomena comply with donation to the point of exemplifying it as saturated phenomena'. It must be said, first, that 'donation not only completely invests manifestation, but also surpasses it and modifies its common characteristics' (Marion, 2008, p. 366). Manifestation, in Marion's thought, is donation itself. This gift manifests its event, but not without first surpassing and modifying the common characteristics of all manifestation. It is not only what is seen, but the event of the gift opens us to a manifestation that is seen based on itself. In other words, it is the manifestation of the gift that will announce to us how it will manifest itself. Intuition is overcome and re-formed by the event of the gift. This is why, at the beginning, we mentioned that the convocation of the gift is only phenomenally in its response. It is only the event of the gift that will define for us how to understand the event itself, and certainly not the other way around.

In Marion's thinking, there is no intentionality or a priori awareness that establishes the margins of manifestation, but rather the gift itself shapes our awareness and intuition. This is only possible if the phenomenon is presented to us as saturated. We will see why. Marion proposes that there are three types of phenomena: poor, common law and saturated. The first type of phenomenon is where meaning is possible to fully embrace. The second type offers us some unpredictability, but not infinite. The saturated phenomenon is, firstly, unpredictable because it saturates quantity and is thus also unrepeatable. Secondly, it is unbearable and intolerable because it dazzles our gaze. Then, thirdly, the saturated phenomenon is presented to us as absolute far from any possibility of analogy and relation. Finally, fourthly, it is given to us as admirable because, precisely, we cannot look at it without experiencing ourselves as being looked at by a gaze that remains invisible. These four types of saturated phenomena correspond to the event, the idol, the flesh, and the icon-face, respectively. This order is the most common in Jean Luc Marion's work, but it does not represent a hierarchy. These types of phenomena, being an inversion to the constituent subject - precisely because the 'subject' is constituted by the phenomena and not the other way around - present us with the paradox of the whole donation. "The saturated phenomenon finally establishes the truth of all phenomenality because it points, more than any other phenomenon, to the donation from which it comes" (Marion, 2008, p. 368-369). The truth of all phenomena is that they are given, but saturated phenomena indicate to us the gift to the greatest possible degree. These are the ones that could only be defined as given and definable based on their donation - taking care, in a special way, of their saturation which means, above all, ungraspable.



### 3. THE WITNESS

The truth of all phenomenicity presents us, therefore, with the fact that it is the donation that defines the happening of the summoned and not the other way round. This is why we can say that, in the face of the donation, there is no subject that constitutes the phenomenon, but a witness who is called upon and summoned.

In the face of the gift, the subject - like *Dasein itself* - finds itself confronted with its own end. It experiences itself as incapable of establishing causes and, above all, of generating them. The saturated phenomenon, therefore, is the possibility of putting an end to the paradox of metaphysics, enhanced in modernity, of the construction of the world based on concepts and intuition. This enables us to continue to think of a construction of the world, but not based on the subject, but based on the witness. The difference lies in the fact that the subject is the one who opens himself to the world and, in his openness, makes the world possible (Marion, 1993b, p. 441), while the witness emerges from the gift and is affected by it. To approach thinking in the last instance, we must approach the saturated phenomena of the flesh and its face, as well as thinking about its interlocution as a witness.

Our flesh places us in a world. We could even say that our world comes about because of a carnal encounter with the other. Indeed, we could say that we come into being as the fruit of an encounter. This is rooted in our condition as children - which of course we all share.

The child appears as their [the parents'] first mirror, in which they contemplate their first common visibility, since this flesh, even if they do not experience it in common, has nevertheless put their two fleshs in common, precisely in this common third where the child is exhibited. (Marion, 2005b, p. 226).

