

Breached Horizons: The Work of Jean-Luc Marion

Jean-Luc Marion



A Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian, Jean-Luc Marion is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University Paris IV (La Sorbonne), Professor at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris, and holds the Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Chair of Catholic Studies at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. In 2008, he was elected a member of the Académie Française.

He is winner of the Prix Charles Lambert de l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques (1977), the 1992 Grand Prix de Philosophie de l'Académie Française, and the 2008 Karl-Jaspers Preis. He also won the Humboldt-Stiftung Prize in 2012. He was made a member of the Accademia dei Lincei, Rome, in 2010.

In 2014, Jean-Luc Marion gave the Gifford Lectures.

Jean-Luc Marion's work provides both a philosophical and theological treatment of questions about the nature of God and His relation to the created world and human beings. Engaging contemporary French and German philosophy, especially phenomenology, Marion thinks God in terms of a pragmatic theology of absence. He considers God as a saturated phenomenon that exceeds the structures of mind, consciousness and intentionality. Understood as excess, God cannot be seen, known or spoken: God is an absence that *breaches the horizons* of our own thinking and being. Marion's later works focus on rethinking the impact of this notion of God on the nature of love, especially love for God and neighbor.

MAJOR WORKS

- *God Without Being* (1991)
- *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger and Phenomenology* (1998)
- *Cartesian Questions: Method and Metaphysics* (1999)
- *On Descartes' Metaphysical Prism: The Constitution and the Limits of Onto-theology in Cartesian Thought* (1999)
- *The Idol and Distance: Five Studies* (2001)
- *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness* (2002)
- *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena* (2002)
- *Prolegomena to Charity* (2002)
- *The Crossing of the Visible* (2004)
- *The Erotic Phenomenon: Six Meditations* (2006)
- *On the Ego and on God* (2007)
- *Descartes' Grey Ontology: Cartesian Science and Aristotelian Thought in the Regulae* (2012)

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- *The Visible and the Revealed* (2008)

Centre for Advanced Research in European Philosophy (CAREP) is a unique intellectual centre in Canada. It promotes the advanced research of current developments in European philosophy with the intention of bringing these to bear on research carried out in Canadian and North American contexts. The Centre offers facilities for scholars and researchers to engage in original philosophical work through lectures, study-days, conferences, seminars, research and publication. Established and set at King's University College, the Centre seeks to enhance and extend the College's commitment to the humanities.

The Centre for Advanced Research in Catholic Thought (CARCT) has as its mission the promotion of critical research in constructive theology and related areas, including biblical studies, hermeneutics, and ethics. In particular, it honours and promotes the mutually enhancing dialogue between philosophy and theology. The Centre seeks to create a space for the critical appropriation of the Catholic theological tradition and the exploration of creative responses to challenges in contemporary society and the global church. Through lectures, study-days, conferences, and seminars, the Centre provides a forum for dialogue among scholars from Canada and abroad. Offering a specifically theological contribution, the Centre highlights the commitment of King's University College to the Catholic intellectual and educational tradition.

We are grateful to Drs. David Sylvester (Principal) and Sauro Camiletti (Academic Dean) for their continued support, their commitment to the life of the mind, and its embodiment in the humanistic projects of philosophy and theology, as well as their help in making this conference possible. We would also like to thank Prof. Tilottama Rajan and the Centre for Theory and Criticism for their continued support and participation in the projects of CAREP. Finally, we would like to thank Reverend Michael Bechard, Campus Ministry and St. Peter's Seminary for their generous support. Thanks are also due to Janet K. Loo (Artistic Director, King's University College Chamber Choir) for organizing the *Songs of Celebration* concert; Tim Bugler for all his help with the poster, program and website; and Corey Cooke for his assistance with all our media and IT needs; Erin Lawson and Marilyn Mason for their help with promotion; Doreen Vautour for her conference assistance; and Claire Callaghan and Linda Whidden for the support of the Cardinal Carter Library. Finally, we acknowledge the invaluable help of our students.

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Friday March 27 – Opening of Conference

4:00pm–4:30pm	Introductions	
4:30pm–5:00pm	Kevin Hart , <i>Introduction to the Life and Work of Jean-Luc Marion</i>	
5:15pm–6:30pm	Jean-Luc Marion , <i>The Unavoidability and the Dimensions of Reduction</i>	
6:30pm–7:30pm	Bishop’s and Principal’s Reception	

Saturday March 28 – Opening Keynote for Saturday

	Keynote Speaker	Room
	Moderator:	
9:00am–10:20am	Jeffrey Kosky , <i>Time and Passion of “Happiness”</i> (Washington and Lee College, VA)	
10:20am–10:30am	Coffee break	

Saturday March 28 – Sessions

Time	Speaker	Room
10:30am–11:00am	Session 1	
Moderator:	Assoc. Prof. Shane Mackinlay , <i>The Hermeneutics of Banal Saturation</i> (Catholic Theological College, Australia)	
Moderator:	Bryne Lewis , <i>The Necessity of Another: Vanity and the Religious Community in Marion’s Account of the Saturated Phenomenon</i> (Luzerne County Community College and Marywood University)	
Moderator:	Levi Checketts , <i>Vacek and Marion: Toward a Phenomenology of Erotic Love of God</i> (Graduate Theological Union)	
Moderator:	Julia Reed , <i>White Theology and Cartesian Metaphysics</i> (Harvard University)	
11:05am–11.35am	Session 2	
Moderator:	Dr. Māra Grīnfelde , <i>Is the Saturated Phenomenon Non-Intentional? An Evaluation of Jean-Luc Marion’s Response</i> (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvia)	
Moderator:	Brock M. Mason , <i>Revelation as a Saturated Phenomenon: On the Possibility/Impossibility of Distinguishing the Experience of God From the Experience of the Human Other</i> (Fordham University)	
Moderator:	Dr. Daniel Rober , <i>Henri de Lubac’s Influence on Marion: Human Nature and the Counter-Experience of Grace</i> (Fordham University)	
Moderator:	Mr. Man-to Tang , <i>Marion on The Visible and The Invisible in Painting: The Play of Gazes</i> (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)	
11:35am–12:40pm	Lunch	

