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Nicholas of Cusa's Mystical Theology in Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenology of Affectivity

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Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to analyze Nicholas of Cusa's reading on the dispute of Mystical Theology through Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness. To do this, first of all, we will address the analyses offered by Jean-Luc Marion on the problem of affectivity. Secondly, we examine Nicholas' interpretation of Mystical Theology through the *aenigma* of the *eicona dei* in *De visione dei* (1453). Thirdly, we present Jean-Luc Marion's interpretation of Cusanus *eicona dei* as an antecedent of his phenomenological conception of *Icône* as "saturated phenomenon." Finally, we suggest that Cusanus *eicona dei* appears in Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology as a precedent of his strategy when approaching the field of affectivity. Both authors try to show an instance preceding the distinction between affectivity and rationality.

Keywords

affectivity – rationality – phenomenology – Mystical Theology – Nicholas of Cusa – Jean-Luc Marion

Although Marion has not addressed the problem of affectivity in a systematic way, we can still find important references to this topic at various moments in his work. From the reflections in *Dieu sans l'être* (1982) on "boredom" (*Ennui*),¹

¹ Jean-Luc Marion, *Dieu sans l'être* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), pp. 166–171. As a general clarification, in cases where we refer to places in Marion's works without offering a specific quotation, we

“vanity” (*vanité*),² and “melancholy” (*melancholia*),³ passing through the sphere of charity (*charité*) in *Prolégomènes à la charité* (1986),⁴ all these places account for the importance of affectivity in Marion’s phenomenology already in his early thought. However, it is in his work *Le phénomène érotique* (2003) where affectivity, and specifically love, reaches the level of a systematic meditation.⁵ There Marion offers not only a radical diagnosis of the history of philosophy based on his postulation of “the silence of love” (*la silence de l’amour*) but also shows the intimate relationship between his phenomenological proposal and the dimension of affectivity, since the field of saturation, in the same way as love, opens a non-objectual domain of phenomena.

Based on our study on the reception of the Christian Neoplatonic tradition elaborated by Marion, we will show in the present article how, in the same way as Marion seeks to indicate the legitimacy of a logic of affectivity (as is the primordial case of love), Nicholas of Cusa maintains a *coincidentia* between the affective way and the intellectual way in the Mystical Theology. This implies supporting at least two points. On the one hand, that in both authors we can find similar strategies in relation to affectivity, since this dimension cannot be sharply separated from the field of rationality or from the perspective of the intellect. On the other hand, and for all the aforementioned, we can place the Cusano as an antecedent of Marion’s strategy. This will allow us to take Nicholas of Cusa’s proposal as a step preceding the modern subordination of affectivity to rationality,⁶ and also uphold a recognition of Christian Neopla-

indicate the original French version. In the case of specific appointments, we refer to the available English translations.

2 Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, pp. 171–181.

3 Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, pp. 188–195.

4 Jean-Luc Marion, *Prolégomènes à la charité* (Paris: La Différence, 1986), pp. 7–11.

5 Although not in a systematic way, love is a topic that can be traced back to previous works, see Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, pp. 9–12 / pp. 73–76. See also, Marion, *Prolégomènes à la charité*, pp. 91–120. In this last place we find a work on the “intentionality of love” in homage to his teacher Levinas. Here we can already see how the connection between love and phenomenology is outlined. In the last mentioned work, this relation is established from a discussion with the Husserlian notion of intentionality.

6 In this sense, we argue that Marion is a thinker who offers a two-sided reading of modernity, since thinking against modernity allows us a new way of understanding modernity. A paradigmatic case of this can be found in the section “Trois exemples” in *Étant donné*. There we see how Descartes, Kant and Husserl, authors questioned by their respective metaphysical versions of the notion of phenomenon, can be conceived in turn as thinkers who have set a precedent in the field of saturated phenomena. In the case of Descartes, the notion of infinity; as for Kant, the sublime; and finally Husserl offers the immanent time-consciousness. See, Jean-Luc Marion, *Étant donné: Essai d’une phénoménologie de la donation* (Paris: PUF, 2013), pp. 359–364.

tonic thought as an inexhaustible source to think about the current problems of phenomenology, and above all, the dilemmas proposed under the prism of the phenomenology of givenness.