Our happening arises as a *third party*. Our whole carnal existence lies in the fact that we receive the flesh of others and that, in our own happening, we reflect it as a mirror. We could even say that each one of us acts as an icon of our parents: we reflect them and lead to them; our face presents the face of those who gave it to us. Our experiences carry, like resurrected wounds, all those pains and joys that we have experienced since we were put on stage in the world. We are not born and destined to learn a language, a culture, or certain arts, but we are impregnated with that heritage by the flesh that has given us our own flesh. This is why, first, we can say that we are staged from an encounter. Then, in the extension of our life's events, other flesh obviously comes to light. With those meats a process that we have inherited can be made new: to generate an icon that reflects our own flesh as 'put together' without it being our own flesh as such. The dynamics of the meats that generate the world is therefore always based on an encounter. Despite this, unfortunately, not everything in our world arises from an encounter.

love. We find that there are cases where the encounters are precisely of hatred, pain, and suffering. This is where a major problem arises. When the encounter is with the face of the beloved, there is no major setback to think of the world as generated between encounters; but when there is an encounter with the unloved, we are faced with a question to re-think.

Marion tries to solve this by proposing the face as the medium of the universal. The face and the compulsion it evokes do not only depend on whether love is involved. Every face evokes compulsion. We are responsible for all faces because none of them is irreplaceable.

The moral law - which announces, however, that the other must always be an end and not a means - only uses the face of the individualised other to the fulfilment of the universal. The compulsion of duty towards the other leads to the neutralisation of the other as *such*. The other is neutralised as other from the moment that the other can always be substituted there to offer the face required by the universal moral law: no face can claim to be irreplaceable because, if it were to achieve this in fact, immediately, in law, the act performed towards it would cease to satisfy the universality of the law. (Marion, 1993, p. 108)

The flesh and its face always present themselves as a possibility. We have already said that the saturated phenomenon does not refer us either to our intuition or to being but opens us to think it from itself. This is why the gift of the other is presented to us as a possibility and not as an end. In the face of this, we can approach the end of the imperative that requires us to think of the other always as an end. We are engendered through others, we know the world *through* others, we take part in our world that we *share*, and we *co-operate* with others in the growth of our patrimony. Thus, the other never appears only to insert us into the world. It is even with the other that we have our space and our time because, "as long as he has not entered our field of vision, that is to say, more precisely, as long as he has not *come* from his own other place to me, nothing has *happened* here and now" (Marion, 2005b, p. 45). Without the other, nothing happens, and, from nothing, nothing can be thought. We have all experienced at some time in our lives that nothing is really happening. Moreover, in these pandemically permeated days, many of us experience that time and space are at a standstill; that nothing is happening. This is because the medium for the world to happen is distant and far away; we have not yet reached that moment of being-together. We only need to look at our world to see that today, more than ever, we are a means, and we need others to our own salvation. The face of the other, as Marion pointed out a few years ago, is the universal medium that imposes a universal moral law on us. This is because no face is ever indispensable and irreplaceable, precisely because the face we may have in front of us refers us to the other faces it has faced and been impregnated with. The case, mentioned above, of our condition as children, presents us with this in a special way. When one of our friends comes to meet us, he carries in his life all the heritage given to him by those who have.

It is the same way that its own moral condition reflects others and is nourished by others. In the same way, his own moral condition reflects others and is nourished by others. In him, we see his face, but it reflects others; he is not himself, properly speaking, someone irreplaceable, because there is never in him something properly his own. There is no *subject*, but a *witness*.

We have seen that our flesh and its face are always related to the third. The encounter is only witnessed from the third party. We can make it even more precise: "Witness, the third party is implied, to the point that the word *witness* (*testis*) comes from the word *third party*" (Marion, 2006b, p. 111). This is where we come across a decisive point in the French thinker's proposal. If we speak of encounter, we think, practically immediately, of the *other*. Jean Luc Marion does not oppose this but indicates that the *other* presents us with *others*. The way to approach this thought that is understood as *communio* could simply be simplified to the multiplication of the first and the second, or, in other words, to the reduplication of the *I* and you. None of this would be possible to approach a true conception of the third. The case of reduplication would still maintain the classical form of otherness, which we can undoubtedly still understand within the whole paradox of dualism. As we have already mentioned, there is nothing that is properly one's own if it does not come from the other, and thus a true place in a conversation can only be assumed from the third party - as we indicated together with Marion: *he*.