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12:45pm–1:15pm	Session 3	Room
Moderator:	Dr. Pierre–Jean Renaudie , <i>Ways of Being Given: Investigating the Bounds of Givenness through Marion and Husserl</i> (University of Porto / MLAG)	
Moderator:	Jenifer M Baker , <i>Givenness in Painting Processes</i> (York St John University, England)	
Moderator:	Dr. Donald L. Wallenfang , O.C.D.S., <i>Marion and Mysticism: From Givenness to Contemplation</i> (Walsh University)	
Moderator:	Thomas J. Millay , <i>Probing the Limits of Consciousness: Reading Kierkegaard and Marion in Dialogue</i> (Baylor University)	
1:15pm–1:20pm	Room change	
1:20pm–1:50pm	Session 4	
Moderator:	Maxwell Kennel , <i>Hermeneutics and the Phenomenology of Givenness</i> (Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo)	
Moderator:	Dr. Felix Ó Murchadha , <i>Givenness, Grace and Marion’s Augustinianism</i> (National University of Ireland, Galway)	
Moderator:	Stephanie Rumpza , <i>The Icon: Crossing the Visible or Crossing it Out?</i> (Boston College)	
Moderator:	Dr. Mark Tazelaar , <i>Breached Horizons: How Marion Helps Us to Understand Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling</i> (Dordt College)	
1:50pm–2:00pm	Coffee break	
2:00pm–2:30pm	Session 5	
Moderator:	Justin Mandela Roberts , <i>Icon(oclast)ic Discourse: Jean-Luc Marion and the Formal Logic of the Infinite</i> (McMaster Divinity College, Canada)	
Moderator:	Carole L. Baker , <i>Lovers and Fiends: John Damascene and Jean-Luc Marion on Icons and the Hermeneutics of Love</i> (Duke University)	
Moderator:	Dr. Stephen E. Lewis , <i>Suffering the Gap Between Flesh and Person: Marion’s Correction of Levinas</i> (Franciscan University of Steubenville)	
Moderator:	Jefferson M. Chua , <i>Beyond Anarchy: Marion’s Aquinas at the End of Metaphysics</i> (Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines)	
2:30pm–2:35pm	Room change	

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2:35pm–3:05pm	Session 6	Room
Moderator:	Dr. Jodie McNeilly , <i>Marion’s Account of the Icon and Idol: Critically Seeking the Aesthetic, and Providing a Phenomenological Alternative with Husserl</i> (The Centre for the Philosophy and Phenomenology of Religion, Australian Catholic University)	
Moderator:	Steven DeLay , <i>The Black Sun of Vanity and the Erotic Reduction in Marion</i> (Christ Church, University of Oxford)	
Moderator:	Joseph M. Spencer , <i>Amorous Hope: On the Adequacy of Jean-Luc Marion’s Principle of Insufficient Reason</i> (University of New Mexico)	
Moderator:	Dr. Robert W.M. Kennedy , <i>Reinvestigating the Essence of Metaphysical Commitments in the Caputo/Vattimo Dialogue via Marion’s God Without Being</i> (University of Ottawa)	
3:05pm–3:15pm	Coffee break	

Saturday March 28 – Closing Keynote Lectures

Time	Keynote Speaker	
	Moderator:	
3:15pm–4:30pm	Christina M. Gschwandtner , <i>A Spirituality of Adoration? Implications of Jean-Luc Marion’s Phenomenology of Religion</i> (Fordham University)	
4:30–5:45pm	Kevin Hart , <i>Marion’s Reductions</i> (Professor, Australian Catholic University)	
6:00pm–7:00pm	Inaugural Reception for the Centre for Advanced Research in Catholic Thought	
7:30pm–8:30pm	SONGS OF CELEBRATION: 60th anniversary of King’s University College, the chamber choir will perform works that reflect the values and identity of King’s University College – faith, joy, hope, charity, justice and service. Featuring Ola Gjeilo’s stunning work, <i>Sunrise Mass</i> , which evokes a spiritual journey.	

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Sunday March 29 – Opening Keynote Lecture

Time	Speaker	Room
	Moderator:	
10:45am–10:50am	Change Room	
9:30am–10:45am	Vincent Giraud , <i>Marion on Presence</i> (Assistant Professor, Kyoto University, Japan)	

Sunday March 29 – Sessions

Time	Speaker	Room
10:45am–10:50am	Change Room	
10:50am–11:20am	Session 7	
Moderator:	John W. Wright, Jr. , <i>Death and Love: Heidegger, Marion, and the Distinction Between Philosophy and Theology</i> (Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego)	
Moderator:	Dr. Jennifer E. Rosato , <i>Discovering Human Insufficiency with Marion: From Vanity to Weakness of Will</i> (Mount Saint Mary's University)	
Moderator:	Kadir Filiz , <i>Jean-Luc Marion and Islamic Thought: An Ignored Relation</i> (Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Turkey)	
11:20am–11:25am	Change Room	
11:25am–11:55am	Session 8	
Moderator:	Dr. Cassandra Falke , <i>Love Without Bodies</i> (University of Tromsø, Norway)	
Moderator:	Diego I. Rosales Meana , <i>The Crying and the Word: Marion and Augustine on Identity and Confession</i> (Center for Advanced Social Research, México)	
Moderator:	Dr. Claudio Tarditi , <i>Seeing the Invisible: Jean-Luc Marion as Interpreter of Saint Paul</i> (University of Turin)	
11:55am–12:40pm	Lunch	
12:45pm–1:15pm	Session 9	
Moderator:	Dr. Peter Joseph Fritz , <i>Jean-Luc Marion and the Catholic Sublime</i> (College of the Holy Cross, USA)	
Moderator:	Dr. Brian W. Becker , <i>The Gift of Desire: Healing the Economic Wound</i> (Division of Psychology & Applied Therapies, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA)	
Moderator:	Joshua Hackett , <i>From Eros to Ethics: Bracketing the Beloved in Love in the Time of Cholera</i> (Purdue University)	
1:15pm–1:20pm	Change Room	

