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The Call and the Phenomenon

François Laruelle

University of Paris X (Nanterre)

Some philosophers (Bergson, Heidegger) have introduced the *Call* in their doctrine. Yet none have ventured the integral “phenomenological” description, and none have grounded the whole of their problematic, as well as their ‘method’, on the *Call as Call*. This is now being done by Jean-Luc Marion. The outlines of the project are traced: a new philosophical territory is open, limited yet well-defined, surrounded by prestigious neighbors (distantly, Husserl and Heidegger, and, nearer, Henry and Levinas); a field of descriptive possibilities is liberated and mapped. One can judge the importance of the Call in Jean-Luc Marion if one compares this structure and its description to those of the *question* in Heidegger, *the immanence of the ego and life* in Henry, *the face of the Other* in Levinas, etc. by which of course each thinker distinguishes himself. The Call is not only the real core of *Reduction and Givenness*, but what actually organizes cross-readings of Husserl and Heidegger, and, in general, the repetition of the possibilities of phenomenology. The Call as Call is thus elevated as a concept, and it will be necessary to reckon with this new “object”, which is neither the Greek Being, nor the Judaic Other, neither Difference nor the Same, but which certainly attempts to “surpass” and “raise”, *in its own manner*, these “great kinds” of our time. The problem is an old one: how to still philosophize, how to continue after X or Y, after Husserl or Heidegger? It will be shown that in these classical contexts Jean-Luc Marion exhibits a reversal and displacement, yet subordinates them to another operation by which he attempts not only to extend phenomenology but to close it in on itself. This operation will be called a *decision of identity*: the identity of the contrary positions of Husserl and Heidegger, and more recently, Henry and Levinas. In a sense, this is a prodigious operation. We will interrogate its structure – if not its possibility because nothing forbids it – that is specific to philosophizing and gives it its “authenticity.”

Rare are those philosophers who generously greet the birth of another. Yet this is not at all the case with Jean-Luc Marion; he is truly a philosopher of generosity. As for the notes which follow, they are intended to fix a date and rank, to set out a probably endless debate, to identify a line of fracture in

all our disputes which will better demonstrate their unbridgeable character. Consequently, this is neither a “philosophical” nor “historical” critique, instead it is simply a marking out of that which can distinguish a philosophy – even a “new” one – from what we could call a “non-philosophy.” Yet, it remains the case that this reading of Marion’s “position,” its structures and decisions, could be based on errors of comprehension. Nothing along this order can be excluded.

The Repetition of the Possibilities of Philosophy

By what traditional criteria does one appraise a philosopher? Marion clearly possesses to the highest degree the techniques of reading, exposition, and argumentation proper to historians of philosophy: their precision. Above all, he possesses a force of decision and an authority of demonstration which interests us, a capacity to remain faithful to his decisions. All this is part of the proper rigor of philosophers. Some examples of this classicism are as follows:

1. The repetition of the possibilities of the phenomenological tradition takes the form of a teleological recovery of the internal history and logic of phenomenology, a regulated succession of historico-systematic figures. History is here put in the service of an intention to demonstrate with which it is merged.

2. Phenomenology is conceived as a teleologically oriented *tradition*, which therefore still contains possibilities – more particularly, a still unexplored *ultimate possibility*, which is to be made manifest. It has the style of a *phenomenological repetition*, grounded in the continuity of an Idea distinguished from its previous realizations. It exceeds or surpasses them by turning them against themselves:

A unique question: can the conditions of presence extend themselves to the point that they exceed all being, beyond the limits fixed by previous states of metaphysics, even by all possible metaphysics? Can the givenness in presence of each thing be accomplished without any condition or restriction.¹

It is thus a matter of “receiving that which gives itself as it gives itself.”² The philosopher’s genius consists in reopening the question of the “real” or of the “given.” The authentic philosophical genius of Marion consists in reopening *by surprise* the questions of Husserl or Nietzsche, which are believed to have been already realized or closed off. Clearly, this phenomenological *telos* takes a broadened form and relies on decisions that are distinct from those of Husserl, since they “surpass” Husserl against himself, or Nietzsche against himself (one should welcome the unexpected introduction of Nietzsche in the broadened phenomenological field, even though it is – through a doctrinal and historical remnant of empiricism – in

an unrealized form that Husserl will later realize; however, in all respects, Nietzsche is a more radical and accomplished phenomenologist than Husserl, who retains something of the subject-object relation outside of manifestation, whereas Nietzsche rids himself of this fetishism and delivers phenomenology from the shackles of the “object” form and assigns it “difference” as difference).

