meant to offer concrete political directions; rather, it opens up the space for these new, concrete directions to be imagined. And, with only a censored version of the past from which to draw, any attempt to imagine an alternative future is seriously hindered.

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Reading Jean-Luc Marion: Exceeding Metaphysics
Christina M. Gschwandtner

Gschwandtner’s book is the first comprehensive study of Jean-Luc Marion’s thought. This is no small feat, at any rate, if one takes into consideration both the length and the complexity that Marion’s work presents for the reader. Gschwandtner’s study differs from other similar publications in another crucial aspect: where others see only fragmentation among Marion’s various philosophical projects or, worse, the disingenuousness of a hidden (theological) agenda, Gschwandtner discovers in Marion’s corpus a coherent vision and puts forward a strong argument in favour of continuity. Gschwandtner is right to have taken into account what has, for different reasons, been left largely unnoticed by other commentators, namely, Marion’s early work on René Descartes. The difference is made not only by tracing the development of Marion’s thought from the Cartesian trilogy to his later theological and phenomenological studies but also by arguing that many of Marion’s later concerns and positions are already to be found, even if only in nuce, in his work on Descartes.

Reading Jean-Luc Marion follows a clear tripartite structure, a part being devoted to each of the following subjects: metaphysics, theology, and anthropology. Each part is prefaced by an introductory text that announces the Cartesian connection of the theme to be presented. Gschwandtner has ample opportunities throughout these conceptual itineraries to demonstrate that she is in command not only of Marion’s work but of all the relevant secondary literature. This is a thoroughly documented study and one can expect that in time it will come to occupy its rightful place as a work of reference. Indeed, one could compare the scope and ambition of Reading Jean-Luc Marion to what William
Richardson’s 1962 monograph accomplished, for example, for Heidegger scholarship. That being said, however, one cannot but think that a study like Gschwandtner’s is subject to time and thus runs the serious risk of becoming outdated by Marion’s own new work (this is in a sense already the case: Gschwandtner could not take into account Marion’s 2008 *Au lieu de soi*, a long-awaited study on St. Augustine) as well as the work of Marion’s other commentators and interlocutors.

Gschwandtner’s study shows that Marion has achieved for the 20th century what St. Thomas did for the 13th. If this analogy is *mutatis mutandis* correct, then Descartes would hold a similar position in Marion’s thought as Aristotle for St. Thomas’s. Incidentally, both St. Thomas and Marion inherited Dionysius apophatic patrimony; only, in Marion’s case, the Greek Patristic influence is reinforced through a particular reinterpretation of the phenomenological tradition, owing to both Husserlian and Heideggerian critiques of metaphysics and ontotheology. Further to the point, one could indeed say that Marion’s work, as comprehensively presented and analysed by Gschwandtner, fulfills Edith Stein’s dream of a dialogue between Thomism and phenomenology, a dialogue, however, that does not remain confined within the limits of a sterile comparison of similarities and differences, but seeks to reenact for our age’s philosophical needs and demands what St. Thomas accomplished for his.

I am aware of the irony in comparing the founder of Christian metaphysics with the thinker who most persistently worked for its overcoming. As Gschwandtner rightly observes, overcoming metaphysics is the common thread that ties together Marion’s three trilogies. Perhaps, overcoming metaphysics is for our age what the synthesis of Greek reason and Christian faith was for the Middle Ages. The clearest evidence for such a claim lies in Marion’s own assertion that Christian revelation (that is, Revelation with a capital R) remains a form of logic. It is such a claim that enables Gschwandtner’s treatment of Marion’s philosophical and theological works as a coherent whole project and gives this book its innovative perspective. Indeed, there is a relationship of mutual dependency between the revelation of the phenomena and the phenomenon of Revelation. The latter ultimately grounds the former but must at the same time obey, insofar as it is a phenomenon, the logic of phenomenality (whether intentional of counter-intentional is of no importance here).
On the other hand, the question necessarily arises as to what Gschwandtner’s master plan might be sacrificing in its insistence on an all-too-neatly arranged synthesis. The isomorphism between Marion’s philosophical and theological work, which implies a parallel univocation between faith and reason, might be seen as undermining the asymmetry (insurmountable for Kierkegaard) between finitude and infinity. Is not the exception to the logic of phenomenality, which the phenomenon of Revelation should be allowed to constitute, undermined and does not the gift offered to l’adonné become thereby devalued?

*Reading Jean-Luc Marion* is, however, far more than an historical monograph on the work of one of France’s leading philosophers. Gschwandtner’s commentary offers to the reader a lesson on philosophical apprenticeship as it chronicles the advances of Marion’s thought and traces the detours of the complex dialogue with his predecessors. More importantly, this is an apologetic work insofar as it answers confidently, and one hopes conclusively, to the recently growing number of critical voices. This study is valuable not only to understand one of France’s leading thinkers but also the direction that Continental philosophy has taken since the work of Emmanuel Levinas.

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**Dialogue With Nietzsche**  
Gianni Vattimo  
Translated by William McCuaig  

Of the numerous (all too numerous) books on Nietzsche that appear every year, there are not a great many that one would describe as necessary reading for anyone with a serious interest in this figure. I can think of only a handful of exceptions to this; David Allison’s *Reading the New Nietzsche*, Alexander Nehamas’ *Nietzsche: Life As Literature*, and Walter Kaufmann’s classic *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* are a few of them, but it is a short list. To this list I would add Vattimo’s *Dialogue With Nietzsche*, which is a translation of the Italian text of 2000, *Dialogo con Nietzsche*. Vattimo endeavours to engage in a dialogue of sorts with Nietzsche, one that does not limit itself to exposition of