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1:20pm–1:50pm	Session 10	Room
Moderator:	Prof. John Panteleimon Manoussakis , <i>The Eschatological Constitution of Consciousness: Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenological Contributions to Theology</i> (College of the Holy Cross)	
Moderator:	Jorge Luis Roggero , <i>Art and Hermeneutics in Marion's latest work</i> (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina)	
Moderator:	Brett David Potter , <i>Image and Kenosis: Assessing Jean-Luc Marion's Contribution to a Post-Metaphysical Theological Aesthetics</i> (University of St. Michael's College, Canada)	
1:50pm–2:00pm	Coffee break	

Sunday March 29 – Closing Keynote Lectures

Time	Keynote Speaker	
	Moderator:	
2:00pm–3:15pm	Ryan Coyne , <i>Origins of the Gift in Marion</i> (University of Chicago)	
3:15pm–4:30pm	Ugo Perone , <i>Memoria et amor: Between Phenomenology and Hermeneutics</i> (Humboldt–Universität zu Berlin)	
4:30pm	Closing remarks by Jean-Luc Marion	
5:15pm	Closing Drink	

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ABSTRACTS

Jean-Luc Marion, *The Dimensions and Unavoidability of the Reduction*

(Académie Française and École Normale Supérieure, Paris and University of Chicago, Divinity School, Department of Philosophy and Committee on Social Thought)

Against a recent tendency (coming from Merleau-Ponty) that downsizes and suppresses the phenomenological reduction, this paper claims that the reduction should be re-considered as a fundamental and inescapable operation of phenomenology, which does not imply the transcendentalism of the ego, including its givenness in its various modes of display or appearance.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Ryan Coyne, *Origins of the Gift in Marion*

(University of Chicago)

The question of the gift is undoubtedly a central theme in the philosophy of Jean-Luc Marion, serving as a guiding thread in his engagements with ancient, medieval, and modern sources. In examining its origins, our goal is not to identify its historical precedents, but to trace the conditions of its emergence. This involves explaining how Marion first constructed the question in conversation with his contemporaries, as well as how this question, once constructed, continued to inform his method. I argue that the question first emerged when Marion displaced the Levinasian concept of the neuter and the neutral. It was by showing how neutrality gives way to paternity that Marion first uncovered the requisite distance needed for interrogating the gift. But if the question of the gift emerges in part through this displacement, then it remains to be seen what kind of influence this displacement continues to exert, if any at all, upon Marion's philosophy.

Vincent Giraud, *Marion on Presence*

(Assistant Professor, Kyoto University, Japan)

Christina M. Gschwandtner, *A Spirituality of Adoration? Implications of Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenology of Religion*

(Fordham University)

Jean-Luc Marion rightly presents himself as a philosopher, a scholar of Descartes and phenomenology. Yet there is also a deep spirituality permeating his work. In this presentation, I contend that Marion's phenomenology of religious experience can be read as a description of and an invitation to a spirituality of adoration. This is true not only of his more theologically inflected writings, but also of his phenomenological proposal of saturation, givenness, and love—and can even be discerned in his writings on Descartes. I lay out this spirituality as I see it operative in his work and question some of its philosophical and theological implications.

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Kevin Hart, *Marion's Reductions*

(Professor, Australian Catholic University)

Most (not all) phenomenologists regard the proper field of phenomenology as coextensive with what can legitimately be opened by reduction. Yet, there is considerable disagreement about the number and proper order of reductions. Jean-Luc Marion is well known for his account of the third reduction, the leading back to givenness, the reduction that comes after (yet, curiously, is also anterior to) the reductions of Husserl and Heidegger. It is the third reduction that is prompted by boredom. Marion is perhaps less well known for what he calls the erotic reduction, which seems to be at the antipodes of boredom. Is it the case that Marion's reductions open up new realms of phenomenality? Do they hang together? If so, how? These are the questions I shall consider in this paper, along with a consideration of how Marion's reductions comport with what I have called the basilic reduction, which I take to be coordinated with Christianity.

Jeffrey Kosky, *Time, the Will, and the Self's 'Happiness' in Jean-Luc Marion*

(Washington and Lee College, VA)

From the beginning of his re-reading of phenomenology, Jean-Luc Marion has defended a reduction that passes beyond both the *ego cogito* and *Dasein*. That account takes a remarkable turn in his reading of St. Augustine where he insists on the practice of a reduction to confession, originary sense giving situation to Augustinian utterance. One of the things that makes this reduction remarkable is that it gives the phenomenon of the good life, *beata vita*, or beatitude—something absent from or distorted by the other reductions. Taking its point of departure from Marion's reading of St. Augustine, this paper explores the phenomenon of something like happiness or joy as it appears in a phenomenology of givenness. Constituting such phenomena will require revisiting notions of time and the will beyond the determinations they receive from a reduction to the *ego cogito* or *Dasein*.

Ugo Perone, *Memoria et amor: Between Phenomenology and Hermeneutics*

(Humboldt–Universität zu Berlin)

In the history of philosophy, love and memory are viewed as intertwined. We see this in Plato as well as in Plotinus and Augustine. Modernity, from Descartes onward, challenges this very intimate connection. The interruption of continuity caused by secularization has resulted in the need of religion to rethink the unity of love and memory, as the classical model is no longer tenable. Jean-Luc Marion has reconceived love from a phenomenological viewpoint. This paper, which takes more of a hermeneutic approach to the question of the aforementioned relationship, attempts to sketch a somewhat different account that focuses on memory.

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SPEAKERS:

Dr. Brian W. Becker, *The Gift of Desire: Healing the Economic Wound*

(Division of Psychology & Applied Therapies, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA)

Despite the promises of market and metaphysical economies to satisfy, they render one anemic and, thus, wounded. And like one who attempts to satisfy hunger with high caloric but poorly nutritional food, we become addicts to the economy, inventing ever more ways to commodify our desire. Rather than move against this trend, various psychological theories reinforce it, speaking the language of healing with their right hand while redressing the wound in economic language with their left. In Marion's constructive proposal for a logic of the gift, conceived within the horizon of givenness, a reformulation of an aneconomic desire becomes possible. This paper will develop the concept of desire as understood within this logic and proposes a resulting therapeutics of desire that, rather than translating desire into the language of economics, speaks the non-predicative language of confession to address the unknowable and excessive calling that gives us our desire and, thus, our identity.