3. The real relation between the historico-systematic description and the object to which it leads (the Call) is the inverse of the apparent relation followed by the book. The “pure form” of the Call is only what produces the exigency of phenomenality because it orders, *a priori*, the deciphering and repetition of the tradition. Without the Call, without its special structure, the decisions of the interpreter-historian, as in the critiques of Derrida or the uses of Heidegger, are incomprehensible or opposed to the stated intentions of the authors in question. As always in this type of philosophical “demonstration,” the Call appears as a miraculous result of logic and history combined, although it is in fact the invariant eidetic structure which renders them intelligible.

4. The statement that the doctrine utilized here — phenomenology — is “the philosophy of our time,” is a traditional, yet inevitable, statement: this kind of axiom is universal and pertains to *every* philosophy. This bears witness to a historical and doctrinal empiricism that is not peculiar to Marion – which we will later call a *philosophical faith* – and which gives rise to the persisting paradoxes of every philosophy: (1) every philosophy is and is not phenomenological, and it is “metaphysical” to the extent that it is not yet phenomenological; (2) there is a double concept of phenomenology, divided between its actual realizations and a *telos* which surpasses them; (3) to think is to utilize a doctrine that has already reached beyond itself; (4) failure is also success, etc.:

phenomenology needs to confront the next dilemma: disappearing as a philosophical discipline, admitting that its method [...] no longer depends on the question of Being any more than that it could previously limit itself to the objective of objectivity.³

For recent French phenomenologists the phenomenological approach only rests on the basis of its own protocols of thought, either on this side or that side of the constitution of the object and of beings in their being.

We have, in the following pages, attempted nothing more than to free the phenomenological approach as such, without confusing it with successive and, in a sense, provisional objectives. If in phenomenology – as opposed to metaphysics – possibility truly surpasses actuality, it is necessary to push this principle to its end, until eventually exercising it against phenomenology as already actualized, for one does not overcome a true thinking by

refuting it, but by repeating it, or even by borrowing from it the means to think with it beyond it. Then even failure succeeds.⁴

The Two Specific Decisions of Jean-Luc Marion

The criterion of the repetition of the possibilities of phenomenology – “strict phenomenological rigor” – is presented as the equation *given = received*. The reduction of being to the phenomenon only takes its sense from the radical reduction of the phenomenon to what is strictly *given* and *received*. This criterion will remain undetermined for now – only the Call will fulfill its requirements or realize it – but we can describe its sense.

First, it is a matter of asserting, against Heidegger and Husserl, the idea of a demonstration of complete givenness, an absolute *Parousia*. Husserl does not remain faithful to this Idea, and it is quite clear that Heidegger refuses or describes it as “metaphysical.” We can therefore, without obfuscating, admire the violence of this decision, so profoundly contrary to the stated intentions of Heidegger, which in effect makes the project of a “phenomenology of the unapparent”⁵ contradictory. We will refrain from objecting to Marion with regard to the choice of this universal criterion which serves as a repetition, critique and surpassing. Only “historians” could make an objection, but here it is only the historian *as a philosopher* who draws his right from something other than history. There is no philosophy without this somewhat exorbitant type of decision. It explains the requirement of the continual broadening and universalization of *pure givenness* beyond the limits or restrictions of intuition - sensible as well as categorical - beyond beings, *Dasein*, the Ego and Being, etc., and thus the phenomenological norms that are imposed on the cross-critiques of Husserl and Heidegger are clearly impossible for them.

Second, and more profoundly, the new phenomenological criterion signifies the *identity* of reception and givenness, of manifestation and the given – of phenomenology and ontology (an “ontology” without Being, yet not without reality). It is perhaps risky to develop this hypothesis, but it sheds light on everything. Marion has attempted a sort of *radical identity* of the two great opposing poles of phenomenology, Husserl and Heidegger, rather than a “synthesis.” Synthesis is the classic solution in the history of philosophy (cf. Hegel), because philosophy is always able to attempt this kind of synthesis. But, as an ultimate phenomenological possibility (in reality it changes the very concept of phenomenology), here it takes the form of the *identity* between complete manifestation without remainder *and* reality understood as *transcendens*, “*überhaupt*.” It is the Identity of radical immanence (which is necessary in order to ensure the complete manifestation that Husserl “sought”) and the most universal transcendence (which necessary to ensure the reality of the given that Heidegger “sought”). The driving force of the entire enterprise, and indeed of the repetition of the tradition, is in this identity of Husserl and Heidegger, and consequently

which is neither one nor the other alone. Hence, this results in a system of choices or interpretative decisions, a style of refusals successively opposed and “zigzagging” one from the other in supposedly falling short of the criterion; or lacking it, the “object” in relation to the phenomenon and the phenomenon in relation to its object.

