Marion: 2013 Père Marquette Lecture in Theology

Foreword

The 2013 Père Marquette Lecture in Theology is the forty-fourth in a series commemorating the missions and explorations of Père Jacques Marquette, SJ (1637--1675). This series of lectures was begun in 1969 under the auspices of the Marquette University Department of Theology. The Joseph A. Auchter Family Endowment Fund has endowed the lecture series. Joseph Auchter (1894--1986), a native of Milwaukee, was a banking and paper industry executive and a long-time supporter of education. The fund was established by his children as a memorial to him.

Jean-Luc Marion

Jean-Luc Marion is known for his idea of the "saturated phenomenon," which states that "there are phenomena of such overwhelming givenness or overflowing fulfillment that the intentional acts aimed at these phenomena are overrun, flooded--saturated!" Marion also discusses intentionality in his book Prolegomena to Charity, in which he explores the human idea of love and its lack of definition; in Being Given; and, in particular, in In Excess: Studies in Saturated Phenomena.

Several of his publications have recently appeared or are forthcoming in English: The Reason of the Gift (University of Virginia Press, 2011), Negative Certitudes (forthcoming, University of Chicago Press, 2012--13), Instead of Self: The Approach to St. Augustine (Stanford University Press, forthcoming, 2013), Descartes' Grey Ontology (forthcoming, St. Augustine Press, 2013), and Le croire pour le voir (English translation forthcoming, 2014, Fordham University Press). Additionally, two new books have just been published or are forthcoming in French this year: Figures de phénoménologie (J. Vrin, Paris, 2012) and Sur la pensée passive de Descartes (P.U.F., Paris, 2012).

Marion has been awarded the Grand Prix de Philosophie de l'Académie Française and the Karl-Jaspers Prize of the city and University of Heidelberg, Germany, in 2008. In 2008, he was elected to, and in 2010 inducted into, the Académie Française as an immortel (member). In 2009, he was elected to the Academia dei Lincei (Rome).

To Professor Marion's distinguished list of publications, Marquette University Press is pleased to add Givenness and Hermeneutics.

GIVENNESS

AND

HERMENEUTICS

I. HOW TO START?

A question cannot be avoided in phenomenology--whether we can and if we must admit an irreducible, whatever it is. This question itself rests on two grounds.

On the one hand, the reduction, which, even as it occurs and is radicalized, highlights, if only by contraposition, the possibility, even the necessity, of an exception, of an irreducible. Whether we understand it as a finally "unreduced" phenomenon, or whether it is directly about the way the reduction itself operates. Both assumptions, however, face two strong objections, at least in appearance. Either it will not be accepted that the reduction may accept the least exception, or it will be argued that the phenomenological enterprise is always and absolutely related to the exercising of the reduction. This is a strength, but indeed only apparent strength of the objections, since they contradict themselves up front: the first is based on the absolute and transcendental authority of the reduction, while the second involves the suspension of the initiating role of that same reduction;

Therefore

We cannot reconcile the two objections, and, between them, we must choose, and of this choice, the objectors are not always aware. In fact, we must choose. Either, the more reduction there is, the less irreducible (and givenness) there will be, as M. Richir would like to think, or there will be even as more phenomenality (i.e., givenness) that one will waive the transcendental status of the reduction (as C. Romano and probably Benoist, in line with Merleau-Ponty, are claiming). We perhaps cannot bypass as easily the fourth principle of phenomenology, as much reduction as much givenness, by abstract negations or by inflationist attenuations.

There is more. This dilemma is itself based on assumptions that must at least be identified, probably before challenging them. First, the assumption that the reduction keeps a transcendental, hence metaphysical, status, leaning on an "I" which is itself unconditioned; while it could be plausible that the whole development of phenomenology, and this starting with Husserl, has consisted in putting aside (or in brackets) the assumed transcendentality of the Kantian and post-Kantian "I" in order to make it the result as well as the origin of the reduction--to modify it according to each type of reduction that it implements only by first exposing itself to the type in question. The debate on the reduction remains abstract and therefore pointless, as long as its feedback

The Issue

And, starting in 1919, had clearly identified it: "What do you mean given, givenness--that magic word of phenomenology and stumbling block to others?" It is not enough to debase givenness to what it has precisely the function of transcending (intuition and sensitivity) and consequently to idle it in order to transcend it. Again, the fourth principle of phenomenology, as much reduction as much givenness, holds, at least as a question.