Carole L. Baker, *Lovers and Fiends: John Damascene and Jean-Luc Marion on Icons and the Hermeneutics of Love*

(Duke University)

The aim of this paper is modest: it is to test whether or not Marion might rightly be described an iconodule within the tradition of those orthodox theologians, represented here by John of Damascus, who have defended the holy images as being not only permissible but integral to orthodox Christianity. While much scholarship concerned with retracing orthodox iconodulia focuses on the different understandings of the iconoclasts and iconodules of the 8-9th centuries, of how images work, this paper will focus on the issues of hermeneutics and circumscription as the primary conceptual poles for characterizing the distinction between the 'idol' and the 'icon.' I will contend that the criteria developed in Damascene's treatises in defense of the holy images underwrites Marion's use of these terms/concepts. Also, Marion's phenomenology of givenness necessitates a hermeneutics of love whereby the icon supplies the apophatic affirmation central to his recovery of *first philosophy*.

Jenifer M Baker, *Givenness in Painting Processes*

(York St John University, England)

Artists' autobiographical material, together with my personal observations as a painter, show that painting processes include the accommodation of unforeseen experiences of appearances and events, external, internal, and within the developing paintings themselves. These experiences, which can helpfully be explored using concepts developed by Jean-Luc Marion, are crucial for the conception and progress of paintings, but are missed by those art theorists who, in approaching paintings from the 'outside,' imply the pre-eminence of the artist's conscious will and planning. 'Givenness' may be experienced in different ways and at different stages of painting processes, with a range of relationships between givenness and intentionality, phenomenological reductions, saturated phenomena, and iconicity. An analysis of this variety is

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presented, drawing in particular on *The Crossing of the Visible* (2004) and *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena* (2002).

Levi Checketts, *Vacek and Marion: Toward a Phenomenology of Erotic Love of God*
(Graduate Theological Union)

Most Christian writers who have written about love (e.g., Anders Nygren, Gene Outka, C. S. Lewis) have focused primarily on agapic love. This paper takes a different perspective: using the works of Edward Vacek, SJ (primarily *Love, Human and Divine*) and Jean-Luc Marion (primarily *The Erotic Phenomenon*), I put forth a phenomenology of erotic love of God. Vacek's work focuses on moral aspects of love in order to argue that love, in all its forms, is the primary norm for Christian moral life. Marion's work, on the other hand, is phenomenological in scope and describes the erotic encounter and also puts it forth as a genuine manifestation of love. I argue that their works complement each other. This paper will integrate their thought to articulate the phenomenon of erotic love, the moral importance of eros and, most importantly, the appearance of Christian erotic love of God.

Jefferson M. Chua, *Beyond Anarchy: Marion's Aquinas at the End of Metaphysics*
(Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines)

In this paper, I wish to provide a rebuttal of Reiner Schürmann's claim that the purported end of metaphysics entails an age of anarchy, i.e., an age that ushers the end of metaphysical thinking in terms of foundations and teleology, ultimately radically reimagining the human person and his or her task in a foundationless world. I argue that through an exposition of Marion's dialogue with St. Thomas Aquinas, we can chart out a riposte to Schürmann's thesis. Through the theological detour of Thomistic Trinitarian thought, we can chart out new patterns of thought and action, specifically on the notion of the tri-personality of the Trinity, leading to the analogical understanding of persons-as-relations. Such a consideration not only provides a sharp rebuttal to Schürmann's understanding of "hard unity" in terms of metaphysical principles, but it also helps us understand the place of the human being in the contemporary world: one of charitable relationality.

Steven DeLay, *The Black Sun of Vanity and the Erotic Reduction in Marion*
(Christ Church, University of Oxford)

Marion has argued that classical phenomenology's failure to do subjectivity justice is the consequence of an antecedent allegiance to one dubious methodological commitment or other: Just as Husserl ultimately conceals the "things themselves" about the *I* due to his obsession with a science of consciousness, so Heidegger conceals the essence of *Dasein* with his obsession with Being. Consequently, this inability to characterize subjectivity adequately invites us to revisit the "question of the subject" anew. As we shall see, vanity and the erotic reduction prove crucial in this reconsidered portrayal of subjectivity. For in reply to vanity's challenge—as Marion puts it, "What's the use?"—how is one to salvage genuine meaning in the face of existence's apparent futility? Marion's answer: the erotic reduction. For in asking oneself "Does anybody love me?," one encounters the initial trace of the reality of love's exigency. Hence,

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what previously must have otherwise remained an unimaginable form of life at last comes into view, that is, love enables and invites the *imitatio Christi*.

Dr. Cassandra Falke, *Love Without Bodies*
(University of Tromsø, Norway)

The naked hips and hands on the cover of the English edition of *The Erotic Phenomenon* suggest that readers will find in Marion's book not only a reparation for "the silence of love" in philosophy, but also an account of love that attends to the body. However, scholars worry that Marion renders the body unnecessary in his account of love. John Milbank articulates a "completion" of Marion's phenomenology (284). Beathe Tóth similarly identifies "what is missing" from Marion's account of love (29). In my paper, I will suggest that what is lacking in Marion's account is no more than what is supplied by the singular events of love in the flesh. Furthermore, if we want to maintain, with Marion, that we can love our beloveds after death (*EP* 193), or that we can love God, then we have to admit the possibility of love beyond the body.

Kadir Filiz, *Jean-Luc Marion and Islamic Thought: An Ignored Relation*
(Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Turkey)

In this paper, I investigate whether or not Marion leaves open any possibility for taking into account other traditions in his phenomenological project. I do so because Marion treats only the Christian sense of revelation as the saturated phenomenon par excellence—even if it is a phenomenological possibility—while simultaneously claiming the universality of givenness. However, despite the lack of discussion about other religious traditions, I will attempt to read his theological works together with Islamic thought by focusing on a towering figure in Islamic mysticism: Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240). According to his notion of the "god of belief" (*ilah al-mu'taqad*), everyone is an idol-worshipper because everyone worships a god that he fabricates in his or her own mind. I will argue that a parallel exists between the thought of Ibn al-Arabi and Marion on the critique of conceptual idolatry.