Being and Appearance, the manifested and manifestation, etc., are identical: they are not “the same,” that is, different(s). This time the equation exceeds a Nietzschean form, which is, in effect, regulated by difference or the same, rather than by strict identity. Marion does away not only with Being, but also with *difference* and *becoming* – which prove to be inseparable – and “transcends” them towards what will be resolved in being recognized as the One – that is, a form of the One, for example, of the One “without Being.” In this manner, he radicalizes the phenomenological ideal and creates an ultra-Husserlian extension of it: everything that is real is *identically* manifested or given; everything that is given or manifested is *identically* real. It is clear that, not being dialectical, this identity of contraries will turn out to be very limited and void of the onto-phenomenological determinations that it has *surpassed without conserving*. It is dialectically weakened by a *tearing-away* rather than a synthesis, as will be seen.

The Eidetic Structure of “Tearing-away-from”

How are the Dyad and Identity organized? The regressive approach is towards ultimate principles and pure results. Instead of leading toward the being of the Call or even the Call of Being (Heidegger), the call that is beyond Being precedes it, no doubt just as the One precedes it. However, the “method” remains one of moving from one doublet or mixture to another, ascending by way of a *decision* through the dyads (given/giveness; appearing/appearance; given/received; call/affection, etc.: but also Nietzsche/Husserl, Husserl/Heidegger, Henry/Levinas, etc.). Overall, and even classically, dualities are in fact three terms or trinities (the given, givenness, reception; or the given, givenness, and their identity, etc.), precisely because a stricture – that of Identity – is necessary in order to restrain or purify them.

Phenomenology is therefore condemned to parallel structures and doublets – as all philosophy is, evidently. It requires phenomenization – that is, the side of immanence, of reception, of affection, and of manifestation to the human being; and the side of the given or of the received, of the *receptivity* of the real, of transcendence. Marion fulfils this requirement. Clearly, the “principle of all principles” is purified and radicalized beyond the couplet of intuition-presence. Intentionality, ecstasy and even difference are removed from the interior or from the syntax of this doublet, instead they are replaced– this, in our point of view, is Marion’s originality – with a strict identity, a One that is only One. Yet, the problem is that this stricture or this constriction – this reduction – wants to lose nothing of philosophy. Its lets duality remain in simultaneous dimensions, in the

form of the doublet: immanence as the condition of phenomenality and reduced to the “me”; transcendence as the condition of receiving the real, a pure phenomenon of the Call or of Givenness, which is itself the ultimate Given. These two dimensions are emptied of their ontico-ontological diversity, in order to together constitute the Call as Call.

Hence, there is a double effect which explains this style of phenomenological repetition:

1) On the one hand, identity proceeds by a *quasi*-dissolution of metaphysical amphibolies and holds one term against the other (Being contra beings, Dasein contra the Ego, the Call contra Being, inauthenticity contra authenticity).⁶ Identity requires a radical distinction or a “dualization”: a purification on the conserved side and a “unilateralization” on the side formed by ontico-ontological diversity.

2) Even so, it only unilateralizes the diversity of objects or authors, but it still conserves the general form of the Dyad. Concretely, it clearly does not *differentiate* the positions; it does not displace their connection. Instead, it proceeds from a decision or absolute break, choosing an author and *identifying*, on the one hand, the abandoned term and, on the other, the residual or conserved term.⁷ Yet, it maintains reference to the surpassed term, on behalf of the very broadening or continual extension of the ideal of phenomenality.