To look again at these issues, we will focus on the terms of a now well-established debate, which is however fragile and ill-posed as to its main thesis, that of the relationship, most often suspected as being an exclusion, between givenness and hermeneutics.

II. Not Intuition, but Givenness

It is therefore necessary to admit the fact of givenness as the ultimate authority, not backing off from this facticity as if it were an abuse or an impropriety, since givenness indeed, as facticity, remains still absolutely to be determined, hence neutral. In this sense, the fact of givenness is valid de jure.

Husserl casts no doubt on this de facto and inseparably de jure character, of a de jure norm: "Absolute Gegebenheit ist ein Letztes. […] Anderseits Selbstgegebenheit überhaupt zu leugnen die, das letzte Norm beißt, der alles Erkenntnis Sinn gebende Grundma

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"Die absolute Gegebenheit ist ein Letztes. […] Anderseits Selbstgegebenheit überhaupt zu leugnen, heißt, die letzte Norm zu leugnen, der alles Erkenntnis Sinn gebende Grundmaß"--"The absolute givenness is an ultimate term. […] On the other hand, denying in general the givenness of self means denying the ultimate norm, the fundamental norm that gives any meaning to fundamental knowledge!"

Also, the problem of a pure knowledge can be solved only "…in der Sphäre der letztnormierenden, weil absoluten Gegebenheit"--"in the sphere of the ultimately normative givenness, because it is absolute." Such a norm attests its primordiality even with respect to the difference, in another sense, which is impassable between the regions of the world and consciousness, that everything separates (immanence/transcendence, certainty/contingency, absolute/relation, etc.), but that do deploy themselves inside the unique givenness:

"We thus consider as well proved that, while it belongs to the essence of the givenness (Zum Wesen der Gegebenheit) by sketches that none gives (gibt) the thing as an absolute, but instead, gives it only in a one-sided presentation, it belongs to the essence of the immanent givenness (der immanenten Gegebenheit) to also give an absolute (ein Absolutes zu geben)."

Whatever is the most cardinal difference that is given (es gibt) between consciousness and reality, it remains an originary difference of givenness mode (der Gegebenheitsart).

In his own, of course essentially different way, Heidegger makes a similar scenario by ultimately

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Using the Es gibt. We have argued, somewhere else, whether the transition to Ereignis does not conceal or erase too quickly the enigmatic indeterminacy ("rätselhaftes Es") of the "es," of the "that" which gives by debasing it to an "undetermined power" (unbestimmt macht) as well as translations such as the common translations il y a or there is! But it remains, however, that the "es" gives, not as this word "es," but as the word, as itself, gives: and as a word, it gives without argument, without context, without pre-text, without hermeneutics: "Of the word, in order to be rigorous, one should never say: it is, but it gives/that gives (es gibt)--this not in the sense that 'that' would give a word, but where the word itself gives. The word: that which gives--… daß das Wort selber gibt. Das Wort: das Gebende."

Here the givenness has the last word, because the word alone gives, and givenness is fulfilled in words. Strictly thinking, about givenness, there is nothing to say, and one should not say anything about it, because it alone speaks, and that is what ends the debate.

Givenness is necessary, to follow the two greatest teachers of phenomenology, as a factum, but in the sense of a factum rationis, ultima ratio rerum, which, as the last and the first givenness, stands out as a de jure norm. Twice unquestionable, irreducible (result of the reduction, it resists it or becomes itself the residue). It is therefore understandable that givenness seems to contradict and to prohibit any mediation, any hermeneutics.

NEVER GIVES THINGS

There is probably the lengthy recurrence of a critique, a complaint which denounces the fetishism of the "given" for help in the direction of hermeneutics, in order to restore, according to the sufficient expression of a critique, its supposedly violated rights--a phenomenology smartened from the purity of the givenness.