Dr. Peter Joseph Fritz, *Jean-Luc Marion and the Catholic Sublime*
(College of the Holy Cross, USA)

Jean-Luc Marion's method of reason opens a space where the varied devotions, liturgies, ethical-political-cultural practices, doctrines, offices, and charisms of Catholicism may show themselves. His thinking allows, at least in principle, for the wholeness of Catholic life to appear. His achievement hinges, in part, on an inversion of Immanuel Kant's account of the sublime. This contestation of Kant does not simply redefine phenomena or human subjectivity. It also presents a vigorous Catholic opposition to the constriction of the Enlightenment ethos Kant extolled, ousting it in favor of an ethos amenable to a life of abundance in Christ and the Spirit. This paper's constructive proposal consists in taking Marion's thought in a direction he has yet to pursue. It argues that Marion's Catholic counterrationality could be adapted to resist today's dominant ethos: the virtually unfettered market rationality that originated and perpetuates the global economic crisis.

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Dr. Māra Grīnfeldē, *Is the Saturated Phenomenon Non-Intentional?*

An Evaluation of Jean-Luc Marion's Response

(Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvia)

The aim of this paper is to evaluate whether and in what sense the saturated phenomenon proposed by Jean-Luc Marion is nonintentional. The answer depends on both Marion's understanding of intentionality and his understanding and actual examples of the saturated phenomenon. It is argued that the saturated phenomenon is nonintentional only based on a narrow understanding of intentionality and that if one uses a broader understanding of intentionality that can be found in Husserl's later works and considers actual examples of the saturated phenomenon, one would have to give additional arguments to justify the nonintentional character of the saturated phenomenon. In order to maintain that the saturated phenomenon is nonintentional, understood both in the narrow and the broad sense, one would have to demonstrate its atemporal character. If one could argue for the possibility of nonconceptual instantaneous givenness, one could argue for nonintentional givenness

Joshua Hackett, *From Eros to Ethics: Bracketing the Beloved in Love in the Time of Cholera*

(Purdue University)

In this presentation, I use Jean-Luc Marion's *The Erotic Phenomenon* and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* to analyze the ethical potential for bracketing the beloved in erotic relationships. In Garcia Marquez's novel, Florentino Ariza pledges his love to Fermina Daza in his youth, but is spurned. She marries another man. His love for her remains powerful, but in her absence, she is bracketed as he finds solace with other women. I examine Florentino Ariza's affairs, his efforts to reach others, and his eventual return to Fermina Daza. The impact of the absent beloved on affairs of the flesh, the passage of time in unrequited love, and the interplay between erotic and ethical passivity are of particular importance here. Florentino Ariza provides us with a model for a different kind of lover who challenges the expectations set in Marion's work, while affirming phenomenological basis for Marion's claims.

Maxwell Kennel, *Hermeneutics and the Phenomenology of Givenness*

(Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo)

Through and examination of Jean-Luc Marion's concept of givenness, alongside the ontological claims of Heidegger and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, I will present the debate between philosophical hermeneutics and the phenomenology of givenness. Attending to the question of ontological priority and origin, I begin by contrasting Marion's understanding of the irreducibility of givenness with Gadamer's claim that "Language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of the constitution of the world." Following a general outline of each position, I will then explore the hermeneutic critique of the phenomenology of givenness with reference to Gianni Vattimo and Richard Kearney through a close reading of Marion's 2013 Marquette lectures, *Givenness and Hermeneutics*.

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Bryne Lewis, *The Necessity of Another: Vanity and the Religious Community in Marion's Account of the Saturated Phenomenon*
(Luzerne County Community College and Marywood University)

This paper asserts that if the encounter with the Other can be understood as a religious experience, then its description must admit a community aspect that cannot be reduced to a binary encounter between Self and Other. "Another" is necessary to recollect the changed character of the witness to itself. Although Marion's work displays the absence of a typical philosophical concept of community, his description of the witness suggests the necessity of community. This paper will offer an account of the saturated phenomenon that emphasizes this potential, focusing especially on the role of the community of religious tradition in staging "vanity," a crucial concept in Marion's account of the saturated phenomenon.

Dr. Stephen E. Lewis, *Suffering the Gap Between Flesh and Person: Marion's Correction of Levinas*
(Franciscan University of Steubenville)

Jean-Luc Marion's description of the personal experience of eroticization as driven by infinite desire, yet limited by the finitude of flesh, manifests how personal desire, lack, and suffering can draw lovers in and through their love to the acknowledgment of what Levinas in his thought would characterize as the Infinite, illeity. This drawing contrasts with Levinas' characterization of erotic love as an "absorption within the immanent" that must be purified into separation from the Infinite through responsibility as far as substitution for any other, not just a particular beloved. For Marion, the suffering of the "gap" revealed by the experience of finitude necessarily resulting from the erotic crossing of flesh leads the lovers to discover the "free" making of love through speech, a discovery which further distances Marion distinctively from Levinas. Ultimately, this exposition of Marion's account of love as an experience of persons bears important consequences for his account of the human relationship to the Infinite, which, as paradoxical as it may seem, also bears personal qualities.

Assoc. Prof. Shane Mackinlay, *The Hermeneutics of Banal Saturation*
(Catholic Theological College, University of Divinity, Australia)

When Jean-Luc Marion first introduced saturated phenomena, they were presented as exceptional. However, he became increasingly clear that saturated phenomena are of interest not only in themselves, but also because they are paradigms for phenomenality in general. He also gave increasing attention to ways in which the appearing of saturated phenomena might be obstructed or prevented. Both of these developments suggest that saturated phenomena should be regarded as much more common than was indicated earlier. Marion himself confirms this interpretation in his essay "The Banality of Saturation." This paper will trace the development outlined above and then examine two issues that arise from it. First, in instances when saturated phenomena are distorted, it is questionable whether they actually appear as saturated, and therefore whether they should still be described as saturated *phenomena*. Second, and more importantly, if the appearance of a saturated phenomenon depends at least in part on the way in which they are received by the one to whom they appear, hermeneutics needs to be

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incorporated into the account of saturated phenomena, so as to embed interpretative receiving in the very structure of their appearing. This requires a refining of Marion's phenomenology of givenness and of his account of the *adonné*.