Those who say "I" and "you" precisely *say to* each other and, by speaking in this way, put into action two functions of the linguistic exchange: one, "I", says, the other (from the point of view of the "I"), "you", listens. But, as the one and the other understand each other (in all senses of an understanding), the roles can be exchanged immediately, the other speaks, thus says "I" and recognises me (from his point of view) as a "you". Afterwards, we exchange the roles of "I" and "you" again, in a single conversation, for as long as it lasts (Marion, 2006b, p. 93-94).

The possibility of exchange lies in the fact that one constitutes the other. Neither the "I" nor the "you" has a place that is precisely personal. It always appears as constituted, i.e., as a screen reflecting one's own transcendent acting. Such a conception of otherness remains within the metaphysical margins, for it fulfils the same role of presenting itself as indifferent to the flesh itself. Time and space *are*, and, within their being, we do not repeat ourselves, in the same space and at the same time, only so as not to become impossible; although they never happen as our space and our time (Marion, 2005b). Thus, in the same way, dual alterity maintains indifference to the flesh and its face. We can even go further. When love is understood from duality, we can fall into idolatry.

If one confines oneself to the Greek definition (Aristotle's, taken up by St. Thomas Aquinas) of love as the will of the good for some other, that good can only be what seems *to me* to be such, hence a good that could (in fact) be,

which must) attract and satisfy me too. On the other hand, I do not love that other (rather than that other), but because he desires a good of the same order as I do, or because he himself constitutes that good for me. In either case, we love each other only for what we have in common (the same good), or for what we have become for each other (our reciprocal good). Thereafter, by pleasing myself in the other, by loving him or her well, I am in fact pleasing myself and, indirectly, I am concerned for my own good. Love, even if fulfilled and happy, insofar as it is reduced to the dual, necessarily turns to reciprocal idolatry and its pretended otherness offers neither of us more than a mutual mirror. (Marion, 2006b, p. 117)

Love understood in the light of Aristotelian thought, as well as in the light of being, albeit based on the Thomistic *actus essendi*, leads us to the search for the good of the other based on what one of the two understands as good. The modern figure of the constitution of the phenomenon would thus be repeated. Love, understood as the search for the good of the other, only presents us with transcendentalism in its maximum expression and, consequently, self-idolatry. This is because it seeks to make visible the appetite for the good by means of the action performed for another. What appeals to one wants to appeal to the other. This is why the Aristotelian Thomistic conception of love is not sufficient to bring us closer to a real definition of love and of God - *Deus caritas est (1Jn 4,8)*. This type of love would therefore be a risk of absorption and perdition of the other: the *I* can end up being absorbed by the *you*, annulling one in the other.

Love in the second degree will involve love distinguishing one from the other whom it unites, hence distinguishing itself from each of them, which is not possible unless a third party also knows that love. "Only he possesses the delights of this kind who has a partner in love (*socius condilectus*), in love manifest to him. The communication of love (*communicatio amoris*) cannot, then, exist in less than three persons."<sup>1</sup> Only the third confirms that what unites the first two deserves the title of love. Only the *condilectio* makes the *dilectio* manifest (Marion, 2006b, p. 118).

Far from transcendentalism, the appearance of the witness that universalises the love generated between the duals allows the communication of love. Love is not exchanged - from one desirable good to a good desirable by another - but communicated, a communication that always generates a synthesis from a third party. The one who comes, we would say the fruit, is the one who presents the communicability of love. The *socius condilectus* presents this to us. Only the communication of love allows us to understand the other as *socius*, as the one with whom we can undertake an enterprise that is witnessed by the one who comes. This is why, as Marion says, only con-love (*con-dilectio*) can manifest love (*dilectio*), that is, always *with-others*.