This objection was introduced as evidence by J. Grondin and J. Greisch and widely reported by public rumor. It ended up providing shelter even for theologians. But, when reading one of the latest formulations of the objection, we see immediately the limit of it:

"The real touchstone of phenomenology proposed by Étant donné is this unconditional universality of the givenness, to which nothing is lacking and which invalidates, in particular, the need for a recourse to hermeneutics."

However, the whole issue is precisely whether… the unconditional universality of givenness being admitted, it also renders obsolete … (the) recourse to hermeneutics: no analytic link connects the two terms, and one cannot see how givenness as such would prohibit hermeneutics, nor why it would not call for it earlier, would even demand that call. The objection assumes here exactly what has to be proven: the incompatibility of the phenomenality core with the differentiated enunciation of its figures of meaning. This inconsis--

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Would immediately a phenomenon which can be objectified--that is, a phenomenon which is constituted by its specific meaning, which would bear no interpretation, since it would already be included in a meaning or concept which would be identified and specific?

But does givenness always, and even ever, give (and claim to give) such an object of univocal and specific meaning? Is givenness identical to the efficient causality that produces a univocal object? Is giving equivalent to placing an object under one's eyes or to having it on (at?) hand?

Who does not see that, thus reduced to production and efficiency, givenness would not give anything anymore, precisely because it would no longer give, but produce? Heidegger perfectly denounced this misunderstanding which, beforehand, jeopardizes any correct approach to givenness. This jeopardy also confirms that the Gegebenheit intervenes, especially as a "stumbling block," more like an enigma than a solution; in all cases, never as something easy:

"Gibt es überhaupt eine einzige Sache, wenn es nur Sachen gibt? Dann gibt es überhaupt keine Sachen; es gibt nicht einmal nichts, weil es bei einer Allherrschaft der Sachensphäre auch kein 'es gibt' gibt. Gibt es das 'es gibt'?"

"Does that give even one thing, if it gives only things? Then it gives absolutely no thing; it does not even give nothing, because in the absolute domination of the realm of things, this does not give also the least 'that gives.'

Here is the corrected word-for-word transcription based on the provided image:

Give the "That Gives"

"Gibt es ein 'es gibt,' wenn es nur ein 'es gibt' gibt?" -- "Does this give the 'that gives,' when and if this gives only a 'that gives'?" In other words, givenness and the es gibt disappear or dissolve when they are devaluated into a pure and simple production of things (that is, of objects already constituted and with unequivocal meaning), and it is on this condition that they probably prohibit an opening toward an interpretation. But this condition of prohibiting hermeneutics exactly coincides with the time of the disappearance of givenness, and not at all with its appearance.

IV. The Given Never Gives Itself Immediately

That the given is immediate and gives, however, an object already prepared for theoretical knowledge--this is the contradiction that the "myth of the given" presupposes, but also its constantly repeated criticism:

"… the concept or as I call it, the myth of the given is invoked to explain the possibility of a direct account of immediate experience" (Sellars).

Thus understood, the given would first be non-mediated, as "The philosophical idea of givenness or, to use the Hegelian term, immediacy" and it is thus conceived as a sense datum, according to the meaning of classical empiricism (Locke). It then draws to it-

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…self the inevitable objection that, remaining immediate, it does not yet offer an object and remains below the standards of any epistemological validity; for if it had any epistemological validity, then it would not be immediate, being an already constructed object.

But this same given would also be, at the same time as immediate, a non-dependent, self-sustaining, non-inferential knowledge. Hence the final argument by Sellars: such a given cannot be constituted by itself immediately but receives its validation from constitution, therefore attests contingent dependency, as it happens in an epistemological becoming.

This twofold objection is unified in Quine's single objection: the connection between the immediate supposed data (what x is at time t, and location l, etc.) and the elementary proposition (according to semantic rules) can never be assured, except by a composition--we would rather say a constitution--which would inevitably be mediate. Strict reductionism cannot be conceived without a constitution.

In other words, to speak like Neurath, there is no immediate protocolary statement: "The fiction of the ideal language constructed from pure atomic statements is as metaphysical as the fiction of the Spirit of Laplace."