We will first address the various Marionian analyses of love, as found in *Le phénomène érotique* and “Ce qui ne se dit pas – l’apophase du discours amoureux,” a chapter belonging to his work *Le visible et le révélé* (2005). We maintain that, far from being a secondary theme in his phenomenology, affectivity acquires a relevant character, since it appears as an element that deepens the scope of phenomenology, thereby expanding its limits.

As we will see, love thus appears as a way of accessing phenomena that goes beyond the field of objectness and beingness, as a display of an erotic reduction (*reduction érotique*).⁷ Second, we will offer a brief exegesis of the dispute over the primacy of affect or intellect in Mystical Theology, as can be seen in the opusculum *De visione dei* (1453) by Nicholas of Cusa. Finally, we will refer to Marion’s article “Seeing, or Seeing Oneself Seen: Nicholas of Cusa’s Contribution in *De visione Dei*” (2016). Following in the footsteps of Nicholas of Cusa’s reception proposed by Marion, we will, third, try to show how Cusanus can be interpreted, not only as an antecedent to Marion’s conception of the “icon” (*icône*) as a saturated phenomenon in light of the *praxis experimentalis* of *eiconologia dei*, but also as a thinker who offers tools to deepen this claim of affectivity elaborated by Marion. Although in different ways, we support that Marion and Cusanus seek to recover the sphere of affectivity in the face of the predominance of rationality.

1 Phenomenology of Givenness and Affectivity: A Logic of Love

At the beginning of *Le phénomène érotique* (2003), Marion offers a radical diagnosis: throughout the history of metaphysics, the notion of love was forgotten in pursuit of the primacy of the concept of being. In other words, contemporary thought is marked by a “silence of love.”⁸ Referring to the term

7 Jean-Luc Marion, *Le phénomène érotique: “Six méditations sur l’amour”* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2003), p. 9.

8 Marion, *Le phénomène érotique*, p. 7. For an earlier reference to the concept of love in his work, see, Marion, *Dieu sans l’être*, pp. 73–75. For a study of the problem of love in the history of phenomenology, see, Roberto Walton, “El fenómeno erótico en el marco de la fenomenología y teología del amor”, in Jorge Luis Roggero, ed., *Jean-Luc Marion: límites y posibilidades de la filosofía y de la teología* (Buenos Aires: SB, 2017), pp. 69–88; See also, Roberto Walton, “El tema del amor en los fundadores de la fenomenología”, in Cecilia Cabrera and Micaela Szeftel, eds., *Fenomenología de la vida afectiva*, (Buenos Aires: SB, 2021), pp. 21–41.

“philosophy,” Marion shows how the σοφία [*sofia*] completely overshadowed all reflection on the φιλος [*filos*]. Philosophy, an activity originally centered on a love of knowledge, thus became purely theoretical knowledge to the detriment of any erotic dimension. The latter was reduced merely to a feeling or, in other words, to something of a secondary nature. Not only does philosophy say nothing about love, it also lacks the words and concepts to express it. This current situation, according to Marion, is mixed with “(...) the desperate sentimentalism of popular prose ... the shapeless ideology of that boastful asphyxiation known as ‘self-actualization’ ...”⁹ The seriousness of this oblivion and silence lies, in Marion’s opinion, in that “... philosophy takes its origin from that ‘great god’ love and from *it* alone.”¹⁰ This amounts to saying that philosophy, as such, is originally a matter of love, that is, an erotic or affective activity.

