

# The Phenomenological Counter-intentionality of the Icon


Jean-Luc Marion's Reception of Nicholas of Cusa's *Eicona Dei*

*Matías Ignacio Pizzi*

**ABSTRACT** The main goal of this paper is to show Nicholas de Cusa's influence on the notion of Icon (*icône*) as counter-intentionality in Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness. In order to do this, first, we offer a study of the early conception of Icon in Marion, as it appears in *L'Idole et la distance* (1977) and *Dieu sans l'être* (1982), showing the passage from an early conception of the icon to its first phenomenological formulation. As we will see, in this early period there is already an influence of the christian neoplatonic tradition (Dionysius the Areopagite). Secondly, we analyze the reception practiced by Marion of the Nicholas of Cusa's thought. In this case, we indicate specifically how the Cusanian notion of *eicona dei* appears as a fundamental historical antecedent of the Icon as a saturated phenomenon, thus revealing the importance of Christian Neoplatonism in the phenomenology of givenness.

**KEYWORDS** Counter-intentionality; Icon; Marion, Jean-Luc; Nicholas of Cusa; Neoplatonism

✉ Matías Ignacio Pizzi, University of Buenos Aires / National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET)  
✉ matiasipizzi@gmail.com    0000-0002-2356-5958

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1. FAR BEYOND THE CONCEPT: A FIRST APPROACH TO THE “ICON” (*ICÔNE*)  
IN *L’IDOLE ET LA DISTANCE* (1977)

One of the central points of *L’Idole et la distance* (1977), Marion’s first systematic work, consists in rethinking the history of metaphysics, not only from the Heideggerian spectrum, but also from a confrontation with theology itself. In Marion’s proposal we observe a movement similar to Heidegger’s, although from a path that simultaneously questions and tries to save theology from the metaphysical dependence; and this because, also following Heidegger, Marion maintains that theology has a metaphysical background. However, moving away from the German thinker, Marion shows that it does not necessarily follow from this that all theology must be metaphysical. In other words, is it evident that a critique of metaphysics entails in itself a critique of theology? In a more powerful way: is all theology metaphysics? Beyond the Heideggerian ambiguities on this subject, Marion points out that not only is it wrong to assume an identity between both disciplines, but also that the history of metaphysics should be rethought along a different common thread.

A gravitating element in his thought, and which would later reach its culminating point in his work *Dieu sans l’être* (1982), consists in indicating that it is not evident that “Being” should be postulated as the central concept of the history of metaphysics and its subsequent overcoming (see Marion 1982, 24–6). This means that the manifestation of God does not depend on the conditions of manifestation of being (see Marion 2012b, 178–9). In an obvious critical gesture against the Heideggerian proposal of the history of metaphysics as a process marked by the “forgetfulness of being” (*Seinsvergessenheit*), Marion indicates that God as such resists being thought under the notion of being. Hence, the Heideggerian proposal finally falls into an “idolatry of being” (Marion 1982, 51–8).

Having pointed this out, Marion offers a new common thread to rethink and recompose the history of metaphysics. It will no longer be the notion of difference as a point of articulation between Being and beings, but rather a concept such that it can offer the possibility of a confrontation with the divine from a non-metaphysical perspective, and therefore, outside the predominance of being and the *Seyngeschichte*. That guiding thread will be the concept of distance (*distance*), of theological root and origin, but which offers a new lens or prism to think about philosophy in general (see Marion 2013b, 12–6). And here his early notion of “icon” bursts in, that is, as the element that must be reached when proposing a new history of philosophy. Non-metaphysical theology, that is, thinking of God outside of the concept, should lead us to explain the iconic character of the divine.

This requires rethinking a central topic of modern thought: the “death of God.” Considering this, Marion intends to reformulate the limits and the scope of the aforementioned phrase that acquires its consummation in Nietzsche’s thought (see Marion 2013b, 49–50). In his opinion, far from showing the completion of the paradigm of the divine (as is often thought), the Nietzschean dictum offers the possibility of analyzing it in more detail. To this effect, Marion appeals to two ways of understanding the divine. On the one hand, we can speak of an “idolatric” way. Here we maintain that Marion adopts the Heideggerian argumentative strategy of forgetting being. Thinking of God in an idolatrous way means enclosing him under a concept, in the same way that metaphysics has thought of Being from beings. Proof of this can be found, according to Marion, in the metaphysical persistence of the search for proof of the existence of God, given that this implies enclosing God in the form of an argument that offers guarantees of its veracity (see Marion 2010, 11–6).