Or: "There is no way that would allow making protocolary enunciations, of which we would definitely be sure of its purity, the starting point of sciences. There is no tabula rasa. We are like sailors forced to rebuild their ship on the high seas,"--

…without ever being able to dismantle it in a dock and to rebuild it anew with better parts. Criticism of the "myth of the given" makes clear a precise but contradictory definition of this given: it would put together, on one hand, the immediacy of a sense datum, limited to intuition, itself restricted to sensible intuition, and would be summarized in a purely subjective, individual, indubitable as well as incommunicable affect (for private language, in fact deprived of language); and, on the other hand, it would benefit from the epistemological validity of a first object, an intelligible atom of evidence.

Besides the contradiction of these two properties (Neurath), the impossibility of each of them can be argued as well. It would first be assumed that the given is always found immediately in the vicinity of the object, and it does not matter here if that object is already constituted or still in the process of being constituted, since it is a being included in advance in the way of being of the Vorhandenheit, of the substantial permanence of a support of objectifying knowledge.

It is not necessary here to repeat the demonstration that C. Romano has just recently made. We retain its positive conclusion: the given can be thought only as being outside (or beyond) the mode of being of the object which it does not yet constitute and in which it does not necessarily have the vocation to complete; as soon as the objecthood appears, with its character--

Characteristics and Requirements

(Permanence, definition, universalization, etc.), the given is already gone. The given can be thought only in its irreducibility to objecthood.

Since the criticism inflicted upon it by the rhetoric of the "myth of the given" is based on its inability (rightly assumed) to satisfy objecthood, we must conclude that it never addressed itself to the given as such, but precisely to a myth.

But the criticism of the "myth of the given" also assigns a second property--which is essential to mark its contradiction--namely, that it stays immediate. In that, it finds an assumption which is widespread in the most common reading in phenomenology of the notion of given and givenness. Now one should, on the contrary, emphasize the paradox that, from the point of view of a rigorous phenomenology, it is in the nature of the given not to give itself immediately, especially not in the immediacy of the sense data, although it gives itself in perfect facticity--or rather because it gives itself as an unconditioned and inherent factum.

Consider a first argument from Husserl:

"Nicht das psychologische Phänomen in der psychologischen Apperzeption und Objektivation ist wirklich eine absolute Gegebenheit, sondern nur das reine Phänomen, das reduzierte."

"This is not the psychological phenomenon in the apperception and psychological objectification which is indeed an absolute givenness, but only the pure phenomenon, the reduced one.

Absolute Givenness and the Reduced Phenomenon

Absolute givenness is not the psychological phenomenon but the pure phenomenon, the reduced phenomenon. \*Or: "About a singular case of cogitatio, for example, a feeling that we are currently experiencing, one could say: this is given, but in no way would be allowed to risk the more general proposition: the givenness of a generally reduced phenomenon is absolutely undisputed--die Gegebenheit eines reduzierten Phänomens überhaupt ist eine absolute zweifellose."

As long as the phenomenon comes from and comes only from what is lived, thus bearing the character of immediacy, it remains doubtful, indeterminate, and therefore not actually given. Because it is not enough to be felt and feel to be found a given. (If this were true, the color of a tie, varying according to the light that illuminates it, would already be enough to provide a given.) The "felt" and "experienced" become an absolute and unmistakable given only when they are subjected to reduction, that is to say, as long as they are mediated.

This obviously does not mean that the given, because it is mediated and not only experienced in intuition, should, for all that, be constituted into an object. Let us consider, to understand this, a second argument, which comes from a precise question by Heidegger.

"The sphere of the problem of phenomenology is therefore not simply immediately given beforehand (unmittelbar schlicht vorgegeben); it must be mediated (vermittelt werden). What does indeed…

What Does It Mean for Something to Be Simply Given in Advance?

What does it mean: something is simply given in advance? In what sense is it usually possible, and what does it mean: something must be immediately, "firstly," put forth to givenness (allererst zur Gegebenheit gebracht werden)?