In this case, Marion tries to recover the concept of love by broadening the field of the phenomenological “reduction.” In the same way that Husserl spoke of a “gnoseological reduction” and Heidegger of an “ontological reduction,” Marion points out that there remains a reduction yet to be formulated, that is, the “erotic reduction” (*reduction érotique*). With this we are faced with a central feature of affectivity, since it seeks to dismantle that prejudice already addressed in his early work *Dieu sans l’être*: the predominance of the *Seynsfrage*. At the level of the erotic phenomenon, this prejudice can be translated as follows: “... in order to be loved, in order to be well, it is first necessary, quite simply, to be ...”¹¹

Following again the thread of criticism of the paradigm of objectness, Marion indicates that the way to dismantle this prejudice must be elaborated through a disputation of the metaphysical concept of “certainty” (*certitude*), a cornerstone of the modern notion of truth and the mode of rationality that excludes affectivity. According to Marion, the main problem with this type of objectual / rational certainty lies in the fact that it does not provide any certainty about me, since the objects that are related to the ego do not say anything about what one is in each case.¹² In this way, the subject only acquires certainty of himself at the cost of lowering himself to the condition of the object. Thus, metaphysical thought reaches “... the certainty of the object, and then extending it even to the *ego*.”¹³

9 Jean-Luc Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon* (Chicago, University Press of Chicago, 2007), p. 2.

10 Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, p. 2.

11 Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, p. 21.

12 Marion, *Le phénomène érotique*, pp. 68–69.

13 Marion, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, p. 16.

Against this, love brings into play an instance of phenomenality that escapes the ego and its constituent (transcendental) operations. This is because, originally, I am my flesh. This phenomenon implies that, prior to establishing itself as a judge of the certainty of objects, the subject presents itself primarily as a phenomenon for itself, that is, self-affecting, since being affected by the things of the world is experienced and revealed as affected by my own flesh (*chair*).¹⁴ Against this, certainty offers no more than a guarantee of objects that I myself certify, but it never offers a certainty concerning what matters most to me. From this follows another type of affectivity: vanity (*vanité*). This maintains that the ego discovers itself through its *cogitata* and that from this instance it can find the source of its certainty, obscuring the fact that this certainty is nothing more than an extension of the certainty of objects.¹⁵ Concerning this issue, the appearance of vanity in the context of the certainty of objects further radicalizes the Marionian thesis of philosophy as an originally affective task. For even when the ego tries to certify itself by way of something it is not, an affective dimension, marked by vanity, nevertheless continues to prevail.

A second moment can be found in the chapter “Ce qui ne se dit pas – l’apophase du discours amoureux” of his writing *Le visible et le révélé* (2005). Returning to his interpretation of the Mystical Theology,¹⁶ Marion tries to formulate a pragmatic language that allows us to account for the expression “I love you.”¹⁷ In the context of this problem, we would like to highlight the centrality of Mystical Theology in the Marionian proposal for a mode of language expressed within the erotic phenomenon. In Marion’s words, “... pragmatic usage (which elsewhere I have attributed to Mystical Theology in order to gain a better understanding of the third and last path) finds a lateral confirmation in the perlocutions of erotic discourse.”¹⁸ This implies that Mystical Theology, though not completely, acts as a paradigm for reflecting upon the proper language of the erotic phenomenon.

According to Marion, Mystical Theology, in its doctrine, implies a productive tension between affectivity and intellect, the expression of which cannot be reduced to predicative language, nor can it be defined in a purely affective or purely intellectual manner. In turn, the “erotic phenomenon” exceeds

14 Marion, *Le phénomène érotique*, pp. 91–92.

15 Marion, *Le phénomène érotique*, p. 37.

16 Jean-Luc Marion, *Le visible et le révélé* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), pp. 119–123.

17 For a systematic study of this subject, see Stéphane Vinolo, *Jean-Luc Marion, apologie de l’inexistence*, “Tome II: Une phénoménologie discursive”, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2019), pp. 238–254.

18 Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), Translated by Christina Gschwandtner, p. 116.

all denominations, thus inscribing itself in the “discourse of praise” (*discours de louange*) by Dionysius the Areopagite,¹⁹ analyzed by Marion already in his early work *L’Idole et la distance* (1977).²⁰ Thus, “... mystical theology would no longer constitute a marginal and insignificant exception in language theory but, on the contrary, would indicate a much more central and vast domain ...”²¹ With this, Marion tries to show that Mystical Theology appears as a central antecedent of the erotic phenomenon and its language, and therefore, of the phenomenological problem of affectivity.