Prof. John Panteleimon Manoussakis, *The Eschatological Constitution of Consciousness: Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenological Contributions to Theology*
(College of the Holy Cross)

I would like to follow up Marion's "broadening" of the phenomenological reduction to a horizon more essential than, and thus anterior to, transcendental consciousness (Husserl) and being (Heidegger), ultimately recovering what could be called a "religious disposition" to phenomena in response to the givenness that constitutes the core of the phenomenological revelation. Such a disposition is universal, that is, it is part and parcel of the constitution of consciousness as such. Drawing from the work of Jean-Luc Marion, I would like to suggest that consciousness's teleological capacity to perceive beauty, pleasure, and perfection suggests not only an orientation toward the "not-yet", and thus an opening to the eschatological, but also reveals a constitution that can be rightly called *theo-logical*.

Brock M. Mason, *Revelation as a Saturated Phenomenon: On the Possibility/Impossibility of Distinguishing the Experience of God From the Experience of the Human Other*
(Fordham University)

In this paper, I argue that Marion's distinction between the icon and revelation is untenable—he has not clearly distinguished between them. Instead, the experience of God and the experience of the human other do not appear to have any concrete phenomenological differences. I will show that revelation, as Marion conceives it, cannot be distinguished from the icon (the ethical or loving experience of the other) by examining a number of Marion's attempts to distinguish them throughout his various writings and showing that none of these attempts succeeds. Finally, I will explore what this blurring might imply for any phenomenological approach to the possibility of revelation. One could argue that perhaps Marion's phenomenology falls prey to a type of secularism where "God" becomes a term for an experience that is not different from the encounter with the human other or perhaps this blurring of the two phenomena says more about God than it does about any failings of phenomenology.

Dr. Jodie McNeilly, *Marion's Account of the Icon and Idol: Critically Seeking the Aesthetic, and Providing a Phenomenological Alternative with Husserl*
(The Centre for the Philosophy and Phenomenology of Religion, Australian Catholic University)

Marion argues that icons are opposed to idols because they "alone deserve and demand the veneration of the faithful" (ID, 68). In *The Crossing of the Visible*, Marion refuses to engage in aesthetics—despite strong evidence necessitating him to do so, and attempts a phenomenology to account for the idol-icon difference. Investigating why Marion does not engage with aesthetic theory, I recast his analysis using Gadamer's phenomenological model. Indeed, the icon resists such a model, but at the expense of undermining the icon itself. Without Marion's aesthetically informed pictorial analyses of paintings, his concept of the visible and invisible that enable the

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movement of the icon would seem to be undermined. I argue that Marion fails to provide an adequate phenomenological account and suggest an alternative one through Husserl's theory of neutralization and pictorial analysis found in *Ideas I*. I reconsider Marion's 'structures of veneration' as imagistic and aesthetic constitutions of belief in the experiences of the faithful.

Diego I. Rosales Meana, *The Crying and the Word: Some Remarks on Confession and the Self in Marion's Perspective of Augustine*
(Center for Advanced Social Research, México)

For Jean Luc Marion, confession opens up a dimension of the self-understood as an existential movement toward the awareness of what Heidegger calls "facticity." Sin and "Temptation" become the fundamental flight into an absorbed entanglement in the world. For Marion, in confessing one's own sins, one constitutes oneself as an acting agent. This conclusion may be true, but it is also incomplete, for in Augustinian philosophy, confession is not only an act in which I recognize and speak about my own sins. If this were so, the world and the image of myself would be impossible. In order for the act of confession to be fully achieved and for the paradox of the self be solved, a new word must emerge that restores my stability. This is the experience of forgiveness. Without forgiveness, confession does not give one an identity, it would be the pure exhibition of my sinner self without any sense. This paper will show that neither confession alone nor the free resolution of the will can come to constitute the identity of the self; rather, the experience of forgiveness, the presence of the Word that pronounces my name, that frees me from the determination of history and time, are necessary as well.

Thomas J. Millay, *Probing the Limits of Consciousness: Reading Kierkegaard and Marion in Dialogue*
(Baylor University)

This paper will argue two points: (1) Marion reveals how Kierkegaard's understanding of consciousness and the knowing subject still operates within Kantian philosophy, and (2) Kierkegaard reveals the commitment to immanence in Marion's discourse. (1) With special reference to *Repetition* and to David Kangas's *Kierkegaard's Instant*, I will lay out Kierkegaard's view of consciousness. What is most basic to Kierkegaard's view is a commitment to non-plentitude or delay. *Being Given* (§25) demonstrates that while Kierkegaard provides a prescient account of the subject's flaws, he remains within the Kantian framework; there is no replacement of the subject with the gifted here (*Being Given*, §§26–30). (2) There have been seemingly innumerable debates on the theological status of Marion's phenomenological work. Kierkegaard, a thinker committed to radical transcendence, shows that while Marion does not exclude transcendence, it remains for him a possibility to be entertained rather than it being an inexorably invading reality.

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Dr. Felix Ó Murchadha, *Givenness, Grace and Marion's Augustinianism*
(National University of Ireland, Galway)

Marion's account of the ego can be understood as an Augustinian critique of the 'capable ego' from Descartes to Kant. This paper will discuss such post-Kantian Augustinianism as a response to a certain Pelagian Stoicism in Modernity and investigate whether this response is phenomenologically demonstrable. The 'receptive' ego of Marion's account when removed from a metaphysically secured Christian ontology leaves open the possibility that the gift of love is directed as much towards evil as good. This leads to the further worry, that of enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*). The enthusiast is impervious to reason, for Kant, because he makes claims which transcend the bounds of experience. While Marion rejects Kant's account of experience, this alone does not remove the concern that his Augustinianism leads him to neglect necessary ethical restraints on the erotic reduction. In closing, I suggest that Marion has resources for answering these concerns.