In view of this, Marion wonders if perhaps the “death of God” should not be, strictly speaking, the occasion to think of God outside of these metaphysical demands that, paradoxically, end up nullifying any possible search. On the other hand, and emphasizing the above, we can speak of an “iconic” conception of God. Here we are no longer faced with an imposition of the divine under the aegis of the concept, but the intention is rather to show that the divine can only be offered from a counter-intentionality in which the phenomenon cannot be constituted. This means, against all transcendental phenomenology, that the phenomenon comes by itself.

In light of these concerns, Marion outlines the *discours de la distance*. This proposes/suggests that we should go through and question both the Heideggerian *Seynsgeschichte* and the subsumption of theology to a solely metaphysical possibility. Taking into consideration a selection of authors, Marion argues that distance can account for a reformulation of theology in non-metaphysical terms. Due to all this, we maintain that a first moment of this relationship between phenomenology and theology in Marion’s thought is at stake here.

With the effectiveness of the *Seynsgeschichte* and its consequent diagnosis of the history of metaphysics as onto-theo-logy nullified, we find in Marion the proposal of a history that seeks to reveal what has remained undeveloped: distance and access to a iconic conception of the divine. However, Marion maintains, and against all chronological order, that these questions have been formulated, though not in a systematic way, by three authors: Nietzsche, Hölderlin and Dionysius the Areopagite. In these thinkers there is the possibility of overcoming the distance that reveals and hides

the manifestation of the iconic God, blocked by the idolatry of being and the erroneous identification between metaphysics and theology.

Briefly, the first moment of this history of distance is constituted by Nietzsche's thought. This moment is charged with a profound productive ambiguity. On the one hand, Nietzsche offers the first questioning of the idolatrous nature of the divine, that is, a critique of the understanding of the divine from the point of view of the concept. Thus, Nietzsche would indicate that the divine as such must be thought outside of metaphysics and the primacy of the concept. However, Nietzsche also appears as a thinker who does not end up living up to his proposal. And this because he remains a prisoner of the same idolatry that he criticizes by affirming the will to power as the principle of reality. This can be seen, according to Marion, in the very end of Nietzsche: "The darkness of the final delirium (*Wahnsinn*) concludes the destruction of idolatrous illusions (*Wahn*) by exposing, once this veil is torn, an individual, Friedrich Nietzsche, to the unbearable trial of the divine that is immediately (corporally) confronted" (Marion 2013b, 55).

The second moment of this history of distance can be found in the figure of Hölderlin, who, according to Marion, enters the horizon of this unresolved task opened by Nietzsche, which is the simultaneous death and persistence of the idolatrous God. Hölderlin allows us, according to Marion, to think "an unthinkable paradox: the intimacy of man with the divine *grows* with the gap that distinguishes them, far from diminishing it" (Marion 2013b, 80). Nietzsche radicalized this distance by inaugurating a questioning of the idolatrous nature of the divine. However, his submission to his metaphysical vocabulary prevented him from opening up the iconic dimension of the divine.

According to Marion, Hölderlin's perspective delves more deeply into this possibility opened by Nietzsche. This implies that poetic language allows the *distance* of the divine to grow, which persists in its irreducible character without reducing it to an idol. By moving away from conceptualization, poetry also allows one to distance oneself from any idolatrous position, which inevitably results from the predominance and one-sidedness of the concept. Here, the poetic language tries to make the experience of a path other than that of conceptual idolatry.