2 Nicholas of Cusa and the *coincidentia* between *affectus* and *intellectus*

In relation to the problem of the dispute over Mystical Theology, our interest consists in analyzing it through Nicholas of Cusa’s *De visione dei* (1453).²² As is well known, this work by Cusano is framed, though not directly, in a discussion that took place between 1451 and 1460 within the monasteries of the Danube valley in which the following individuals participated: Gaspar Aindorffer, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Quirin in Tergensee; Bernard of Waging, prior of the same abbey; the Carthusian monk Vicent, a native of the Aggsbach monastery; John of Weilham, prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Melk, and the priest of Marquard Sprenger.

In a synthetic way, this quarrel can be summarized as a discussion concerning the predominance of the affect or the intellect in the mystical tradition, the ultimate question of which lies in the possibility or not of knowing God.²³ However, the one who comes to settle this debate is Cusanus. The central question that Gaspar Aindorffer asks him is the following: “Can the devout soul,

19 Marion, *Le visible et le révélé*, p. 141.

20 Jean-Luc Marion, *L’Idole et la distance* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 2013), pp. 227–250.

21 Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, p. 116.

22 For references to Nicholas de Cusa’s work, we follow the critical edition, Nicolai de Cusa, *Opera Omnia, iussu et auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Heidelbergensis ad codicum fidem edita* (h). We offer the canonical abbreviation of the text, the book and the chapter when it corresponds and in parentheses the volume of the critical edition and the corresponding paragraph. When we offer a location without an express citation, we limit ourselves to the Latin version. Otherwise, we refer to the available English translations (Jasper Hopkins).

23 For a historical study of this dispute, Matias Pizzi, “La controversia Falque-Marion sobre el *eicon* de Cusa: ¿una insospechada *concordantia philosophorum*?”, *Escritos de Filosofía* 6 (2019), pp. 106–124.

without cognition of the intellect ... only with affection ... reach God – that is, be immediately moved or brought to Him?”²⁴ Given this, Nicholas forcefully points out that “cognition coincides with love.”²⁵ In other words, if the soul sought God out of blind affection alone, it would not know what it is looking for, and therefore it could not find it. Ergo, affection is insufficient. This means that “in all love such that through it someone is led to God, there is knowledge, even if he does not know what it is that he loves. There is therefore a coincidence between knowing and ignorance; that is, a learned ignorance.”²⁶

Thus, the mystical way implies an ascent beyond the rational concept, although also guided by a certain type of pre-cognition of the intellect. The very paradoxical character of the *docta ignorantia*, the cornerstone of his thought, is what surprises the understanding (*intellectus*) and moves it to satisfy his natural desire (*naturale desiderium*) to know.²⁷ Thus, all knowledge is guided by a desire, and all desire is in itself intellectual, since the intellect “... insatiably desires to attain unto the true through scrutinizing all things ...”²⁸ Here is the intimate link between desire as a mode of affectivity and the realm of the intellect, to the point of the impossibility of their separation. In a phenomenological sense, desire and intellect occur simultaneously.

This *coincidentia* between the *via affectiva* and *via intellectualis* can be seen in the *De visione dei*. There, Nicholas tries to offer, as appears in the letter to the monks dated September 14, 1453, a *praxis experimentalis*:²⁹ “... wonders which are revealed beyond all sensible, rational, and intellectual sight ... I am sending to Your Love a painting that I was able to acquire. It contains the figure of an omnivoyant [individual]; and I call it the Icon of God.”³⁰ Hence, there is the

24 Edmond Vasteenberghe, *Autour de la docte ignorance. Une controverse sur la théologie mystique au xve siècle*, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915), p. 19. The translations of this book are ours.

25 Vasteenberghe, *Autour de la docte ignorance*, p. 110.

26 Vasteenberghe, *Autour de la docte ignorance*, p. 110.

27 *De doc. ig.* I. c.1 (h I n.2).

