lins argues that most of them are, though the kenotic view runs into serious difficulties.

In the final chapter, Timothy O'Connor and Philip Woodward start with a philosophical-cum-theological reason for supposing that there is a multiverse: God's resolving to create a multiverse would enable God to eliminate or reduce arbitrariness in his more specific creative choices. O'Connor and Woodward maintain that if God has created a multiverse then it would be almost certainly be one containing many different species of 'divine image-bearing' creatures. If he has done so, they argue, one would expect non-human incarnations. They sketch their own distinctive metaphysics of God's human incarnation, and explain how one individual divine person can be simultaneously located on different planets, in virtue of having more than one body. Nevertheless, they have Christian theological doubts about multiple incarnations.

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Jean-Luc Marion, *Givenness and Revelation*. Trans. by Stephen E. Lewis. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016. xviii + 137 pp.

How would (specifically religious) revelation be possible? This question presents something of a limit test for contemporary phenomenology. If revelation is given, *as such*, then under what conditions could such givenness occur? Moreover, if such conditions could be specified, then would that challenge the very status of the revelation *as revelation*? Jean-Luc Marion takes up these difficult questions in his 2014 Gifford Lectures, published by Oxford University Press as *Givenness and Revelation*. After a helpful foreword by Ramona Fotiade and David Jasper, which does a nice job of situating the present work in relation to Marion's overall phenomenological methodology and his theological orientation, Marion begins the introduction by admitting that the book itself should rightly be approached with some surprise. Regarding the very title of the text, Marion admits:

> At first glance, nothing seems to join an apparently old and steadfastly theological notion together with a philosophical concept drawn from the most

> recent phenomenology. However, if we wanted to consider better their respective features, the two terms could instead converge—especially if we refrain from masking the formal difficulties of each. (1)

In general terms, then, Marion sets out to challenge, or destabilize, the legitimacy of reason as the framework in which all revelation would have to be understood. Accordingly, Marion takes as one of his starting points that failure of the "desire to make Christianity reasonable" (3). Such an "epistemological interpretation" of revelation misses, he claims, the key religious dimension of the revelation itself as finding its authority elsewhere. In this sense, revelation is necessarily an interruption, not only of one's expectation (hence the surprise announced in the book's title), but also of one's sense of self. Not only does revelation require a reevaluation of reason, and hence a distinction between a worldly logic and a logic of the Kingdom of God (46), but also a reconceiving of intentionality (as well as selfhood) such that intentionality is not that which proceeds from subjective agency, but instead constitutes the religious person as called or gifted by God via the revelation received as such (see 56-57). To conceive of revelation on the terms of human reason is to reduce God to an idol of our own conceptual making. When we recognize this idolatry and stand in light of revelation as it calls to us, we become "witnesses" to the truth that is given to us by God (52-53).

Marion recognizes that overcoming idolatry risks coming at the cost of making God absolutely incomprehensible. Here, we might want to push back just a bit against Marion's ease with such incomprehensibility. Moving from a reductive kataphatic conception to an excessively apophatic conception presents problems for a phenomenological approach to the theological truth revealed in the first place. Indeed, if revelation is to have any phenomenal meaning, then it has to do exactly that: reveal something to someone. Yet, it is not clear that absolute incomprehensibility could reveal anything at all. If God is to speak to us, then somehow we have to be able to hear that speaking. Nonetheless, when faced with the reductive temptations in both directions, it is crucial to avoid all egoistic pretention to conclusiveness in both philosophy and also, especially, in theology. As Marion notes—highlighting the phenomenological obstacle that revelation presents—"what is at issue when the issue is God either remains incomprehensible by definition, or is degraded into an idol" (116).

How then can "the question of God avoid sinking into idolatry" while maintaining some positive meaning that would be available as the content of revelation itself? Marion suggests that what is required is that the question of God must remain a question (117). The content of the revelation of God is neither a refutation of the atheist's objection, nor a proof of the theistic apologist's claims, but instead amounts to a transformative eschewal of the question of existence as tantamount to the question of God. "The biblical Revelation of God," Marion writes, ". . . does not come to give an answer (without proof) to the question of the existence of God. Instead, it comes to transform our idolatrous and therefore in this sense insignificant debates . . . into a serious test" (117). Continuing on, he explains that "faith does not enter in as an obscure replacement for the light of understanding, but in order to bring the understanding to decide to will or not to will to accept the coming of God who gives himself in and as the event of Jesus" (117).

Importantly these passages from the conclusion to *Givenness and Revelation* highlight something about the entire text: *it is deeply theological*. I have argued elsewhere that Marion is usually careful to distinguish between phenomenological possibility (and the conditional arguments that are offered in relation to such possibility), and theological actuality (and the scriptural/revelational authorities taken as evidence therein). In this book, Marion consistently deploys scripture as evidence for the claims he is making about the conditions attending to specifically Christian revelation. Indeed, one of the objections that could be raised to Marion's account of revelation is that it is too exclusively framed in relation to Christianity. This is not a problem if the book is considered an instance of phenomenological Christian theology, but it is something to interrogate considering that, in the introduction, Marion more broadly refers to his focus as "the revealed character of religion" (1).

