

Transfiguration as Saturated Phenomenon

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“Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.”

—Matthew 17.1-8, NRSV

At the heart of Jean-Luc Marion’s phenomenology in general and his phenomenology of religion in particular we find the concept of the saturated phenomenon.¹ All too briefly stated, a saturated phenomenon is the opposite of an ordinary visual object as described by Husserl. In the latter case, intention always exceeds intuition. Visual objects are given in *Abschattungen* (profiles, aspects, adumbrations, perspectival “looks”). These correspond not only to the many different angles from which it may be viewed, but also the many different lightings in which it may be viewed and its potential interior cross sections (its conic sections, as it were). Thus the simplest object offers an infinity of *Abschattungen* of which in any perceptual act, even if I add memory and imagination

to current perception, I am only in possession of a very finite subset. Yet I intend the entire object. My concept includes not just the facades I have accessed but those I haven’t and those possible presentations which are not (yet) facades. My intention is a combination of presentation and appresentation, of presence and absence. Adequation as the intuitive fulfillment of intention is but an infinite task, a regulative ideal.

By contrast, a saturated phenomenon is one in which what is given to intuition exceeds the intentionality that becomes aware of it. My transcendental ego cannot anticipate it, nor can my concept contain or comprehend it. My horizons are overwhelmed and submerged by it. I am more the subject constituted by its givenness than it is the object constituted by my subjectivity. Abstractly put, and in terms of the Kantian table of categories, the saturated phenomenon is:

- (a) invisible according to quantity,
- (b) unbearable according to quality,
- (c) absolute according to relation,
- (d) and irregardable according to modality.²

More concretely, saturated phenomena can be classified as

- (a) the event, especially the historical event,
- (b) the idol, that is, the painting,
- (c) the flesh, feeling, especially bodily feeling, that is passive, as in suffering, and prior to objective cognition,
- (d) the icon, that is the face of the other a la Levinas.³

This general phenomenology of the saturated phenomenon, about which there is much more to be said, is developed with an eye to its extension to the phenomenology of religion. The phenomena of revelation or epiphany make up a “fifth type of saturation” which “saturates phenomenality to the second degree.” Such a phenomenon

"not only falls into the category of saturation (paradox in general), but it concentrates the four types of saturated phenomena and is given at once as historic event, idol, flesh, and icon."⁴ At two places Marion cites the event of Jesus' transfiguration as an example.⁵ In an important paper presented to a session on continental philosophy of religion of the APA's Eastern Division in December of 2002,⁶ John D. Caputo raises two objections that are deserving of the closest attention. I believe they are mistaken, but if so, it is important to see why, both for the understanding of Marion's theory but also for the understanding of the biblical text.

The first objection begins with the observation that the first order saturated phenomena and the second order (or second degree) saturated phenomena of revelation "seem to correspond closely to the natural and supernatural orders" so that access to the first but not to the second is available without "supernatural gifts," "supernatural faith," and "supernatural grace" (17-18). This concern about the supernatural immediately opens out, with a reference to "bodies risen from the dead" into a more specific ("stronger") notion of miracles in the usual sense of the term. Taken at face value it sounds as if "a high tech video camera whose lenses could tolerate higher intensities than can the human eye" might have recorded the event (perhaps for CNN) or that a "super-sensitive microphone" could have recorded the divine voice (20). Caputo worries "that theology has been invaded by phenomenology and that it is theology that suffers a distortion" (18). He worries about a "magical realism" (21) that results from "a kind of historical literalism about the events of the New Testament. Events that many, dare I say most, New Testament scholars regard as 'later theological reflections' or expressions of faith by a later community, viz, that God was in Jesus in a preeminent way, are treated by Marion as having onto-phenomenological status, as if they were literal occurrences that true believers would have witnessed" (20).

There are three things to note about this concern. (1) It is not in terms of the distinction between natural and supernatural that Marion distinguishes between saturated phenomena of the first and second orders or degrees. It is rather, as we have already seen, that the phenomena of revelation combine all four types of saturation. Still, Marion does not call them simply complex phenomena but phenomena of revelation. So it would not be surprising if the phenomenologist took note of the fact that these events are experienced as involving "supernatural gifts", "supernatural grace", and "supernatural faith".⁷ But that is not quite the same as linking revelation to miracles in the usual sense of the term ("bodies risen from the dead").