Brett David Potter, *Image and Kenosis: Assessing Jean-Luc Marion's Contribution to a Post-Metaphysical Theological Aesthetics*

(University of St. Michael's College, Canada) An important influence on Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology is the work of Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar. Marion is particularly interested in Balthasar's "phenomenological" approach to the content of Christian revelation, as well as his understanding of the intra-Trinitarian distance (a pre-existent "death" within God) that funds the total *kenosis* of the death of the Son. The key difference between the two thinkers, however, lies in their metaphysical orientation. Balthasar suggests in his *Theo-Logic*, that the early Marion "concede[s] too much to the critique of Heidegger," moving too far away from the "transcendental" metaphysics of Aquinas and the classical tradition. Yet, Balthasar's criticism is premature. Rather, Marion's work paves the way for a postmetaphysical theological aesthetics that might renew Balthasar's project of "theological aesthetics" in a cultural situation "after" the death of God, while simultaneously opening a space for Christian revelation apart from a certain hegemonic tradition of onto-theology.

Julia Reed, *White Theology and Cartesian Metaphysics*
(Harvard University)

Marion famously argues that the indeterminate or "blank" ground of Cartesian metaphysics is both God (as infinite and incomprehensible creator) and the ego (which represents God as a *cogitatio*). As such, even though Descartes submits God to knowledge, metaphysics remains radically open to the transcendence of God beyond being and representation: the Cartesian God, according to Marion, is known as a *cause* or *perfection* but not a *being*. This paper argues that this fissure in Cartesian metaphysics runs not only through its foundation but also through its field of representation. Drawing on several key tensions and ambiguities in Cartesian metaphysics—including issues with distinction, individuation, and containment—I show that the indeterminate foundation of Cartesian metaphysics generates a perceptual field split between a presumptive and unsustainable divine perspective on *adequately* clear and distinct objects and a finite perspective on *asymptotically* distinct objects.

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Dr. Pierre–Jean Renaudie, *Ways of Being Given: Investigating the Bounds of Givenness through Marion and Husserl*
(University of Porto / MLAG)

Marion's philosophical works extend the concept of givenness in order to provide new grounds for phenomenological description. Analyzing the breakthrough of phenomenology in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, Marion claims that phenomenology does not deal with the given but only with the very fact that the given is given, relying on an absolute notion of givenness, understood as a mode of phenomenality. Consequently, Marion's third phenomenological reduction aims at bracketing everything but the pure "giving itself" of the phenomena in order to lead the given (*le donné*) back to givenness (*la donation*). Pointing out the limits of Marion's reading of Husserl, this paper demonstrates the bounds of givenness and elaborates a phenomenological analysis of phenomena that does not need to presuppose a generalization of the concept of givenness. Husserl's broadening of intuition must be understood as a way to make phenomenological description possible even when things are not strictly given.

Dr. Daniel Rober, *Henri de Lubac's Influence on Marion: Human Nature and the Counter–Experience of Grace*
(Fordham University)

Marion's thought, particularly in his works dealing directly with religion and theology, reflects the clear influence of *la nouvelle théologie*, the Catholic theological movement in France that paved the way for the Second Vatican Council. This paper argues for the strong resonances between Marion's thought and that of Henri de Lubac, a Jesuit known particularly for his writings on nature and grace as well as on the nature of the church. In *Being Given*, and even more in *Certitudes negatives*, Marion presents a vision of human nature and its destiny that comes quite close to de Lubac's while also advancing it in new directions. Analysis of these resonances between Marion and de Lubac also reveals some mutual limitations, particularly in dealing with the political. The conclusion of the paper will look at some of these issues. I conclude by exploring points of contact and tension between Marion's thought and contemporary Catholic academic theology in the United States.

Justin Mandela Roberts, *Icon(oclast)ic Discourse: Jean-Luc Marion and the Formal Logic of the Infinite*
(McMaster Divinity College, Canada)

This essay will delineate the formal logic of the infinite as an axiomatic and centrally guiding theme that informs the whole of Marion's corpus. There is a natural anxiety about attempting to "reduce" anyone's work to a single interpretive take, not to mention an individual as intricate and subtle as Marion. However, this paradoxically fitting vantage is the "theme" that disavows thematization. Following a treatment of the infinite, seeking to demonstrate the way in which its unique rationality permeates a variety of important aspects of Marion's thought, this essay will pose a series of questions to suggest that the actualistic theology of Thomas Aquinas explicated through the *analogia entis* may more coherently and persuasively encompass the formal logic of the infinite.

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Jorge Luis Roggero, *Art and Hermeneutics in Marion's Latest Work*
(University of Buenos Aires, Argentina)

The last two books of Jean-Luc Marion, *Donation et herméneutique* (2013) and *Courbet ou la peinture à l'œil* (2014), are closely linked. This paper aims to demonstrate that Marion's hermeneutics, understood as the task of "managing the gap between what gives itself and what shows itself", has its model in the work of the painter in the terms introduced by Marion himself in *La croisée du Visible* (1991) and restated in his last book about Courbet. Painting is in charge of "making appear", of "letting see" the "unseen." The painter exercises a radical hermeneutics that allows what gives itself to show itself.

Dr. Jennifer E. Rosato, *Discovering Human Insufficiency with Marion: From Vanity to Weakness of Will*
(Mount Saint Mary's University)

I propose first to trace Marion's account of vanity through *God Without Being* and *The Erotic Phenomenon* and, second, to argue that this privileged attitude has a correlate in Augustine's weakness of will as Marion describes it in *In Place of the Self*. An indifference to beings insofar as they would remain present and capable of enjoyment, vanity reveals the insufficiency of all that is, when it is not loved. Hence, vanity exposes both the priority of love as a divine name as well as the importance of the erotic reduction beyond the epistemic and ontological reductions. Although Marion does not discuss vanity when considering Augustine, he does discover in the saint's weakness of will a strikingly similar opening to charity. Like vanity, weakness of will neutralizes the ego's customary modes of engagement with the world and thereby reveals the priority of love over the initiatives of the ego.