28 *De doc. ig.* I. c.1 (h I n.2). See also, Nicholas of Cusa, “On learned Ignorance, Book I”, in *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism*, Trans. Jasper Hopkins, (Minnesota, Arthur J. Banning Press, 1990), p. 5.

29 Vasteenberghe, *Autour de la docte ignorance*, pp. 113–117. Starting from a painting by the Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden that represents the self-portrait of the face of Jesus Christ (by means of perspective laws), Nicholas offers us the experience of a look that seems to see everything.

30 *De vis. dei.* (h VI n.1): “ut pro captu vestro enarrare queam mirabilia, quae supra omnem sensibilem, rationalem et intellectualem visum revelantur (...) caritati vestrae mitto tabellam, figuram cuncta videntis tenentem, quam eicona Dei appello”. See also, Nicholas of

need for a sensitive figure that allows us to gradually raise our gaze towards the realm of the intellect, that is, the *coincidentia oppositorum*.

In this sense, we can observe a typical gesture of Nicholas: the use of sensitive figures as *manuductiones*, whose purpose is to guide us towards an incomprehensible understanding of the incomprehensible. These figures are defined as *aenigmas*, since, beginning from the sensible, they allow us to approach what exceeds all understanding.³¹ As we will see, the *eicona dei* offers us, in an “enigmatic” way, an affective dimension marked by love that, again, cannot be separated from the *coincidentia* between the *via affectiva* and the *via intellectualis*.

This relationship between love and intellect in the vision of the *eicona dei* appears in two places. On the one hand, in Chapter VIII entitled *Quomodo visio dei est amare, causare, legere et in se omnia habere*, Cusanus accentuates the paternal character of God’s vision. To embrace everything that has been created means to preserve each of the children, and therefore, his love shows in his act of seeing. This means that the recognition of human love makes it possible to direct creaturely understanding towards that primal love of God, which encompasses everything with his gaze. Again, seeing and loving are identified with each other.³²

On the other hand, in Chapter XVII called *Quod deus non nisi unitrinus videri perfect potest*, Nicholas addresses the notion of the infinite lover (*infinite amabilis*). God’s love consists of a power to love infinitely.³³ From this, the trinitarian character of love can be perceived. From the power to love infinitely and from the power to be loved infinitely, there is the nexus of infinite love between the infinite lover and the infinite capacity to be loved. Specifically, since God is a lover (infinite) and, at the same time, has the capacity to be loved, he allows men, in recognition of their power to love, to direct their speculative consideration towards absolute unity, simple and perfect. Loving, kind, and unified – they constitute the same and simple absolute essence.³⁴

Cusa, “*The vision of God*”, in *Nicholas of Cusa’s Dialectical Mysticism*, Trans. Jasper Hopkins, (Minnesota, Arthur J. Banning Press, 1988), p. 680.

31 Among them, the “beryl stone” (*beryllo*) presented in *De beryl.* (h x / 1 n.3) as a way of explaining the coincidence between the proposals of Plato and Aristotle; the “top” (*trachus*) in *De poss.* (h XI / 2 n.18) as well as an illustration of the coincidence between the maximum and minimum movement / stillness, and the “play of the spheres” in *De ludo globi* (h IX / n.2) like way of approach freedom human as creation and invention.

32 *De vis. dei.* (h VI/27).

33 *De vis. dei.* (h VI/71): “Amabilitas enim tua, quae est posse in infinitum amari, est, quia est posse in infinitum amare”.

34 *De vis. dei.* (h VI/77): “Unde licet eam amem, ita quod amor meus amans se extendat super ipsam, tamen non trahit secum amor amans meus amorem amabilem meum”.

From this, it can be observed how the notion of love is offered as a way of understanding this unity, and above all plurality and singularity of God, which cannot be separated from the *via intellectualis*. This *coincidentia* between affection and intellect is summarized in a passage from Sermo VIII, where Cusanus points out that “glory consists of the clear cognition of the intellect and of the extremely ardent and sweetest love of affection.”³⁵ Thus, access to the incomprehensible or that which is beyond all opposition can only be glimpsed through this coincidence and cooperation between affect and intellect.