How then to combine – in the Call itself and in the “method” that it implies – the abolition, by Identity, of the confusion of already actualized identification and the continuing reference to the surpassed term? The answer is clear: through the Call itself inasmuch as every “call” – even in an initial empirical description that is not yet phenomenological – functions as a *tearing-away*, rather than a negation, a differentiation, or a withdrawal, etc. Transcendence “calls” or tears away from the empirical, and this tearing-away-from is the ultimate eidetic structure, the originary experience which replaces intentionality or ecstasy, and even the *Schritt zurück*. The Call is indeed primary. But, since it has the mode of transcendence, it remains relative to a term that it does not deny but *abandons*. It can therefore no longer really *unilateralize* it or *reject it as distant and absolutely contingent*. The Call manifests itself first, but only by remaining relative to what it tears us away from. Therefore, the “empirical” (including beings and Being) is the *negative*, and perhaps *passive condition* of the Call as a pure form that can only tear us away from philosophies by ultimately presupposing them. The description of the formal structure of the Call (its recognition, its surprise, the identification of the self, its facticity) is made in order to overcome beings, and therefore Being, but they remain as a negative pole of reference for what is no longer an auto-position, an anticipatory resolution or a question. The Call is perhaps a question in return, or an ecstasy in return, the absolute relation of God to the human that only abolishes the latter in the mode of tearing-away or, perhaps, in election. A “call” in general is nothing other than this structure which combines the identity of the calling-called

and the abandonment of what, in the called, is still ultimately necessary in order for there to even be a call. Transcendence is always “relative-to.” Clearly, being absolute as Identity and entrusted to it alone, what it is relative to can only be a negative condition; even so, a *condition* subsists for the unconditioned. This allows for the *continual surpassing* of authors and of already actualized positions, as well as the Identity (of) Call which is first.

The Internal Limitation of a Philosophy of the Call

It is therefore likely that this radicalization of phenomenology will only destroy all non-phenomenological preliminaries and will resolve itself in a strategy. Marion combines together the first Identity of the Call and philosophical decision as inseparable: he finally makes a *decision of identity*, and it cannot completely abolish every decision or every relativity-to – as is also the case with other thinkers. The Call has the internal form of a Dyad in which one of the terms will have been “absolutized” – it becomes the One without Being – but yet remains relative to the other as a negative condition. It joins the fold or the doublet with the One that turns back on it.

This solution allows him to turn against two authors: it excludes Henry’s position of radical immanence without transcendence and Levinas’s transcendence without the immanence of reception. But it only does this by demonstrating a desire to conserve to the utmost the most fundamental matrix of philosophy – that of the Dyad, Fold or Doublet. All of the interest in Levinas’s or Henry’s solutions was to remove it and arrive at – though in each case in a very different mode – a genuinely simple thought without a fold: a thought of the One that does not turn back into a dyad. They sought to think a unilateral relation which breaks down bilateral and reciprocal duality. They were not content with only breaking down its more empiricist or contemporary forms – for instance, Husserl’s “correlational *a priori*” – but the very Idea of correlation or co-belonging. The thoughts of the One or of the Simple, with the Unilaterality which *results* from them (with Henry and Levinas for example), do not presuppose an empirical term in order to abolish it. They treat it in the accusative rather than the dative case, and they annihilate every dialectic, even an ultra-positive one like this. Marion is *literally* right – against Henry, for example - when he says there is no affection without an Other or an Affectant. But this does not exceed philosophy and its traditional matrix, in which he has as much faith as in God. As a result, the real originality of the examined solution – *the return to a certain “adequation,” which is no longer onto-ontological* – remains limited by the conservation of this “philosophical” form: the unity-of-contraries. It is only regulated, but not excised. We will see later that philosophy and its decisions continue to condition the Call itself from the exterior, because the call is only a *tearing-away* from philosophy, from its “shackled” (onto-ontological) forms, rather than a radical suspension of all possible philosophy. We will see that *boredom* does not go as far as veritable

indifference and that it still does not have the greatest possible reductive force.

The Phenomenological Decision: A Non-Phenomenological Preliminary

The ultimate possibility of phenomenology should no longer be a possibility, but a reality. Its radical possibilization should be its actualization as Call. The phenomenological process should envelop itself, should enclose without folding back on itself, in the revelation of the Call, and phenomenology should itself be a phenomenon, the reduction should be the ultimate given, the givenness equal to the given.

However, it is necessary to ask if this *identity* of the given and givenness, of the manifested and reduction, is really without remainder. It is necessary to ask if it is not matter of a decision – no doubt, an absolute one – but one which remains – as a decision – outside of manifestation and falls outside of the given and received. Finally, it is necessary to ask if an *identity* can be the object of a decision or if philosophy does not encounter here an ultimate failure of its will to manifest itself.