Stephanie Rumpza, *The Icon: Crossing the Visible or Crossing it Out?*
(Boston College)

Jean-Luc Marion's work on the icon has earned him abundant praise and equal amounts of criticism. Yet, little attention has been paid to how he measures up to the iconographic tradition he is inspired by, even if he subsequently moves beyond it. Theologian Sergei Bulgakov claims that a theory of icons stands or falls on its theory of representational art: many a well-intentioned iconodule has unwittingly served the cause of iconoclasm with a poorly defined aesthetics. Recognizing the ambiguity of the image, Marion focuses instead on the reception of the countergaze that unleashes an image's iconic or idolatrous capacity. But if we heed Bulgakov's warning, we must take seriously the function of the image before we can understand its extension to revelation. By comparing Marion and Bulgakov's approach to the image as referential, I will expose potential gaps in Marion's work and suggest ways of addressing them.

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Joseph M. Spencer, *Amorous Hope:*

On the Adequacy of Jean-Luc Marion's Principle of Insufficient Reason

(University of New Mexico)

Despite differences between their projects, Jean-Luc Marion arguably borrows his conception of hope from Gabriel Marcel. The similarities between their conceptions, however, make Marion's larger phenomenology of the erotic vulnerable to important recent criticisms of Marcel. If, as Adrienne Martin has argued, Marcel is wrong to argue that both hope and love can be adequately accounted for only with reference to a certain irreducible irrationality, then a Martinesque critique of Marion's principle of insufficient reason might be leveled against his project. However, where Marcel gives the bulk of his phenomenological attention to hope (rather than to love), Marion gives the bulk of his phenomenological attention to love (rather than to hope). This difference in strategy allows Marion to provide a fuller and ultimately more adequate account of how the insufficiency of reason plays a role in hope—and even to provide a few important corrections to Marcel's phenomenology.

Dr. Claudio Tarditi, *Seeing the Invisible:*

Jean-Luc Marion as Interpreter of Saint Paul

(University of Turin)

I examine the question of visibility in Marion's phenomenology of givenness. In showing that Marion conceives of givenness as a paradoxical manifestation of visibility, I argue that this conception has been deeply influenced by Marion's reading of the Pauline Letters. The seminal influence of Saint Paul on Marion cannot be dismissed as a mere theological or religiously biased account of phenomenological philosophy. Instead, Saint Paul constitutes a decisive source of inspiration for Marion's attempt to philosophically rethink the question of visibility and invisibility. I pay special attention to the difference between icon and idol. In providing a careful analysis of the notions of idol and icon, I claim that the specific phenomenality of the idol can be traced back to an object experienced by the intentional gaze, whereas the icon represents an excess or saturation of phenomenality that cannot be objectified.

Mr. Man-to Tang, *Marion on The Visible and*

The Invisible in Painting: The Play of Gazes

(The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Jean-Luc Marion, in *The Crossing of the Visible*, makes good use of western paintings in order to show the passage of the invisible to the field of visible. He analyzes linear and aerial perspectives in several western paintings. The empty (*le vide*) of perspective does not add anything to the reality but it manifests (*mise en scène*) the visible. Marion goes further that 'the gaze' (*la vue*) is the middle way in-between the visible and the invisible. Through the gaze, the intertwining correlation suspends Husserl's principle of all principles. In this sense the subject/object structure is suspended. This paper has three aims: (1) to examine Marion's phenomenology of painting; (2) to bring in Chinese painting, which emphasizes cavalier perspective, to broaden the understanding of the relationship between the visible and the invisible; (3) to evaluate Marion's position of 'theological turn'.

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Dr. Mark Tazelaar, *Breached Horizons:*

How Marion Helps Us to Understand Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling
(Dordt College)

In the past decade, many interpretations of *Fear and Trembling* highlight the significance of the “eschatological”—the marvel of Abraham’s expectation that he will get Isaac back. For these interpretations, the central issue is the contrast between the knight of faith and the knight of resignation. Merold Westphal, however, contends that these interpretations lead us away from the main contrast between the hero of faith and the tragic hero. Kierkegaard scholarship is at an impasse. I argue that Marion’s phenomenology of sacrifice, together with the important idea of *veritas redarguens* that he appropriates from Augustine, offer insights that can resolve the impasse facing Kierkegaard scholars. Primary is the insight that the *ordeal of Abraham* shares central features with the *ordeal of truth* (*veritas redarguens*), both of which are ultimately ordeals of love. In that ordeal, Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac is his loving disposition to receive Isaac by returning him to givenness.

Dr. Donald L. Wallenfang, O.C.D.S., *Marion and Mysticism:*

From Givenness to Contemplation
(Walsh University)

This paper will argue that Marion’s innovations to the method of phenomenology engender contemplative spirituality and what could be called a “theology of childhood.” In Marion’s methodology, the genius of the child is brought to the fore as the one who lives constantly with the propensity toward wonder and awe. Within the Catholic tradition, Carmelite spirituality is imbued especially with the charism of mystical contemplation that is understood in terms of the gaze of the child. The nature of Carmelite spirituality is an important corollary to the hypothesis that Marion’s phenomenology of givenness leads to contemplation. This paper suggests a close proximity between Marion’s phenomenology and Carmelite spirituality as a way to understand how human perception informed by the hermeneutic of givenness will tend toward the act of contemplation, that state of prayer where words trail off.

John W. Wright, Jr., *Death and Love:*

Heidegger, Marion, and the Distinction Between Philosophy and Theology
(Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego)

Focusing on the role of death in *Being and Time* and Marion’s use of love across several works, this paper seeks to examine one particular aspect of the possible distinction between philosophy and theology. For Heidegger, death marks the boundary for the totality of the being of Dasein; philosophical study cannot continue into death itself. Dasein therefore cannot continue into consciousness of death. In contrast, theology is founded in the revelation of God beyond being, which is love and culminates in Christ’s resurrection. In Marion’s work, we see that love precedes being and continues beyond the end of being in death. Finally, love’s characterization as the constant self-giving to another leads theology not to reject philosophy but to offer itself in love for the sake of philosophy.