Here comes an apparently very simple analysis, but one that should be considered paradigmatic, because it was so crucial for the young Heidegger, who was wondering about this:

"The naive consciousness […] makes immediately many, too many assumptions and presuppositions, instead of considering what is given immediately, primitively. What is given immediately! Each word has its meaning here. What does mean immediately?--… statt sich darauf zu besinnen, was unmittelbar gegeben ist. Was unmittelbar gegeben ist! Jedes Wort ist hier von Bedeutung. Was besagt unmittelbar?"

For example, consider a teacher speaking while standing behind a pulpit. What do the students perceive? Or more exactly, what phenomenon does appear to them, is giving itself to them? Contrary to the assumptions of constructivism and the prejudices of empiricism, sense data are not given as isolated, immediate entities, abstracted and derived.

Not the immediate entities: not the color of the wood, not the size of the support, not the effects of morning light, not the resonance of voice sounds--none of these appear first. Rather, in the experience of the pulpit (im Kathedererlebnis), what is immediately given to me is the pulpit as such, i.e., as meaning, before any sensorial explanation.

Experiences and Independent Meaning

Even those who would not know what a pulpit is, nor a course, nor a teacher, nor listeners, nor a university, would nevertheless immediately see a meaning--probably another meaning (that of a ceremony podium, a celebration totem, etc.), but a global meaning (Bedeutung)--would always be first and immediately given to them, a meaning within which the sense data could then, later, take place and meaning, mediately and abstractedly recognizable a posteriori.

Only the phenomenon with a meaning is literally giving itself--the phenomenon which is mediated by its own meaning. Only what occurs by itself is given, hence with its literal meaning, mediated by reduction (Husserl), or by its own meaning (Heidegger), unless the proper meaning accomplishes de facto and de jure the most radical possible reduction--the reduction of that thing to itself.

It is therefore necessary to consider "the issue of givenness" as an enigma, which places it outside the common dichotomies of naive consciousness: neither immediate in the sense of the sense data of the subjective impression, nor mediate in the sense of objecthood built for knowledge.

It is not about choosing between words that are all inadequate, or even about finding a middle-way solution: it would be even better to know how to "fail" in solving this "problem" the right way. If its enigmatic character, Rätselhaftigkeit,…

The Path of Original Understanding

As putting us on the path of original understanding (Verstehen), original because it is anchored in the "being in the world" itself. Again, you have to understand the question: Was heißt gegeben, Gegebenheit - dieses Zauberwort der Phänomenologie und der Stein des Anstoßes bei den Anderen--"What does 'given' mean, givenness--this magic word of phenomenology and the stumbling block for others?"--and therefore remain in the enigma.

The indeterminacy of the given offers perhaps the only proper determination, the one which distinguishes it from all that follows--sense data, objects, knowledge--the offspring of its event (apparition?). Because, for once, Valéry saw and expressed this question well:

"The nature, that is to say, the Data [the given]. And that's all. Everything inceptive; the eternal given of any mental transaction, regardless of data and transaction, this is nature, and it is nothing else."

Here, before this indeterminate beginning, neither mediate nor immediate, in front of this enigma, another enigma intervenes--the enigma of hermeneutics.

V. Interpretation

The enigmatic character of the given, neither immediate nor mediate (as an object), its enigmaticity (Rätselhaftigkeit), lies therefore, according to the text of Sein und Zeit just mentioned, in an understanding (Verstehen). But the question of the interpretation (Auslegung) depends in turn on the interpretation of this Verstehen. And therefore, it too shares the enigmatic character of the given through the Verstehen.

Two Essential Remarks and Tasks

One has to make here two essential remarks, and there are two tasks to face.

First, we should not--and we cannot--take the instance of hermeneutics as the universal solution to the determination of the meaning of the given, as if it were self-evident and fell from the intelligible sky upon a given that would remain obscure and problematic. The act of interpretation is no more obvious than the reception of the given, with which it shares its enigmatic character.

For hermeneutics does not operate on objects or on sense data, modifying them at will by arbitrary authority--such an attitude would rather define ideology. Hermeneutics practices a givenness of meaning on the given, from an appropriate meaning to the given, in such a way that the latter, instead of returning to its anonymity and remaining hidden, is deliberately released and freed in its manifestation.