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<sup>1</sup> Marion quotes from Richard of St. Victor's *The Trinity (De Trinitate, III, §11)*.

The end of dualism makes way for the witness. It will be the witness alone that will co-labour us to approach reality and not force reality to understand it. This is because the given always and always summons us. It is in this way that we can say that the response to this summons is juridical.

If, legally speaking, launching an interlocutory appeal amounts to suspending all action as long as the fact has not been established, thus making the question of law dependent on the question of fact, in phenomenology it will be said that interlocution operates a reduction: not to what is given to constituent consciousness (Husserl) nor to what is given to *Dasein* (Heidegger), but to what is purely given, taken as such. Determining the given as purely given requires suspending from the *self*-everything that does not result directly from the claim itself, and thus reducing the *self* to the pure donation of a *me/me*. It is no longer a question of understanding it according to the nominative (Husserl) or the genitive (of being: Heidegger), not even according to the accusative (Levinas), but according to the dative: I receive *myself* from the appeal that gives me to myself. (Marion, 1993b, p. 451-452).

Donation, according to Jean Luc Marion's thinking, will only be triggered by a reduction. This is the reason for his principle: 'as much reduction, so much donation'. This presents us with a giving of oneself starting from the relation, but from the relation starting from the third party, since the gift cannot be understood if it does not trigger a *me/me*. The gift always comes to us from another place. This is why the nominative, which is pronounced from the subject, does not come close to a real understanding of the gift. Neither does the genitive, for there is nothing that is *of being*, but the gift is given from itself. In the same sense, neither does the accusative succeed in reducing the gift, for in experiencing itself as 'accused', there would be no real setting in motion from the gift, but only a unilateral datum - that is, without a response that phenomenalisises what is given. Thus, the dative, from which the *my/me* arises, can bring us closer to an experience of the gift itself, since it defines us only insofar as it manages to be reduced, that is, insofar as it manages to be interpreted as giftable. To speak that the gift is given and is given from itself, but that for it to be given it must enter a reduction, shows us that there is neither a transfer nor an empire, but a communication. This is why Marion, when he speaks of love, speaks of a *socius*. The *socius*, that is, the face that presents itself to us, is not only equivalent to an ethical epiphany (Levinas, 2016), but to an oath that makes possible the happening of the world and that is made once and for all (Marion, 2005b). The taking of an oath requires a judgement. This judgement, as we have already seen, will require the third party to be authentic. The donation, therefore, will always be something juridical that inter-pellates, con-vokes and con-forms us.

#### 4. THE STACKING OF EVENTS

The juridical character of the third party brings us closer, once and for all, to understanding the phenomenality based on the response to the summons given by the donation. It is here, therefore, where we must stop and analyse the Marionian proposal. The adonate, that is, the one who receives the gift, emerges *a posteriori* from the gift, emerges *from* the gift. This is because for him to enter the scene he must be con-vocated and his response will only be valid in the presence of someone who bears witness to it. This is where Jean Luc Marion's philosophical turn lies. The appearance of the third party makes the gift itself distant from any individual and incomparable experience. There would be nothing compatible, the phenomenology of donation, with all the mystical and esoteric experiences that certain philosophies claim. The experience that would supposedly have a flesh with the *One*, the *Totally Other*, the *Actus Essendi*, the *Sein*, *Seyn* or *Seyn*, is only entangled in the subjectivity and transcendentalism of the subject. To approach an understanding of this proposition, we must, therefore, raise Marion's proposition regarding the temporality that stacks up in our flesh.