What decision remains in the Call? The “decision of identity”: this formula is as violent as the thing it describes. The Call no doubt surprises decision (without ontologically anticipating it), but it is embodied in the decisions of the history of phenomenology, as has been seen, and only auto-manifests itself through these “decisions” which the Call requires as the repetition of this history. The subtle problem is therefore this: can the counter-decisions of the Call “overcome” the metaphysical decisions of phenomenology, and really exceed them without remainder? Certainly not, since they need them as their “negative” conditions. In this function at least, the “decision” subsists outside of the Call, and as a result, it is impossible for phenomenology to realize the principle of the absence of presuppositions. The priority of the Call over Being, over Auto-Position and Decision, remains one of a *Prius a priori*, but it is marked by the fact or facticity.⁸ In this case, how could one not admit a last trace of empirical facticity, that is to say, of philosophical facticity (of actualized phenomenology or the tradition)? Hence, among other effects, there is an inversion of the order of phenomenological knowledge (repetition) in relation to the order of the real (the Call) – in the manner of the classic circle of all philosophy – at the site of their overlapping. And, above all, there is a problem in the status of the reduction as surpassing. One cannot speak of a Hegelian *Aufhebung*, but the Call is the Christian nucleus that will order this, the real heart of every result and reduction – and therefore it is the *pure form* of the result. As for the status of *the reduced and the suspended*, or of *the surpassed*, it is inevitable that in the doublet of the given and givenness in their first or final identity, in givenness being the given – givenness and the phenomenological operations that accompany it, like the reduction, finally fall outside of the absolute

Given, or of their identity, and remain its negative condition or its *non-manifested presupposition*. The identity of terms in the dyad is only ensured by one of them; the other can only fall outside of the absolute manifestation that it realizes.

Phenomenology therefore does not only exceed ontology: there is also a “bad” excess, a resistance of phenomenology itself to the phenomenon, a resistance of its operations and conditions to its results. Phenomenology is equally a system of operations and of fateful decisions that are designed to render *manifest* more and more broad layers of reality; they are designed to give a phenomenal status to what withdraws from the phenomenon or what presents itself “at first sight” as dissimulated. It is impossible to ignore these operations when they are of a philosophical type. The power of deconstruction, for example, is that it marks the limits of this effacement or forgetting. Phenomenology would need to be the final phenomenon, and close itself off within the ultra-ontological adequation of the One, but in fact the result is the inadequation of phenomenology to the phenomenon that it produces or rather contributes to produce.

This failure of phenomenology to manifest itself is not peculiar to this tradition. It is an essential law of every philosophy – whether as *auto-position* (Fichte, Hegel), as *super-position* (Nietzsche), as *de-position* (Heidegger), as the Call – that its operation, as a decision (either positive or “negative”), excludes itself from the real or from its results. Moreover, the Dyad, by which a philosophy always commences, is never entirely reabsorbed into the One, if the latter at least has not been recognized as of primary significance. It is important that the book in question is titled *Reduction and Givenness* rather than *The Call and the Phenomenon* (for instance), because this title is a symptom which demonstrates that the theoretical apparatus remains a co-constitutive preliminary that excludes itself from its products and makes phenomenology fail in relation to itself and its ideal of absolute *Parousia*.

How far can the Ego, Being, and the Other go with respect to the phenomenon? Marion knows that these types of questions deploy requirements which go beyond the powers of Husserl, Heidegger, and others. Yet, philosophy is an infernal machine that always slips from the hands of those who manipulate it: it cannot satisfy this requirement of absolute manifestation. Phenomeno-*logy* is rightly what falls outside of the phenomenon; it is never given. Ego and World, Difference, Withdrawal, and even the Call in its decisional aspect, all these fall outside of the phenomenon. In order to avoid this aporia, it would be necessary to change the terrain, to pass from a philosophical conception to probably a “scientific” experience of the phenomenon as radical immanence. The *telos* of phenomenology is always betrayed: because it is only a *telos* and because to philosophize is to betray the reality of the One. The return to the things will be endless and will miss the phenomenon. The analysis of the figures of phenomenological Reason (object, *Dasein*, Ego, Region, Call, etc.) only demonstrates the agony of philosophy. No philosophy ever attains its

intentions. It never attains the real, because it remains within realization, or the One, because it remains within identification. The brilliant example that we have examined shows this once again.