Hermeneutics does not give a meaning to the given by securing and deciding it; rather, it gives its meaning--that is to say, the meaning that shows that given as itself, as a phenomenon that is shown in itself and by itself. The self of the phenomenon rules, in the final instance, all the givenness of meaning.

It is not a givenness by which a meaning is constituted by it into an object or ascribed to this very object but rather a way to let its own meaning come to the object, acknowledged more than known. The meaning given by hermeneutics does not come so much from the decision of the hermeneutic actor,

The meaning given by hermeneutics arises not from the hermeneutic actor's decision but from the phenomenon itself, awaiting interpretation. In this process, the hermeneutic actor remains a discoverer and servant, revealing the phenomenon by attributing the most appropriate meaning inherent to it. This reciprocal interpretation requires the hermeneutic actor to be influenced by the given, allowing it to manifest as a phenomenon.

Hans-Georg Gadamer articulates this reciprocal structure through two key concepts:

1. Fusion of Horizons: Gadamer addresses Nietzsche's historical aporia, where interpretation either imposes the interpreter's horizon onto the subject, distorting it, or loses its own perspective by fully adopting the subject's horizon. Gadamer proposes that true understanding occurs when the horizons of the present and the past merge. He asserts, "The horizon of the present is not formed without the past. There is no horizon that exists apart from historical horizons that one should conquer. Understanding (Verstehen) is, instead, the process of the fusion of these horizons, which are supposedly independent of one another."

2. Reciprocal Process: This fusion involves a dialogue between the given (e.g., the past horizon) and the interpreter's present horizon. Gadamer emphasizes that understanding is not a one-sided act but a mutual process where both the interpreter and the subject matter influence each other, leading to a shared horizon.

In summary, Gadamer's hermeneutics highlights the dynamic interplay between the interpreter and the phenomenon, where meaning emerges through the fusion of horizons and reciprocal engagement.

Here is the corrected transcription based on the image:

The Question and Answer Structure

The phenomenon (the present horizon, in this case); how to define this reciprocity, which will reduplicate the interpretation of the hermeneutic person with the interpretation of the hermeneutic person itself?

"We are back to what we agree upon here: the hermeneutic phenomenon also carries with it the originarity of the dialogue and the question and answer structure."

It is, in the historical interpretation which ultimately led to the interpretation of texts, about a dialogue:

"Because the question-answer dialectics, which we highlighted, shows understanding as a reciprocal relationship such as found in dialogue. Admittedly, a text does not speak to us as a 'you.' It is always to 'us,' who understand, and of us, to make it talk. Now, as we have seen, this way of giving a voice in the understanding is not any intervention of a personal initiative: it refers in turn as a question to the expected response of the text."

Thus, the question (which asks the meaning of the given) receives this meaning, which will provoke the apparition of the given, only as the answer not of the interpreter, but of what is interpreted, the text. It will be, in this sense, the meaning of the given, of the answer.

Thus, hermeneutics depends on the question and answer structure, that is to say, the call and response structure, hence of the structure of the given articulated on the visible: hermeneutics itself is a special case of the play between what is given and what is shown, between the call of the given and the response (through the meaning) of what shows up.

Here is the transcription from the provided image:

…without any phenomenological legitimacy. This failure of the articulation between the logical and the ontical comes from misunderstanding the ways of being of both, ways of being which will never appear as long as we remain at "the leveling … of the original 'as' of the circumspect interpretation at the level of the 'as' of the determination of beingness at hand (Nivellierung des ursprünglicher 'Als' der umsichtigten Auslegung zum Als der Vorhandenheitsbestimmung)."

In this case, the hermeneutic is degraded into a single, arbitrary and illegitimate utterance (Aussage).

Understanding, at least in its phenomenological (and hence logical) legitimacy implies, on the contrary, the possible-being of the Dasein, in the sense where the Möglichsein has the existential primacy in Dasein, not the rank of a modality or a category of non-daseinmäßige being (possibility as a bare, not yet effective contingency).

Far from the (positive) indifference of free will, the Dasein frees itself for its most typical possibility, because, as geworfen, it is following the project mode, the view (and not the vision) mode.