If every donation, to happen as such, must be responded to, then we can speak of a hermeneutic phenomenology - for to respond, the call must be *interpreted*. It is in this that the repetition of the constitution of the phenomenon could once again be judged. The criticism of Marion could be formulated by the interpretation that the hermeneut would make of the given phenomenon. In response to this, Marion would reply: "Hermeneutics does not give, by fixing and deciding it, a meaning to the given, but, each time, lets it unfold its own meaning, that is to say the one that makes it appear as itself, as a phenomenon that shows itself in itself and by itself" (Marion, 2019, p. 111). The meaning of the gift, unlike Heidegger, is not to be found in something apart from the gift itself, it is not its manifestability, but *its gift manifests its meaning*. This is why the function of hermeneutics is itself also given meaning from the gift. The interpreter does not, in any case, repeat the figure of the *ego*, for he himself is interpenetrated from a place and a time that are given to him from the gift itself. Faced with the gift, the hermeneut does not define the meaning of the gift, but the gift gives meaning to his interpretation. However, this interpretation, to be correct, must be judged by the third party(ies). "The proof of a correct hermeneutic is shown in the fact that the authority of the interpretation must end up passing from interpreter to interpretor" (Marion, 2019, p. 111). Only the third party as a witness can judge the interpretation as correct. The response, which phenomenality with the summoning of the donation, will therefore always be a universal response from alterity understood in the light of the third party. The *"I"* does not manage to give an answer, as this would only constitute the manifestation, but neither from the second (*you*), as it would simply be a duplication of the *"I"*; it would therefore only be the third that judges the interpretation that responds to the manifestation of the gift. Now, following on from what has been said above, we can point out that it is the gift that defines the dynamics of its own giving, which means that time also finds its meaning from the gift itself - or, more precisely, time happens from the gift. "Temporality does not work here on behalf of the object, but in favour of the

event that undoes and overdetermines the object" (Marion, 2005, p. 83). Just as the gift triggers an interpretation, it also unravels time. If the gift is given, time will be extended. The inversion is clear: the gift is not given in time, but the gift gives time. Temporality is not subjected to objectuality, but the event of the gift is that which also gives temporality. "From then on, time is no longer defined as the extension of the spirit, but as the extension of the event" (Marion, 2005b, p. 45). The more the happening of the gift is extended, the more time will be extended. If we take up the principle 'as much of reduction, as much of gift', we could affirm that time arises from the existing relation between the flesh that receives the gift. This enables us to really think of a way out of the burden of chronological time, which passes indifferently with our flesh, and to open ourselves to think of a time generated from the flesh. To affirm that time is generated, we could understand it if we really turn to Marion's phenomenological principle radically: without reduction, there is no donation; that is to say, without an interpretation of the gift, without a judgement of the call that it produces and without the response, nothing is given.

It is the happening of the gift that will con-form us. Thus, together with Jean Luc Marion, we could indicate that "*time*, especially according to the having-been, *does not pass*, but so to speak, it piles up. Because time does not pass, if it were to pass, it would leave no trace and thus destroy nothing" (Marion, 2005, p. 66). The gift, which opens events to us, presents itself to us from our birth to our death. It is these two phenomena that are known only through the trace it leaves behind. Birth, on the other hand, is seen only through *what is born*; death, through *what is dead*. It is the trace that allows us to experience its historicity, and this depends exclusively on its donation. We can say nothing about birth or death other than the fruit it has left behind. If there is a judgement, it is a judgement of the trace it gives us and which is piled up in our flesh, for it is the "only means of all phenomenalisation" (Marion, 2005, p. 62). How many experiences we see embodied and embodied in the faces of our elders! We can clearly say that time *has not passed* but is piled up and given to us from the flesh that has been con-formed by those who have gone before us. Our history is given to us in this way. Even in the meeting of lovers. This is why Marion says: "At the end of my days I will only see myself summed up in the sum of my acts as lovers" (Marion, 2005, p. 92). It is our own jouissance that is reflected in the other, and from our jouissance we cannot distance ourselves, for it is desire that tells us ourselves, showing us that which excites us. In the end, it is the flesh that, open to the unpredictability of the gift, gives us our world - which is *piling up*. This presents us with a world that is being generated and put together in the light of the third, which is always new. "No totalisation of the world seems possible, precisely because the world only appears as such if it is still once again possible, if it operates the dispensation of the possible, which is as such untouchable" (Marion, 2019, p. 182). In the world, generated from the encounter we have with third parties, the donation comes again and again. It is this donation that, by means of reduction, com-poses our world. This is why we cannot say that the world *is*, but that it happens-with. It is only from the third that we will be able to approach an understanding of our history based on