However, poetry alone cannot fully cope with the onslaught of the iconic character of the divine. Here the figure of Dionysius the Areopagite bursts in. His mystical theology and his appeal to "praise" constitute a "non-predicative language." The reading of the mystical theology of Dionysius the Areopagite carried out by Jean-Luc Marion points towards an extension

of this language that is expressed in the distance already opened in Hölderlin's poetics. To this end, Marion rescues the Dionysian concept of praise (ὑμνεῖν), thus opening up a possible language to "describe" distance. This theme, from its earliest appearance (Marion 1971, 89–118) to idol and distance, retains the same line of interpretation (Marion 2012b, 174).<sup>1</sup> Unlike the predicative language of the metaphysical tradition (object language), Marion points out that the linguistic structure of "praise" must be understood in the following way: "for every x, there is a y that characterizes it in such a way that, in stating 'I praise you, Lord, as y,' x makes request to it as its Requisite." (Marion 2001b, 187).

With all this, Marion intends to show the possibility of a meta-language that "instead of using the logical operations of affirmation and of negation, Denys utilizes the operation designated by 'as'" (Marion 2001b, 187). By doing so, he does not name the absence of names as a negation of the predication, but rather the name of the absence. This anonymity indicates the excess of significance in relation to the statements. For this reason, the distance can be revealed from a meta-language formulated from the particle "as," which must be read under the structure "*en tant que*." This means that the "Requisite," that is, what it tries to name, is not identified with y, but rather that y "indicates the relation under which x aims at the Requisite" (Marion 2001b, 187), that which describes the "Requisite/y" does no other thing than to describe the describes the one who prays/x.<sup>2</sup>

This process inherent to the language of praise avoids the conceptualization of distance, since all predicative language is reduced to its non-predicative dimension. This allows us to point out that Dionysian mystical theology is and will be a model for Marion a non-metaphysical theology and a non-predicative language, and therefore a way of escaping any type of idolatry that will help phenomenology to rethink its problems. Dionysius thus reveals a way of language that does not preach, a privileged element of metaphysics and its eagerness for conceptualization, but rather allows the manifestation the absence of a name and the name of the absence that overflows the idolatrous phenomenality formulated from the iconic perspective of the divine.

1. The origin of his relationship with Dionysian mysticism, as he himself indicates, must be found in a seminar on *De divinis nominibus* directed by himself in Montmartre.

2. For the question of "praise," see Dionysius the Areopagite's *De divinis Nominibus* VII, 2, 197.

1.1. *Counter-intentionality and counter-visibility: a phenomenology of the icon in Dieu sans l'être (1982)*

The main problem of *Dieu sans l'être* (1982) can be summarized under the following question: “Does God have anything to gain by being?” (Marion 2012a, 2). According to Marion, God should not necessarily be thought under the horizon of being, since doing this implies subordinating God to being, and in turn, placing him under the aegis of metaphysics and its primacy of the idolatric concept. And this because Marion tries to question both the relationship and the dependence of God on being, and in this way offers a new critique of the subordination found in the Heideggerian proposal. To show this, Marion addresses the notions of “idol” (*idole*) and “icon” (*icône*) taking as a common thread two central themes of the phenomenological tradition: “intentionality” and “visibility” (see Roggero 2016, 173–192).

As an initial approach, Marion gives us a series of preliminary clarifications. In the first place, the “idol” and the “icon” can only be addressed from an antagonism that, paradoxically, marks more strongly their impossibility of dissociating them (Pizzi 2020a, 417–41). While the “idol” (*eidôlon*) refers to the Greek sense of the visible as a polysemy and polychrome, the “icon” (*eikôn*), “theorized by patristic and Byzantine thought” (Marion 2012a, 7), refers rather to the shining of the visible out of any polysemy. Secondly, “The idol does not indicate, any more than the icon, a particular being or even class of beings. Icon and idol indicate a manner of being for entities, or at least for some of them” (Marion 2012a, 7). As we have already anticipated, this distinction is subordinated to the field of visibility. Thus, the problem of the divine will be analyzed from a “comparative phenomenology of the idol and the icon, it is therefore a question of . . . two modes of apprehension of the divine in visibility” (Marion 2012a, 9).