Nor does Marion make such a link. Bedazzlement and overwhelmingness are marks of saturated phenomena, especially those that are "unbearable according to quantity" such as the painting as idol. It is in just this context that Marion gives the transfiguration as an example. But in the very same passage, he gives the teaching of Jesus as another example, citing John 16.12: "I still have many things to say to you, but you do not yet have the power to bear them."⁸ Marion might as easily have turned to the gospel of Mark. There we find people amazed when Jesus cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1.23-27) and when he healed the paralyzed man let down through the roof (Mark 2.3-12) but also at Jesus' teaching: "They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1.22). The phenomenologist can and should take note of the fact that such teaching and the faith that receives it can be and have been experienced as a supernatural gift of supernatural grace. But that does not make Jesus' teaching miraculous in the sense in which casting out demons and healing the sick are miraculous. In short, the phenomena of revelation need not be miracles.

It might be helpful here to recall Mary Magdalene as portrayed in *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. She sings, "I don't know how to love him . . . He scares me so." While Jesus

was unquestionably a saturated phenomenon in her experience, it would be a strange reading to assume that what scared her about him was the healings and the exorcisms. Quite clearly, what bedazzled, overwhelmed, and even scared her was the way he loved her, and there is nothing of magical realism in the implicit narrative of her relation to Jesus that underlies her portrayal in the musical.

(2) Still, the transfiguration itself is a miraculous event more like healing the sick and casting out demons than like teaching with authority. Nor is it the least bit unique. In the biblical context⁹ the phenomena of revelation are very often miraculous. To put it in literary language, there is a great deal of magical realism in the Bible. The point to notice here is that it is not the task of the hermeneutical phenomenologist, who finds phenomena in texts, to filter this element out of the text. The difference between phenomenology and theology is that what the theologian affirms on the basis of faith as actual, the phenomenologist merely describes as possible. Revelation in the sense being used here is always supernatural, a gift of divine grace, whether or not it is miraculous in the familiar, narrower sense. The phenomenologist, who describes the possible event of revelation, does not qua phenomenologist affirm the actuality of the supernatural in either the "weaker" or the "stronger" sense. But for the same reason it is not the task of phenomenology to deny the supernatural in either sense. As a theory of possibility it remains neutral with respect to actuality. This means that it is misleading to say that a phenomenological description of an event of revelation as recorded in a sacred text of some tradition gives "onto-phenomenological" status to the supernatural elements the narrative includes or presupposes. It only gives them phenomenological status, the status of pure possibility. This is in keeping with Marion's larger phenomenological task of removing all a priori restrictions on possibilities of givenness.¹⁰

(3) Caputo understands this and recognizes that Marion draws this line between phenomenology and theology sharply and repeatedly. For this reason he rejects Janicaud's complaint that in Marion's work phenomenology has been compromised by the illegitimate intrusion of theology (19).¹¹ But as we saw above, Caputo's concern is not that phenomenology has been corrupted by theology but "that theology has been invaded by phenomenology and that it is theology that suffers a distortion" (18). This is the site of his worry about "magical realism" (21) and the kind of "historical literalism about the events of the New Testament" (20) that many, perhaps most New Testament scholars have spared us by some sort of demythologizing or other. So perhaps it is the task of the theologian rather than the phenomenologist to filter the miraculous out of the text.

Caputo offers his commendation to the theologians who do just this. But I wonder. Is the hermeneutics that produces this result not the modern, all too modern, product of the dogmatic naturalism of the secular Enlightenment? Is it not in the thrall of metaphysical bondage to the principle of sufficient reason once divine agency has been removed as a possibly sufficient reason? Does this hermeneutics not strip the text of its alterity, reducing its otherness to the sameness of "our" horizons, the anticipations of experience of our collective, historically contingent, and not very transcendental ego? Does this theology not commit onto-theology in a paradigmatic fashion? After all, at the heart of onto-theology, according to Heidegger's analysis, is the following answer to the question, "How does the deity enter into philosophy?" – "the deity can come into philosophy only insofar as philosophy, of its own accord and by its own nature, requires and determines that and how the deity enters into it."¹² Doesn't the theology under consideration similarly allow the philosophy of scientific secularism to determine a priori the terms on which God can enter into *theological* discourse?