the accumulation of the events that are given to us. The third, therefore, is the one that makes a real understanding of the meaning of our world possible.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenology of the gift, by giving itself as an event that piles up in our flesh, gives us the opportunity to escape from dualism, both Husserlian and Heideggerian. There would not be, in the happening of the gift, an *a priori* existence that allows for manifestability and its comprehension, but rather the adonate emerges from the gift it is *a posteriori* to the gift. There would be, therefore, neither a consciousness that constitutes the phenomena nor an unspeakable, mysterious, hidden - and even esoteric - saying of the *Sein* that would make phenomenicity possible. The phenomenon, according to Marionian thought, manifests its own donation, since all donation is an event that is phenomenalised in the response it provokes. This is why we affirm that the event can only be seen through the *data*. This data is that which is ready for interpretation which is validated by the third party - data which, by the way, is impregnated in our flesh. In short, we could say that the hermeneutics of the occurrence of the gift can only be found in the flesh, for it is only the flesh that *stacks up* the given. One of the possible criticisms of this postulate can be triggered by the theory of the subject that, while remaining transcendently Kantian, constitutes reality based on the *ego*. This would not be possible in Jean Luc Marion's thought, since every event is witnessed, that is to say, inter-prepared based on the third party who judges the given. This proposition, that of the relay of dualism starting from the third party, gives us great opportunities for all our philosophical thinking. Understanding the world based on a trinitarian otherness would enable us to think of the world as *not given* until the appearance of the community of the world. There would thus be an inter-relation between the flesh which, in its response, phenomenalises the calls that are generated. What is possible in the totalisation of the world would be, in this way, untouchability, for there would be nothing that is not given from the flesh, although the flesh always remains unpredictably happening in its being-with-others. We believe that this is the only way to put an end once and for all to the *subject*, making way for the *witness*.

The relief that the witness offers the subject makes it possible for us to understand the world from its very donation. We believe that in this way we can also end up thinking of a privileged caste that comes closer to really understanding the meaning of the manifest. In navigating the world, in really living life, we find a way out of individuality and selfishness, opening the way to the communicability of the flesh. This is of real and urgent importance. Jean Luc Marion pointed out to us that love only arises from its communication. The *socius condilectus* that he mentions enables us to understand that what is most proper to the witness is to co-communicate, to share, to share and to share. We would say, therefore, that the world will only come about as such between witnesses who generate an alliance between those who are con-vocated by a community that generates an ever-new alliance between the partners. This alliance, in the light of Marion's thought, could only be phenomenalised by means of response.



We must be even more precise. The donation that is given is only possible by means of the reduction, but the reduction requires an inter-pretation that is universalisable that the third party testifies as correct the inter-pretation of the given data. We, inspired by such a thought, would also say that the donation only happens from its reduction and that, indeed, the response is phenomenised only from its inter-pretation in the light of the third party, but we would like to emphasise the response that arises as a fruit of the call.

