



Vertaling

Uit een hoofdstuk over fenomenologie en muziek

How does Marion envisage disengaging these regions?¹ First of all, by describing the phenomenon as an event (*événement*). This is a move that counters the delimitation, with Descartes and Kant, of the phenomenon as object. Kant, for example, specifies in the first of his “four rubrics that organize the category of the understanding and thus impose on phenomena the quadruple seal of object-ness,”² to wit the rubric of quantity, that each phenomenon must dispose of a quantity in order to become an object, that is, it should possess spatial extensiveness (cf. the Cartesian *res extensa*).³ This extensiveness involves that the whole of the phenomenon equals (and results from) the sum of its constituent parts. In addition, the phenomenon is inscribed beforehand, as object, in finite space. These two delimitations make it possible to know the phenomenon in advance: although we perceive at most only three sides of the cube at once, the other three can be inferred from its structure and the spatiality of its form.⁴ “It is the same,” Marion observes, “for all technical objects: we no longer see them, we no longer have even the need to see them, because we foresee them for a long time. [...] We reduce them to the rank of phenomena of the second order, of common [*de droit commun*] phenomena, without according them the full, autonomous, and disinterested appearance.”⁵ Thinking about the phenomenon in terms of objectivity mystifies the original phenomenality of the phenomenon.

The movement of thought suggested by Marion is precisely in the opposite direction: from the object towards the event. Its course is indicated by three characteristics of the event: irrepeatability, surplus, and possibility.⁶ In the first place, the event is irrepeatable: “Each event, absolutely individualized, arrives only once (*hapax*) and once and for all (*ephapax*), without sufficient antecedents, without remainder, without return.”⁷ It escapes any attempt to determine its cause or to list criteria: it proceeds from itself alone. A second characteristic of the event is its surplus regarding any precedent. It is unlike any other, it has not been produced nor can it be reproduced; it “undefine[s] the world in the twofold sense of rendering it nonfinite and forbidding it any definition.”⁸ Finally, new horizons are breached by the possibility borne out by the event, and this is true for phenomena that are historically older as well. This is a possibility that is totally unrelated, according to Marion, to the possibility in metaphysics. That possibility is completely and beforehand subsumed in the economy of what can be realized, whereas in the case of the event this is a free, unshackled possibility that can be described in metaphysical terms as a leap of the impossible (that which is outside all causality, essence, or sufficient ground) towards facticity. Repeatedly Marion emphasizes that the initiative to appear and become a *fait accompli* resides with the phenomenon itself, the phenomenon that offers, gives *itself*. Such giving itself inevitably happens in time, but not, as Kant wishes, before a transcendental *ego* that dwells outside time and produces it (just as space) in a majestic fashion. Marion argues his case by referring to an event that preeminently contains these three characteristics: my own birth. My birth is a phenomenon that presents *itself* to me in the manner of giving *itself*.⁹ I haven’t witnessed my own birth, but I know about it from the testimony of others:

¹ I understand the term region to refer to Marion’s notion of “a regional phenomenality - that of the given phenomenon” (Marion, *Being Given*, 179) and to the distribution, in turn, of this phenomenality in the areas of the *poor*, the *common*, and the *saturated phenomena* (cf. Marion, *Being Given*, and 221ff: “Topics of the Phenomenon”).

² Marion, *In Excess*, 34.

³ Marion, *Being Given*, book III (§ 13-17); Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis - Cambridge: Hackett, 1996), A163/B204.

⁴ The example refers to Husserl’s famous analysis of appresentation. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), §50. Cf. Marion, *In Excess* (62ff and 105) and the related analysis in Marion, *Being Given*, 199-202.

⁵ Marion, *In Excess*, 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 36; Marion, *Being Given*, 170-73.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁹ Marion, *In Excess*, 41-44.