From God-without-Being to the One-without-Being: From Philosophy to Non-Philosophy

We have not yet made a philosophical type of “critique.” We have shown, rather, the author’s rigor, that is, his ultimate fidelity to philosophy. Yet, we have highlighted, in his case, the most general and most persistent aporias of the philosophical style of thought. How can one “escape” the aporias of which philosophy itself cannot escape, or rather, how can one “avoid” them?

The Call presupposes the Other, the desertion and inauthenticity of the *I* as *me*. Yet this does not have a Judaic sense, since the Call is completely *manifested* and is accepted-received rather than refused. With Henry (immanence) against Levinas, and with Levinas (the Other) against Henry, the most authentically Christian of territories is traced. Marion does not want to abandon philosophy – its Greek element – but only to be torn away from it by a Call – by God, rather than by a thought that is other than philosophical. He wants to be Christian from the point of view of the real, and a philosopher – once again, though it is definitive or unsurpassable – from the point of view of thought. He wants to continue to reduce and describe. He turns the philosopher into a final negative condition, and he turns the Christian into the way of surpassing the onto-theological structure of metaphysics. He joins the human to God and God to philosophy, instead of joining the human to itself or of leaving philosophy to its non-human destiny. Either one is a philosopher who makes, *in extremis*, the leap of the Call – but we can hardly believe that this is the case – or else one is a Christian who is compelled, in spite of oneself, to do philosophy. One is asked to tear oneself away from philosophy without actually forsaking it. He is less Nietzschean with respect to God – as is sometimes thought – than a believer with respect to philosophy. Faith thinks. It seeks out the phenomenological intelligence that it consumes in the call or in generosity: humans take part in this without being able to choose it – except as philosopher.

How could we abandon philosophy without regret, without a “tearing-away-from”? In general, one does not abandon philosophy, but only one philosophical theory for another. This occurs precisely for reasons of philosophical faith, or out of boredom or even for reasons of religious faith that are partly linked with philosophical faith itself. In both cases, the recourse to transcendence exalts philosophical faith and religious faith in relation to one another. But one abandons the whole of philosophy – spontaneous philosophical faith – by indifference, that is, by recourse to

immanence alone. Philosophy is not an intermediary between these two extremes – Faith and Science – it is entirely on the side of Faith. And the only solution in order to really escape philosophical aporias is to avoid them *a priori*. This is not to posit the identity of two “opposed” doctrines, but to elucidate first the essence of Identity itself as being first of all *given*, this identity to which one resorts in a blind and grasping manner; to elucidate its internal structure, its entirely immanent phenomenality, rather than to requisition it in order to resolve the aporias of the history of phenomenology. For instance, if the Call remains partly “relative-to” phenomenological decisions, what identity will assure this relation in an ultimate manner but a fold, the fold of transcendence or of the double decision: as operative and counter? But does not this fold itself, as the entire reality of the Call, presuppose a condition that is more ultimate than the Call itself? Does it not presuppose instead of a new form of transcendence – there is none anymore – this time, a radical immanence – the One as the One or without Being – sufficing as the real and stronger than God himself? Either, the precedence of the Call over Being is really absolute and not at all relative, and it will have the Judaic form of the Other, which Marion does not want. Or, it will also be relative, in the temperate manner which we have seen, and nothing – except for a miracle – would prevent the Call from referring to a more ultimate requirement.

It will then be necessary to renounce the most fundamental philosophical presuppositions: discourse would be more than descriptive and would be co-constitutive of the essence of the real, at least as its negative condition. But the phenomenological endeavor only conditions the representation of the One rather than the One itself, unless it renounces thinking in the philosophical matrix from the outset, in the mould of the dyad or of the doublet and admits that *the Given absolutely precedes (the decision of) Givenness, or reduces the Reduction* (language and operations), that this is already effected, but absolutely effected, that it does not surprise us but belongs to the Given itself, to the One which has “already” suspended its ontico-ontological pretensions, without them even being able to be manifest. It is only manifested within their suspension. We have always lived within the reduction. There is no need to stop the reduction – it has never begun. There is no need to phenomenalyze phenomena – the phenomenon is actual. Consider Sartre’s objection to Husserl, which is more or less the following: it is less a matter of effecting or carrying out the reduction than of seeing it as already completed and achieved, once and for all, with the need to perpetually recommence it without ever attaining its goal. Marion multiplies the reductions and discovers a third one, which he realizes must be singular, “without call” as the Call itself – it may be recognized or not, but it is actual as Call. It must be both a phenomenological possibility and close the internal history of phenomenology. But how then are we not obliged to continue when one thus engages in the possible and transcendence and when one follows “the