Therefore, hermeneutics never deals first with the text (vision of its meaning), but with the intra-worldly being opened to and by the possibility (the avenue for the coming of the interpreter).

Thus, in the yet still inappropriate situation (uneigentlich) of maneuverable being (zuhanden), there is no pre-given (vorgegeben), no pieces, no fragments, but always the meaning already, this character of Dasein and not the property of the in-…

Here is the transcription from the image:

…tra-worldly being.

"The understanding, as opening of the Da-, always concerns the opening of the totality of the 'being for the world.'"

Therefore, it becomes clear that the apophantic 'as' (Aussage) presupposes and by repercussion derives from the existential 'as':

"We call the originating 'as' of the circumspect interpretation (ermhneiva) the hermeneutics-existential 'as' as different from the apophantic 'as' of the enunciation."

The circle is not vicious, but rather than avoiding entering into it, it is necessary to enter it correctly. Hence the second thesis: if hermeneutics is rooted in understanding, if that understanding always means the pre-understanding, hence the opening of Dasein to its possibility, but if, in addition, the possibility opens to the call and response play, then we can have a glimpse of how hermeneutics can be articulated on the issue of givenness.

It is only if the way the given is received and the identification of the given imply that this given is always to be interpreted as a phenomenon, that the hermeneutic instance sets the locus of the given, because this instance sets there itself.

For we need to understand hermeneutics itself in view of the way the given is received and identified. Hence the last step: not any more to know how to understand (interpret) hermeneutics itself, but how to understand it so that it understands itself (in it) (regarding) the given.

Here is the transcription from the image:

VI. Four Hermeneutic Moments in Givenness

No given gives itself immediately, nor either mediately as an object already constituted. For the given does not show itself just because it gives itself up. This necessary condition has nothing sufficient about it. Sure, the phenomenon appears only if it befalls as a given, but this is not enough for it to appear as showing itself, in full phenomenality.

Starting with Étant donné, from which it was one of the conclusions, we noted that "…if all that is showing itself must first give itself, it sometimes happens that what gives itself does not succeed at showing itself."

The given shows itself only in its reflection, in its reflexive return, in short in the response of the "adonné," who sees it, but only as it receives itself from this given.

In other words, it is "…precisely because the principle that 'what gives itself, shows itself' remains intact, that it becomes possible to see the finitude of phenomenality, in the context of givenness: for what gives itself shows itself only as much as it is received by the 'gifted' (adonné), whose proper function is to give back to the given, the possibility of showing itself."

But if the given gives itself as a call, if it shows itself only in the response of the "adonné," and if the "adonné" is by definition finite, then what is shown always stays behind and late in comparison with what gives itself. The finitude of the manifestation…

Here is the transcription from the provided image:

…(of the self-manifestation of phenomena) emerges, by contrast, against the infinity of the obscure givenness of what still remains out of sight:

"I'm therefore obsessed because I cannot or do not want to let show itself the night of the invus, data but without species, which surrounds the huge day of what shows already itself."

The gap between what gives itself and what is shown about it irremediably characterizes the phenomenality of the givenness, because it is a direct result of the finitude of the adonné.

Hence the required area and function of hermeneutics: hermeneutics manages the gap between what gives itself and what shows itself by interpreting the call (or intuition) by the response (concept or meaning).

Intuition, given and received, stays blind--still shows nothing--as long as the adonné does not recognize in it the meaning or meanings (or concepts) which will allow a phenomenon to show legitimately itself.

The hermeneutic power of the adonné therefore measures ultimately the possibility for what gives itself to show itself, in short, calibrates the scale of phenomenalization of the givenness.

Not only does "…the unconditional universality of givenness" not "invalidate the recourse to hermeneutics," but, on the contrary, a phenomenology of the givenness reveals phenomena as given only as far as there is in it the use of a hermeneutics of the given as shown and showing itself, as visible and seen by adonnés.

De facto, our attempts toward a phenomenology of givenness have not stopped using the help of hermeneutics. Let us highlight at least four of its interventions.