Caputo's second objection to Marion's reference to the transfiguration is perhaps of even greater interest, for it will take us more deeply into the text itself. His preference for the desert of Derridean deconstruction is deeply connected to the fact that at that site *il faut croire* (15).¹³ Citing Kierkegaard, he insists the divinity is a matter of faith and not of givenness (21-23) and is worried that "instead of the desert and the blindness of faith, Marion speaks of brilliance, transfiguration, the blindness of bedazzling glory, and instead of messianic desire, Marion describes the gift of messianic advent, the flesh of the Messiah who has already come" (15). In short, Caputo's objection is that in the theory of the saturated phenomenon, and especially with reference to the transfiguration as an example, faith is replaced by sight and we end up with a theology of glory needing to be chastened by a theology of the cross.¹⁴ The issue is both serious and substantive, worthy of the most careful attention. We need to look both at the text and its context. What we shall find, I suggest, is precisely a theology of glory chastened by a theology of the cross, one in which it is still necessary to believe. I shall follow Matthew's version, but the same essential elements are to be found in Mark 8-9 and Luke 9.

The immediate setting for the transfiguration is Peter's confession of faith. In response to Jesus' question to the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?", Peter responds, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 18.15-16). Given how weak and confused we know Peter's faith to be, it is not unreasonable to assume that James and John shared this faith. At the very least, in the case of Peter whatever was seen and heard on the mount of transfiguration was not the basis of faith but presupposed it. Still, the question arises whether we have an almost immediate transition from faith to a sight for which faith is no longer necessary. The shining face and the dazzling clothes are not the beatific vision, to be sure, but they are a rather spectacular foretaste of glory divine.¹⁵

Let us skip over the next two layers of context, though only for the moment, and look at the event itself. In response to the shining face and the dazzling clothes, Peter offers to build three dwellings, one for Jesus, the other two for Moses and Elijah, who suddenly appear with him (Matthew 17.3-4). Peter wants to prolong this event as long as possible, to keep this presence present. But his plan is interrupted before he can present it. "While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!'" (Matthew 17.5).

We learn three important lessons from this key text. (1) To begin, we are reminded that the Holy is the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.¹⁶ Already the shining face and the dazzling clothes are mystery, and the voice does not make the situation any less mysterious. Phenomenologically speaking, what the disciples see and hear is in no way anticipated by their horizons of expectation. These are phenomena that show themselves from themselves.¹⁷ They express themselves *kath auto*.¹⁸

For Peter, at first, this *mysterium* is only *fascinans*. It is attractive, immediately desirable, and he makes a move to grasp and possess it as much as possible. The *tremendum*, the overwhelming, frightening, repelling side of the sacred appears only with the replacement of vision by the voice. We read, "When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear" (Matthew 17.6). If we focus only on the dazzling vision we cut the story in half. For one brief, shining moment the disciples' faith is "rewarded" with a very spectacular sight. But apart from its momentary character, this is a very dangerous "reward"; for just as in Otto's phenomenology of the sacred the *fascinans* is inseparable from the *tremendum*, so here the terrifying voice, which is also a saturated phenomenon, is inseparable from the tantalizing vision. So far from being a resting place, an arrival, a completion, this vision is only a moment in a much more complex story, as we shall see.

Marion's discussion of bedazzlement comes especially in his discussion of the idol, the painting as the visible that exceeds all concepts.¹⁹ When he says that such phenomena dazzle, fascinate, and draw us in, captivate or that we find them irresistible and adorable, he evokes the *mysterium fascinans*.²⁰ But when he says they overwhelm, overflow, swallow up, engulf, envelop, and even crush the self,²¹ we meet with the *mysterium tremendum*, and this in the analysis of saturated phenomena of the first order. Like the biblical text under consideration, the theory of the saturated phenomenon does not focus on bedazzlement in abstract isolation but invites its *Aufhebung*, its teleological suspension in a context where the struggles and strivings of faith are *not aufgehoben* or teleologically suspended in the sight that signifies arrival and presence without deferral.