A phenomenological consideration of the stakes of such revealed character of religion as, itself, an historical phenomenon, is an important and widely discussed matter of phenomenological debate. Indeed, from Ricoeur to Henry, and from Derrida to Chrétien, new phenomenological approaches to the idea of the phenomenon we have historically called "religion" focus on the key question of whether revelation can count as a constitutive aspect of worldly phenomena. Put a bit more technically, and expressed as a question, we might ask: can phenomena be given such that they would be excessive,

as such, of all intentional horizonality? Is the "event" of such a religious phenomenon something that can be countenanced within phenomenology itself, as philosophy? This question does not seem to admit of a positive answer. As Marion himself claims, "the event leaves us speechless and with no way out, because in the event we are deprived of every signification that would make it conceivable, which is to say possible (in the metaphysical sense), and it imposes on us an actuality which, having never been possible or thinkable in advance, merits precisely the title of impossible" (50).

Given the centrality, and decidedly philosophical orientation, of such phenomenological concerns about the very idea of religious revelation (i.e., of a religious phenomenon to be presented, as such), Marion's seemingly immediate understanding of "religious revelation" as *Christian* revelation and "religious phenomena" as the *Christ* event are perhaps rightly considered as problematic even within phenomenological philosophy of religion. Accordingly, Marion seems to deepen the worry of many critics of the so-called theological turn in phenomenology that phenomenological considerations of religion just are theological defenses of particular religious truth claims. If this is the case, then justified worries might emerge that Marion's critique of the epistemological interpretation of revelation (chapter one), his engagement with Augustine and William of Saint-Thierry (chapter 2), his discussion of Christ as the saturated phenomenon (chapter 3), and his account of the trinity as the logic of manifestation operating in revelation (chapter 4), all amount to a self-protective attempt to close off phenomenological Christian theology from rational philosophical critique. Indeed, if the first move in one's argument is that the rest of your argument can't be understood according to the "worldly wisdom" of rationality, then the "wisdom of God" that is subsequently defended is unlikely to be very compelling to those not already convinced of the actuality of that revelation itself.

I mention this worry not as a critique of the importance of Marion's text. Indeed, this book is perhaps the clearest presentation of his basic phenomenological approach to Christian theology that has yet become available. That fact alone should make it required reading for anyone working on Marion's thought. Moreover, I fully expect that this book will be of extreme value to historical theologians who are looking for phenomenological resources for their work. Rather, I mention the worry because I think that, in a time of in-

creasingly blurry lines between professional philosophy and theology (both in continental and also in analytic philosophical traditions), it is increasingly important to do the meta-philosophical work of understanding the audience and the aims of a text as implicated in the evidentiary authorities operative within that text. That said, I find Marion's book to be at its best when I read it as offering an enriched conception of what it means, *for me*, to live as a Christian, rather than as offering an account of what religious revelation means, *for anyone*, who identifies as a phenomenological philosopher.

The main thesis that runs throughout *Givenness and Revelation*, and that shows up at various points within it, is that we overcome the epistemological interpretation of revelation, move from worldly logic to Kingdom logic, as well as from conscious intentionality to counter-intentionality, and are maximally likely to be open to being transformed by Christian revelation, when we shift from God as rational postulate to God as person, and from an egoistic concern with knowledge to a humbled embrace of love. "The clearly non-epistemological intention of revelation," Marion suggests, "aims to manifest God in person; God's intention is not so much to make himself known as to make himself *re*cognized, to communicate himself, to enable men to enter into a communication that puts them in communion with him" (27; see also 29, 43, 45, 71, 91). This is a compelling theological vision worthy of serious consideration.

After reading Marion's book, I have a much easier time appropriating it in my religious existence than in my philosophical work. Indeed, I am a personalist open theist. As such, I am deeply sympathetic to Marion's account of God and the phenomenological approach to Christian theology that illuminates the existential ramifications of such an account. Ultimately, then, I find *Givenness and Revelation* to be a profound challenge to the complacency and egoistic idolatry of those Christians who would approach Christian theology (and God!) from the perspective that forces revelation to occur within the conceptual frames of human rationality as located in specific politico-cultural contexts. As an American who has been increasingly disappointed in much of the Christian community in light of the Trump election, Marion's book not only calls for a reassessment of one's theological doctrine, but also stands as an invitation to confession and contrition for having so often fallen prey to the idolatry of certainty. Even if legitimate objections might be subsequently

raised to it, we all need to hear the rule that Marion claims "remains inviolable": "If one believes he understands God, it isn't God" (116).

Despite wanting to give a copy of *Givenness and Revelation* to every pastor in my country, I am not sure that I would give it to my non-Christian philosophical colleagues. This is not necessarily a problem, but it just depends on what one expects a text to do. Not all books can do everything and what Marion does in *Givenness and Revelation* is much needed indeed in contemporary theology as a guide for Christian life and social practice. It is a clearly written, exceptionally historically astute, and a deeply theologically motivated book, but if one is not already convinced of either the truth of Christian revelation, or at least of the legitimacy of blurring the lines between theology and philosophy, then this book is likely not only to be "surprising" regarding its focus, as Marion indicates in the introduction, but also frustratingly confessional regarding its conclusions.

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Paul K. Moser, *The God Relationship. The Ethics for Inquiry about the Divine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 358 pp.

In his three most recent books (*The Elusive God, The Evidence for God and the Severity of God*), Paul K. Moser has sought to re-orientate and critique a discipline which, he thinks, is often neglectful of the existential and ethical challenges of religious faith. As Moser sees it, the vast majority of academic philosophical and theological work engages with religious issues in a purely intellectual manner, ignoring the importance of the ethical and volitional challenges of a life of faith. The overarching aim of these recent works has been to connect issues of religious epistemology to questions concerning a person's redemptive relationship with God. According to Moser, God's elusiveness in the world is a result of his will for all human beings to be redeemed and reconciled to him, a purpose which would not be achievable by providing only undeniable evidence that God exists (or, 'spectator evidence' in Moser's terms). Hence, for Moser, our evidence for God must be informed