• First, the call is defined by its sensible or semantic anonymity. Not only because of the silence of the call--not everyone hears voices, always because of lack of its physical sound--but mostly because the call involves the intention and assignment of a signal (sonorous or other, silent or visible). So that such (non-) sounds must first be interpreted as calls (and not background noises, etc.), then be interpreted as calls addressed to such and such adonnés; what only one interpretation can assume. Finally, it will be necessary to determine the identity of the called party (to take the call as mine, as sent toward one's self), which will finally allow the response. Interpretations again, which confirm that the call is only heard in the response. This answer determines not only the content of the call, but also its reality (or its illusory character).

• The same applies to the gift (the phenomenon of the gift, as opposed to exchange and trade): no being or object offers in itself a gift; it can only be about an unrefined state of a thing, a something ventured or available, of something which is available or ventured, without any intention which would destine it to anyone: this is decided by interpretation. And even once decided that it is indeed something destined to be received by someone as a gift, it is still necessary to interpret what recipient

…must benefit from it. Deciding whether or not there is a given can be possible only by interpreting if that shows itself.

Second, what is worth of a phenomenon in general has even more worth of a saturated phenomenon, whose intuitive height requires the assignment of several concepts or meanings, obtained by hermeneutics. The gap, in fact, never filled, between saturated intuition and the scarcity of meanings or concepts, must be lived, failing to be filled, by the invention of many, if not of all the possible interpretations of intuition. You can say as Mallarmé did:

"Oh! know, spirit of litigation / At this hour when we are silent, / That from multiple lilies the stalk / Grew too much for our reasons…"

The inadequacy of noesis to its noema (in Levinas's sense) is generalized and becomes the rule of saturated phenomenality. We can also generalize what we argued about the face of the other, i.e., the saturated phenomenon of the icon, where "…the face of others requires […] an infinite hermeneutics."

Third, how to distinguish between degrees of intuition, that is, between poor phenomena, phenomena of common law, and saturated phenomena? And besides, should we distinguish the three cases as being categories which are set, decidedly different and always irreducible? Or, rather, should we consider transitions from one to the other, so that the saturation is not confined to exceptional and marginal

…cases, possibly not liable to qualify or legitimately outside norm? In fact, we must admit the banality of the saturation, since the same given may show itself (to appear, to phenomenalize itself) as more or less saturated depending on the hermeneutics that looks at it. What hermeneutics, if not the one exerted by the "adonné?" The "adonné" has nothing passive in it, because, by its (hermeneutic) response to the (intuitive) call, it allows [it] and it alone, to what gives itself to becoming, only partially but really, what shows itself.

The passage from a poor or common law phenomenon to a saturated phenomenon remains a matter of hermeneutics: the three horizontal stripes of a flag and a painting by Rothko, sound as signal (information, communication, concept, meaning) and sound as music (meaningless concert), wine in its taste and its chemical formula, odor and perfume.

The saturated phenomenon therefore requires also a hermeneutics, where the existential "as" agrees to expose itself to the counter-experience, and to thus enter into a battle with the inevitably objectifying experience expressed by the apophantic "as." And they revolve in an inversely proportional way.

Finally, fourth, the basis of the final distinction of all phenomena into objects or events has its origin in the hermeneutic operation, which, by radicalizing the banality (already hermeneutic) of the saturation, transforms the object into event and return. We are following here the famous analysis of the difference

…between the phenomenality of the present-at-hand (vorhanden) and of the "ready-to-hand" (zuhanden) developed by Heidegger, namely on the example of the hammer.

And we are generalizing it to the inversion of objecthood into its hidden "événementialité." However, as Heidegger said, it is about seeing the hammer as something handy and usual, rather than an inert subsisting object; it is about having it play the existential "as," that Dasein's "as," open to the world, which sees it as it is used, in a radical hermeneutics.

Probably our distinction between these two modes of phenomenality in general offers other features. \*"But the essential remains: the distinction between modes of phenomenality (for us, between object and event) can be based on hermeneutic variations, which […] have authority over the phenomenality of étants."

The phenomenology of givenness is managing the gap between what gives itself and what shows itself, whose challenge sets the self of the phenomenon, only by the exercise of a properly phenomenological hermeneutics.