Writing in April, 2003, I am reminded of the way in which the spectacular military victory by British and American forces signified by the fall of Baghdad showed itself, even before it was completed, as but a prelude to a much more difficult and danger-filled task. The urgent call of the future permitted no dwelling in the present.

(2) The transition from vision to voice is of the greatest phenomenological significance for another reason. As with Levinas, the notion of a reversed or inverted phenomenology is central to Marion's phenomenology.²² In Husserlian phenomenology, the arrows of intentionality emanate from me and in my acts of *Sinngebung* constitute the objects of my experience. As transcendental ego, I am like Gyges, able "to see without being seen."²³ As we learn from Sartre's analysis of *The Look*,²⁴ this relation can be reversed within the domain of vision when I am the one seen rather than seeing, the one constituted by the gaze of the other rather than the one constituting. The reversal of the Gyges fantasy may even be complete so that I am seen by one who is not seen. Taking his cue from Patocka rather than Levinas, Derrida

defines transcendence, including divine transcendence, in terms of this unseen seer.²⁵

My autonomy is challenged and I am put in question by such a look, and this is an important dimension of the meaning of the face for Levinas. But there is more. "The face speaks. The manifestation of the face is already discourse . . . The primordial sphere, which corresponds to what we call the same, turns to the absolutely other only on call from the Other. *Revelation* constitutes a veritable inversion [of] *objectifying cognition*."²⁶ Marion shares with Levinas the view that the inverted intentionality in which the other is not reduced to the same but presents itself from itself, *kath auto*, is most fully actualized in the voice that addresses me. That is why in *Reduction and Givenness* his phenomenology culminates in "the pure form of the call" and the subject is converted into the *interloqué*.²⁷ And that is why in his analysis of the face as icon, Marion cites Levinas' "the face speaks" and describes the face, a first order saturated phenomenon that is recapitulated in revelation, as an "icon addressing a call . . ."²⁸

Here again, in the theory as in the text, my gazing is *aufgehoben* or teleologically suspended in my being addressed. In biblical context, divine discourse typically has a performative rather than merely constative illocutionary force, and the performatives are typically promises and commands.²⁹ This tells us that we have not left faith behind. For faith is not just a matter of belief but of trust in the promise and obedience to the command.³⁰ The sight that faith is not, is not only the presence in which doubt is no longer possible but also the present in which neither trust nor obedience are necessary.

(3) Sound as it may be, this analysis is too general. We must return to our text and ask specifically what this (presumably divine) voice says on this occasion. After confirming (if it is to be trusted) that Jesus is indeed the Son of the living God, as Peter had affirmed, the voice issues a simple command: listen to Jesus. But it is not as if Jesus is about to say something new. In context, this imperative is an indictment. Jesus has been talking, and the disciples

have not been listening. Right after Peter's confession, "You are the Christ," Jesus begins to tell the disciples that he is going to Jerusalem to be killed. In his typical role either as spokesman for the group or the first one to pipe up, Peter says, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you" (Matthew 16.22). Which, being translated, means, "This does not fall within the conditions of possible experience defined by our transcendental ego. Such a Messiah does not, yea, cannot occur within our horizons of expectation. We have no noetic acts at our disposal to constitute you as crucified criminal."³¹ Jesus' response is as sharp as his language is unhusserlian: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." (Matthew 16.23)

In Mark's gospel Jesus tries three times, without success, to tell the disciples that he is going to be killed. In chapter 8 we have the "Get behind me, Satan" episode we've just considered. In chapter 9, Jesus tries again, but we are told that the disciples didn't understand, and we are given a good clue as to why: they were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest (Mark 9.30-37). Then in chapter 10, Jesus tries once more, to which the response is a request from James and John to sit on his right and left hand, respectively, in glory (Mark 10.32-40).³²

The voice from heaven was timely if not very effective in its exhortation: listen to Jesus. That is precisely what the disciples were unwilling and unable to do, and our text gives us further insight into why. Right after telling the disciples that he was going to be killed, he implicates them as well: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16.24). Then, as if Jesus does not want the disciples to miss the point, and the evangelists as narrators do not want us to miss the point, immediately after the transfiguration narrative, we find Jesus once again telling them about his death. In these conversations there is promise and hope. Jesus talks of his own resurrection and while

inviting his disciples to follow him on the way of the cross assures them that "those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16.25). But the disciples are so repelled by the *tremendum* of the cross that the *fascinans* of resurrection and finding life instead of losing it is entirely lost on them.