wind of every possible call.”⁹ It is difficult not to imagine the hand of God – Joshua stopping the course of the sun – reversing the flight in, and of, transcendence, suppressing the operative and decisional transcendence of phenomenology by the counter-transcendence of His returned hand – the Call. This miraculous and divine inversion has taken up the torch from the inversion or of the reversal as philosophical operations, but has not removed them.

Is this desire to *forsake* or *leave* philosophy the result of having never consistently let oneself be torn away from it? Clearly not: it is a question of understanding philosophy by understanding that it has always already “forsaken” us; or indeed, that it is we who have given it its leave; that we do not have to tear ourselves away from it because we always keep it at a distance, have kept it away, and have never returned to it. In brief, *philosophy exists; there has never been a philosophical faith, but the only philosophical faith has been the belief that there is philosophical faith. This is the Good News, which is no longer confused with the Call.* The priority of the Given over Givenness, of the Phenomenon over Phenomenalization, is no more than a dogmatic thesis as soon as it becomes a question of the One as One that is absolutely and non-relatively “without Being.” And it determines a new use of language and, for instance, of phenomenological operations. This use is no longer directed by the Call and its aporias, like those of the given and givenness, but by this absolute precedence, without remainder or reserve, of the Given over the operations of reduction-givenness. This priority of pure Identity, without transcendence this time, establishes a radical unilateralization – without blending – of all of philosophy itself and not merely some of its objects or authors. The “empirical” condition thus takes on another expression: there is indeed an empirical “given” in addition to the One as One. This is ontico-ontological diversity in effect. It is not necessary to go back to an absolute creation (Levinas) or an absolute destruction (Henry) – an absolute without an object that is there, without the empirical. Yet the empirical is not constitutive of the One either. The One as One renders the empirical ontico-ontological diversity absolutely contingent. It provides for this condition without rendering it constitutive, etc. This solution to the aporias of philosophy is called “non-philosophy.”

One should applaud Marion – if these interpretative hypotheses are correct – for positing the *strict identity* of contraries rather than their *mediation* or their *differentiation*. From our point of view, this marks progress in the suspension of the pretensions of philosophy and in the demonstration of its lack of validity. Nevertheless, thought here only reaches a crossroads, because this identity now needs to be “founded” and to be given its *absolute* reality. The choice is therefore as follows. One can either found it in an ultimate manner – not relative-to – through a new recourse to transcendence that entrusts the Call to itself “as Call.” But, could this fold of transcendence – which dissimulates itself and hides its own existence – ever signify

anything other than God who is this identity by and for transcendence? Or one could understand that this strict identity of contraries is founded on its own and therefore in an identity which is only identity – this time, in a radical immanence of the One as One, where this structure of the Call would be rooted. Then, one would surely need to change its name.

Marion's work will be welcomed for this recourse, a little more direct than elsewhere, to identity or to the One. But, it is regrettable that the One is only a "call" or a tearing away from Being, instead of being its most radical reduction, its contingency outside of the One. This half-measure, here less timid than elsewhere, is called "philosophy." To summarize it in one stroke: God will never have really been "without Being." "Without Being" cannot be said of God but only of the One that renders Being definitively contingent and expels it outside of itself. As for God, He is only that which tears itself away from Being. He needs philosophers.

* Originally published in French as François Laruelle, "L'Appel et le Phénomène," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 1996 (1): 27-41. English translation by Kris Pender.

¹ Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et Donation* (Paris: PUF, 1989), 7.

² Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 8.

³ Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 9.

⁴ Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 9-10.

⁵ Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 9.

⁶ Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 282.

⁷ Hence the curious interpretation of "surpassing" Heidegger (*RD*, 292): the choice of inauthenticity rests on Marion's use of the alternative of authenticity/inauthenticity as "entirely" given, that is, as *identity* rather than as difference (as Heidegger himself would have it).

⁸ Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 301.

⁹ Marion, *Réduction et Donation*, 294.