For all the aforementioned, we maintain that the *eicona dei* can be conceived as a *manuductio* that tries to express the *coincidentia* between affectivity and intellect, since this *aenigma* summons us from the sensitive to an intellectual ascent that is always marked by the affectivity of desire and love. For this reason, it makes no sense for Cusanus to separate both dimensions and to try to establish a kind of priority, either temporal or ontological. What is involved in this case is a productive simultaneity that, from a phenomenological point of view, tries to describe a “unique phenomenality.”³⁶

3 Affectivity and Rationality in Marion's Reception of Nicholas of Cusa's *eicona dei*

Though not always directed stated, Marion's analysis of love, as we have seen, does not always appear on the horizon in his reception and approach to Christian Neoplatonism and his interpretation of Mystical Theology.³⁷ The phrase “I love you” implies a rereading of Mystical Theology and its consequent pragmatic dimension, as Marion himself showed in *De surcroît* (2001) when referring to Dionysian theology as a “pragmatic theology of absence” (*Théologie pragmatique de l'absence*).³⁸

35 Sermo VIII “Signum magnus”: (h XVI/2 n. 26): “in clara cognitione intellectus et ferventissimo et dulcissimo amore affectus consistit gloria”. The translation is ours.

36 Here we appeal to the expression “*unique phénoménalité*” used by Marion in his book *Certitudes négatives*. See, Jean-Luc Marion, *Certitudes négatives*, (Paris, Grasset, 2010) p. 299. For this subject, see also, Jorge Luis Roggero, “Problemas de la articulación entre fenomenología y hermenéutica en la obra de J.-L. Marion, en diálogo con la propuesta de C. Romano”, *Logos. Anales del Seminario de Metafísica*, Vol. 53: 2020, 327–343.

37 Matías Pizzi, “Alcanzar a Dios sin Dios. La relación entre fenomenología y teología en Edmund Husserl y Jean-Luc Marion”, *Areté. Revista de Filosofía*, Vol. 32: 2 (2020), 417–441.

38 Jean-Luc Marion, *De Surcroît: Études sur les phénomènes saturés* (Paris, PUF, 2001), pp. 187–188.

In this sense, we argue that Christian Neoplatonism offers Marion various tools to formulate what we have termed the “language of saturation.”³⁹ Hence, we can find an intimate relationship between the phenomenology of givenness and Christian Neoplatonism, given that the latter appears and comes as a source to think about (a) affectivity and (b) a language that enables its description.

In relation to the subject of affectivity, Marion’s reception of Christian Neoplatonism is also at stake in his reading of Nicholas of Cusa’s *De visione dei*. And this is because Cusanus appears as an antecedent to his phenomenological notion of the “icon” as a “saturated phenomenon” (*phénomène saturé*), since “Nicholas of Cusa not only raises the notion of the icon to the level of its concept, but, by thus granting it a universal meaning, justifies in advance its approach by contemporary phenomenology.”⁴⁰

Now, following the centrality of the cusanus *eicona dei* in contemporary phenomenology debates, we argue that it is possible to explore affectivity in the phenomenology of givenness through its reading of the *eicona dei*, since the latter already implies a proposal against the dispute over Mystical Theology. In Marion’s words, “Nicholas of Cusa’s response to these questions will thus have to open access to an experience of *theologia mystica* but at the same time guarantee its intelligibility and rationality.”⁴¹ From this, Marion, following Nicholas of Cusa’s reading of the *eicona dei*, shows the relationship between Invisibility, Love, and the Other as prior to objectness. These features find their unity in the intentionality of the Icon described by Nicholas, since they foreshadow what Marion had already thematized “... as the reduction to givenness and the erotic reduction ...”⁴² And is this because Cusanus offers, in Marion’s view, a strictly loving intention, that is to say, an affective intention.⁴³

39 Matías Pizzi, “La certeza negativa a la luz del vocablo cusano *posses*: aportes para un lenguaje de la saturación”, in Jorge Luis Roggero, ed., *El fenómeno saturado. La excedencia de la donación en la fenomenología de Jean-Luc Marion* (Buenos Aires, SB, 2020), pp. 191–200. See also, José González Ríos and Matías Pizzi, “Certitudes négatives y docta ignorantia: la presencia de la máxima doctrina de la ignorancia de Nicolás de Cusa en la fenomenología de la donación de Jean-Luc Marion”, *Daimon. Revista internacional de Filosofía* (in press), available in <https://revistas.um.es/daimon/avance>.