The biblical narrative of the transfiguration belongs to the theology of the cross and not the theology of glory. The disciples are beginning to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God for whom they had been waiting. Three of them are given a brief, if spectacular bit of visual confirmation. But the purpose of this confirmation is not to enable them to bask in some onto-theological glory, but to give them all the more reason to listen to Jesus, who wants to talk about the way of the cross both for himself and for them. "This is indeed my Son, as you have begun to suppose. So listen to him." The question posed by the text is whether they (and we) have faith, the faith to obey the divine voice, to listen, really listen, to Jesus, to believe still that *this* Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, to trust the promise of resurrection and new life, and to obey the call to discipleship.³³ It is not a text about confirmation so much as a text about commissioning.

We commit the Hegelian sin of abstraction, isolating a part from its whole, a text from its context, if we focus on the dazzling vision and fail to see its *aufhebung* in a daunting vocation. This is a real danger, both to our reading of the transfiguration text and to Marion's use of it to illustrate an aspect of the saturated phenomenon. Triumphalism is always a temptation and all too often a tactic in support of what Nietzsche's Zarathustra would call "wretched contentment."³⁴ So Caputo's warning is as welcome as it is necessary.

But the triumphalism it warns against, which turns out to be at once epistemic and ethical, is not necessary. It is neither the only nor even the best reading of either the gospel narrative or the phenomenology of the saturated phenomenon. We have just seen how the biblical text teleologically

suspends the dazzling moment into the dangerous mission of discipleship, posing a threefold challenge to Peter, James, and John. Do you have the faith that will obey this call to discipleship? To you have the faith to trust the promise of resurrection and new life? Do you have the faith to believe *still* that *this* Jesus, who overwhelms all your horizons of expectations and addresses your transcendental ego as Satan, is the Christ, the Son of the living God?

We have also seen that Marion's account of the second order saturated phenomena of revelation, taken as a whole, needs no revision to accommodate such a reading of the transfiguration. Perhaps the presentation emphasizes bedazzlement in such a way as to leave it open to misunderstanding. Perhaps its complex totality would be better served if what theologians sometimes call "the Jesus event" or "the Christ event" in its totality were offered as a paradigmatic example of revelation. For just as the theory does not in the first instance restrict the revelatory to the miraculous (but includes Jesus the teacher as a saturated phenomenon), so the theory does not reduce the *mysterium* to the *fascinans* but also reminds us of the *tremendum*. We have seen this even in the second moment, the idol as unbearable, and it would be easy to show it in more detail in relation to the flesh as absolute and the icon as irregardable. For example, the face as icon cannot be looked at in the sense of keeping it under the control of the seer by keeping it "within the limits of a concept," thereby depriving it of its initiative (showing itself from itself); in short, "it does not admit constitution as an object."³⁵ But this means that even when it becomes visible as phenomenon, it remains invisible in precisely this sense of being irregardable, and faith can never be supplanted by sight.³⁶

Perhaps Kierkegaard can be helpful in illuminating how the transfiguration is not a triumphal transition from faith to sight nor an *aufhebung* of the theology of the cross in a theology of glory. His Anti-Climacus takes up the theme of offense from Johannes Climacus in *Philosophical Fragments* and,