In the light of Christ's thought, we would affirm that the response that generates the gift appears only as a fruit. Jean Luc Marion is close to this when he speaks of the third who comes, which corresponds to the child in the meeting of lovers. It will be the third party who manifests the gift of his parents. He, as the fruit, makes known to us the existence of a partnership, of an alliance, which is generated and renewed, and is always attested to by the fruit. Thus, in the light of this thought, we would say that every covenant will be an event as soon as the enjoyment generates more fruit - or, even more precisely, that a covenant will only be healthy if it produces universal fruit. To approach the manifestation of the covenant from the point of view of the fruit will be useful for us to understand the *a posteriori* of the adonate. Only in this way can the gift, as Marion indicates, free itself from the whole horizon of intuition and being, to open an unleashing from itself, but phenomenised from the flesh which, by piling it up, testifies to it. The way out that it offers us, therefore, is the escape from a large part of our western illness: to understand ourselves as subjects immersed in a dualism in the light of being. The thought of Christ, exploited and traversed by the French thinker - though perhaps without a clear intention - will free us from Greek reasoning, that is, a reasoning of being. Such a proposal, that is, the event and not the being, lies in the fact that Christ is presented as Son, that is, as fruit begotten of the Father (Mt 3, 16ff; 16, 15ff) and that, both, generate the third of the Trinity: The Holy Spirit. Likewise, Christ indicates that the knowledge that we will have of him will be through the love that his community has for each other (Jn 13, 35ff). Even the knowledge of what is good or bad will be known by the fruit it bears (Mt 7, 16.17). It is only the fruit that makes it possible to know the event only presents itself as the fruit and is known only from it happening. Above all, because we cannot say who the father is unless we start from his event; we know only his event as Father. The *witness*, therefore, fulfils the fundamental role of all evangelisations. The one who looks at Christ and looks at him and reflects him is the one who is an authentic evangeliser. We could, therefore, come closer to understanding, based on Christianity, a reality that reflects the encounter with the third one. "We find the face of Jesus in the face of our neighbour, and in him we find the face of God" (Beuchot, 1999, p. 81). The flesh of Christ is incarnated in the Christian. It is a com-position which arises from an encounter, and which is *witnessed*. The face of the Father is presented to us through the face of the Son, and those who are en-rostered by the Son present us with his face, which reflects the radiance of the Father. Christianity is understood starting from the third and we believe that it still has much to tell us to think about, for these reflections are only presented as indications. These hints do not emerge from Marion, but through his thought we can arrive at them. In short, Marion has served us.

as a witness to a resource which Christianity possesses and which we must exploit to enrich our Western thinking.

With such a proposition we must be clear. We do not mean to say that the thought of Christ is compatible with the thought of Jean Luc Marion, but that Marion's thought has exploited, because of the carnal nature of his philosophy, resources that are present in Christianity. These thoughts, which we identify as properly Hebrew, will help us to rethink what we understand by theology and, once and for all, to free ourselves from all subjection to being. No doubt this reflection is still in outline. We hope to enrich the philosophical discussion and open ourselves to think about Christianity starting from itself in its unpredictability. We cannot deny that "Greek philosophy played a considerable role in the doctrinal systematisation of Christianity<sup>2</sup>" (Laberthonnière, 1904, p. 6). This is because of its anchoring to being that stops everything as does Medusa (Shestov, 2018, p. 96) by leaving everything in the adequacy of the entity with being or of its existence with that which makes it possible. The flesh, on the contrary, is always the possibility of generating fruit. The incarnate thought of Christ gives us the opportunity, therefore, to move away from the systematisation of Christianity, for the system corresponds to something properly Greek. Thus, in conclusion, we could affirm with Laberthonnière: "the end of life is to harmonize with God and with others in <sup>love</sup>3" (1904, p. 102). Only self-giving gives us the meaning of our life because everything we know is given. Only in the face of the other can we really know what is happening to us. Only in the face of the other can we experience ourselves as a *witness* and not as a subject.

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2 "La philosophie grecque a joué un rôle considérable dans la systématisation doctrinale du christianisme" (Laberthonnière, 1904, p. 6). Own translation.

3 "A fin de la vie c'est de s'harmoniser avec Dieu et avec les autres dans l'amour" (Laberthonnière, 1904, p. 102). Own translation.

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