40 Jean-Luc Marion, “Seeing, or Seeing Oneself Seen: Nicholas of Cusa’s Contribution in *De visione dei*”, *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 96 (2016), Translated by Stephen E. Lewis, 305–331 at 317.

41 Marion, “Seeing, or Seeing Oneself Seen”, 307.

42 Marion, “Seeing, or Seeing Oneself Seen”, 330.

43 In addressing this topic, Marion takes up the figure of Christ as a paradigm of the iconic intentionality present in the cusanus *eicona dei*. See, Marion, “Seeing, or Seeing Oneself Seen”, 322–324. In his book *D’ailleurs* (2021), Marion takes up again *De visione dei* (but

Thus, we argue that Nicholas of Cusa offers Marion's phenomenology an intimate relationship between affectivity and rationality, since the cardinal's proposals can be located on the horizon of a phenomenology of givenness through his *praxis experimentalis* of the *eicona dei*. And so, Cusanus appears as a thinker who tries to reveal the paradoxical character of all philosophy that faces a series of phenomena defined by a fundamentally excessive character.

4 Conclusion

As we were able to appreciate throughout this work, both Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology and Nicholas of Cusa's philosophical-theological proposal seek to question a clear and sharp distinction between the plane of affectivity and that of intellect or rationality. This means, in Marion's terms, that affectivity, marked by love, not only cannot be thought of as a secondary or derivative phenomenon, but must have its own logic, which finds a fundamental clarification in the phenomenology of givenness and the analyses of the *phénomène érotique*.

In the case of the Cusanus, the relationship between intellect and affect is traversed by a consideration of their *coincidentia* in the *maximum absolutum*, since Nicholas of Cusa's proposal aims to introduce us to Mystical Theology through the *aenigma* of the *eicona dei*. Like the *docta ignorantia*, this behaves as a *manuductio* that guides speculation beyond the sphere of *ratio*, in which opposites are opposed, and guides it towards the sphere of the *intellectus* in which the opposites coincide (*coincidentia oppositorum*). In the case of the *eicona dei*, this acts as a symbolic paradigm of the identity between seeing (intellectual-loving) and loving (affective-intellectual) in God.

Now, this relationship between Marion and Cusanus can be thought of, not only as a comparison or search for similarities, but also in terms of a logic of reception. From the problem of the language proper to saturated phenomena (formulated in his reading of the cusanus *possest*),⁴⁴ to the thematization of phenomena that exceed the field of visibility, as we could see in his reading of the cusanus *eicona dei*, Marion does not stop showing the importance of Nich-

also *De docta ignorantia III* and *De possest*). There Marion offers a relationship between "vision" and an approach to the philosophical/theological concept of "Revelation". See, Jean-Luc Marion, *D'ailleurs, la révélation* (Paris, Grasset, 2021), p. 193.

44 Marion, *Certitudes négatives*, pp. 116–118. See also, Pizzi, "La certeza negativa a la luz del vocablo cusano *possest*", in Roggero, ed, *El fenómeno saturado. La excedencia de la donación en la fenomenología de Jean-Luc Marion*, pp. 191–200.

olas of Cusa's thought as a source for thinking about the current problems of the phenomenological tradition.

For all this, Cusanus appears to anticipate what will later come to be called the phenomenology of givenness, not only in the conception of "Icon" (*icône*) as saturated phenomenon (as Marion explicitly states), but also through his phenomenological strategy in approaching the field of affectivity. Cusanus also advocates the impossibility of sharply distinguishing between affect and intellect, since what is sought is to explore the logic lying behind love itself, which, as such, can only be glimpsed in the plane of excess as *coincidentia oppositorum*, that is, as the field of saturated phenomena.

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