after incorporating it into his analysis of despair in *Sickness Unto Death*, returns to it in *Practice in Christianity*. Like his creator, Anti-Climacus seems to be a good Lutheran in the sense of thinking it important to clarify the nature of faith. He writes, "The possibility of offense is the crossroad, or it is like standing at the crossroad. From the possibility of offense, one turns either to offense or to faith, but one never comes to faith except from the possibility of offense."³⁷ In a footnote to this passage, Anti-Climacus insists, as he already had done in *Sickness Unto Death*, that the opposite of faith is not doubt, as modern philosophy would have us believe, but despair and offense.³⁸ Then, after discussing the possibility of offense at Jesus "simply as an individual human being who comes into collision with an established order" (Jesus as Socrates redivivus) and the possibility of "essential offense in relation to loftiness, that an individual human being speaks or acts as if he were God, declares himself to be God," Anti-Climacus turns to the possibility of "essential offense in relation to lowliness, that the one who passes himself off as God proves to be the lowly, poor, suffering, and finally powerless human being."³⁹

Obviously, it is this third possible offense, offense at lowliness, that concerns us here. In the transfiguration narrative, the disciples would seem to have turned from the second possibility of offense ("in relation to loftiness") to faith. They believe that Jesus is no ordinary human being but the Christ, the Son of the living God,⁴⁰ and both the vision and the voice on the mount of transfiguration offer a divine confirmation of Peter's affirmation. But this does not signify the transition from faith to sight, but more nearly the challenge to move "from faith to faith."⁴¹ Having turned from the offense of loftiness to faith, the question now is whether they can and will also turn from the offense of lowliness to faith and affirm *this* Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. The first move would signify an incomplete faith, one especially vulnerable to a triumphalist theology of glory and the

need for an apologetics to make itself as secure, as much like sight as possible.⁴² Anti-Climacus had earlier warned that "the first one to come up with the idea of defending Christianity in Christendom is *de facto* a Judas No. 2: he, too, betrays with a kiss, except that his treason is the treason of stupidity . . . As for Christianity! Well, he who defends it has never believed it."⁴³ The second move is a more complete faith, one not trying to turn itself into sight because it is too busy pondering the paradox of lowliness as the flip side of the paradox of loftiness – that is, when it has any time to ponder at all. For the most part its energy will need to be spent following Jesus on the way of the cross.

Notes

1. See "The Saturated Phenomenon" in Dominique Janicaud, *et al.*, *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn,"* trans. Bernard G. Prusak, Jeffrey L. Kosky, and Thomas A. Carlson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 177-216; *Being Given*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), §§ 21-24; and *In Excess: Studies in the Saturated Phenomenon*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002). The French originals of these three texts date from 1992, 1997, and 2001 respectively.
2. "The Saturated Phenomenon," p. 198; Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, §§ 21-22. One must pay special attention to context to see what these terms mean, especially when, for example, a cubist painting is given as an example of invisibility. *Being Given*, p. 201.
3. Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, §§ 23 and *In Excess*, ch. 2-5. See especially p. 29. n. 41. These two quartets do not seem to me to map onto each other very strictly. There is a great deal of overlap.
4. Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, p. 235.
5. Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, p. 238 and *In Excess*, p. 65, n. 14.
6. Entitled "The Hyperbolization of Phenomenology: Two Possibilities for Religion in Recent Continental Philosophy." It will come as no surprise to readers of Caputo that the other possibility, beside Marion, is Derrida. Page numbers in parentheses are to the ms. version of this as yet unpublished paper. Cited by permission.
7. Marion does not do this explicitly, I believe, although Kierkegaard does in *Philosophical Fragments*.
8. Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, p. 238.
9. And in many other contexts outside the Jewish and Christian scriptures.
10. Already in *Reduction and Givenness: Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998) and then again in *Being Given*, Marion's critique of Husserl and Heidegger is that instead of going "to the things themselves" they erect arbitrary, a priori conditions (limitations) of possible experience.
11. For Janicaud's complaint, see *The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology in Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn."*
12. Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 55-56.
13. Caputo is citing the closing line of Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 129. Cf. John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. xxi, xxiv, xxvi, 93, and 133.
14. The contrast between these two theologies comes from Luther's "Heidelberg Disputation" of 1518. See *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, ed. H. J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), pp. 40-54. For its significance in the development of the early Heidegger, see John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 159-67, 187-90, 196-202, 376-82 and "Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther" in *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 159-74.

15. It is worth noting that in the notion of rapture, Aquinas speaks of a possible "preview" of the beatific vision, but does not see that as eliminating faith from among the theological virtues.
16. See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), ch. 4-5.
17. Very important to Marion's work is Heidegger's claim that phenomenology means "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself." *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 58.
18. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 51.
19. In "The Saturated Phenomenon" Marion gives the aesthetic idea as an example, drawing heavily on Kant's analysis of the sublime. See pp. 196-197 214.
20. See Jean Luc Marion, *In Excess*, pp. 60 and 74.
21. Jean Luc Marion, *In Excess*, pp. 60, 74, 113. Cf. Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, pp. 202-206, where bedazzlement is situated between the unbearable and the intolerable. Just after citing the transfiguration (p. 238), Marion gives the appearance of the risen Christ as another example, but precisely to emphasize the terror it evoked in the women (Mark 16:6).
22. See, for example, Jean Luc Marion, *In Excess*, pp. 37, 44, 61, 87, 99, 113-14, 117, 119.
23. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 61.
24. Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Pt. 3, Ch. 1, Sec. IV.
25. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 25, 32-33, and 40. These passages should be read in connection with those that link transcendence to secrecy. See pp. 67, 73, 77-78.
26. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, pp. 66-67.
27. See pp. 204-205 in relation to ch. 6, "The Nothing and the Claim."
28. Jean Luc Marion, *In Excess*, pp. 116, 119. Marion equates the face as call with the face as "a phenomenon that is invisible but which envisages me." As with Sartre, being seen is not simply a cognitive act aimed toward me rather than emanating from me. It is address, challenge, even judgment.
29. See Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical reflections on the claim that God speaks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
30. Thus Paul can speak of the "obedience of faith" (*upakoen pisteos*) in Romans 1.5 and of "faith working through love" (*pistis di' agapes energoumene*) in Galatians 5.6. Though the Greek word is the same, biblical faith and Plato's opinion are vastly different, and the former is not a lower segment of Plato's divided line.
31. Peter's piety suffers, it would seem, from his neglecting neglected to read the critiques of Husserlian phenomenology to be found in Levinas and Marion.
32. It would seem that Peter was not alone in neglecting his Levinas and Marion. See previous note.
33. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is commenting on our text when he writes, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller & Irmgard Booth, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 99.
34. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra's Prologue, Section 3; First Part, On the Pale Criminal; Part Four, On the Higher Man.
35. Jean Luc Marion, *Being Given*, p. 214. Cf. Jean Luc Marion, *In Excess*, pp. 112 and 115.
36. Perhaps this is the meaning of Aquinas' claim that even when in rapture or in the life to come we see the essence of God, we cannot comprehend what we see. The beatific vision is a

saturated phenomenon. Levinas, too, finds the face of the widow, orphan, and stranger to be invisible. Desire for the "absolutely other" is "Desire for the Invisible," and the face "is neither seen nor touched" because "[s]peech cuts across vision." Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, pp. 33-35 and 194-95. Cf. "Transcendence and Height" in Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 17 and Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Boston: Kluwer, 1991), p. 100.

37. *Practice in Christianity*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 81.

38. The note seems to come directly from Kierkegaard and not to have been revised to take into account the late decision to publish this work pseudonymously. It can be taken as continuing the polemic of the unpublished draft known as *Johannes Climacus, or De omnibus dubitandum est*, published with *Philosophical Fragments* in the Princeton/Hongs edition.

39. *Practice in Christianity*, pp. 85, 94, 102.

40. I have tried to formulate this so as to indicate that whether or not this involves the subsequent metaphysics of Incarnation, as Anti-Climacus' formulation suggests, is not important for the point under consideration.

41. This translation from the Authorized Version is the most literal rendering of the Greek of Romans 1.17, *ek pisteos es pistin*. More recent translations offer interpretations of the phrase. Of course, I, too, am offering a reading of this enigmatic phrase, but not in the translation.

42. Cf. Kierkegaard's polemic against apologetics in *The Book of Adler*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 39-40, where he writes, "The man who traveled from Jericho and fell among robbers was not as badly situated as Christianity, because the orthodox apologetics that mercifully attended to it has done it just as much wrong as the robbers." This wrong consists in making it probable.

43. *Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 87.