Having pointed out this deepening of the problem of visibility, Marion turns to the “first visible” (*premier visible*), namely, the “idol.” The first central point consists of the fact that Marion tries to distance himself from an understanding of the “Idol” as something of an illusory character. The metaphysical duality of appearing (phenomenon) and what does not appear (essence) has no place in this phenomenological approach. There is nothing behind what the Idol reveals, nothing hides, since it “even consists only in the fact that it can be seen, that one cannot but see it . . . seeing it suffices to know it” (Marion 2012a, 9). This also means that the scope and origin of the Idol must be reduced to the field of human gaze. The intentional process indicates that “the first intention aims at the divine and the gaze strains itself to see the divine, to see it by taking it up into the field of the gazeable” (Marion 2012a, 11). The human gaze takes over here in such a way that its

power of mention and ability to sustain it acquires the measure of the greatness of the idol. With this, we argue that Marion tries to identify idolatrous visibility with the traditional version of phenomenological intentionality (Husserl/Heidegger), since the intention goes from the human gaze to the divine as its intentional correlation, and always as the gaze can bear it.

In this attempt to expand the field of visibility previously hinted at by idolatrous intentionality, Marion begins his analysis of the “icon” (*icône*). In this sense, Marion points out that, contrary to the “idol,” the icon “does not result from a vision but provokes one” (Marion 2012a, 17). With this, Marion tries to reverse the order as it was appreciated in the visibility of the idol. Thus, in the icon there is a movement that goes from the invisible to the visible. Far from being in the hands of man, “the invisible proceeds up into the visible” (Marion 2012a, 17). As an interesting element that pertains to the relationship between phenomenology and medieval thought, it is suggestive to observe how Marion refers to an author like John of Damascus when specifying the original meaning of the icon. Well, in his opinion, the original experience of the icon can be found in the patristic thought (see Marion 2012a, 17). Thus, the “icon” opens us to an excess expressed from the invisible, or in the words of Marion, “the icon shows, strictly speaking, nothing . . . The icon summons the gaze to surpass itself by never freezing on a visible, since the visible only presents itself here in view of the invisible” (Marion 2012a, 18).

Returning to this paradoxical idea of “making the invisible visible”—of Neoplatonic and mystical origin—Marion tries to point out that this can only occur if the initiative is taken by the invisible and, in any case, what is analyzed is how the invisible becomes visible, and not the other way around, as was the case with the idol. To clarify this experience Marion refers to the concept of *ousia*, although not in its Greek meaning, but from the “Patristic Thought.” With this, Marion reminds that “*Hypostasis*, which the Latin Fathers translate by *persona*, does not imply any substantial presence” (Marion 2012a, 18).<sup>3</sup> Here Marion concentrates on a central topic of Christianity, since the translation of the concept of οὐσία / ὑποκείμενον as a person plays an important role in the foundation of the dogma of the trinity, as we can find it in *De trinitate*. In this same sense, the icon takes the place of the person and anticipates the way of an inversion, since “the gaze of the invisible, in person, aims at man” (Marion 2012a, 19).

3. For this, Marion alludes to the “Council of Nicea” as a space for reflection on the possibility of an iconic understanding of the divine.

In an even more radical way, Marion tries to take the icon as the original paradigm of the face. In a Levinasian horizon, the Other can only manifest itself as an icon, that is, as an infinite gaze that summons me from a radical alterity, and that therefore cannot be reduced or subordinated to an idol/concept. In other words, “the invisible of the icon consists of the intention of the face” (Marion 2012a, 20). And this intention has its origin in the infinite, in an unspeakable excess, defining itself as an “origin without original” (Marion 2012a, 20).

In this way, the icon represents a complete phenomenological inversion of the idol. Again, Marion is based on a theological appeal, as he resorts to Corinthians II 3:18, where Saint Paul speaks of a transformation of the human gaze according to the icon, and therefore, “we become a visible mirror of an invisible gaze” (Marion 2012a, 22). Here the inversion can be clearly seen, because in the case of the idol, it behaves like an invisible mirror, the visible human gaze being the one that forges it. On the other hand, in the icon the human gaze takes the form of a mirror, although visible, of a now invisible gaze.

## 2. FROM VISIBLE OBJECT TO INVISIBLE FACE: NICHOLAS OF CUSA'S *EICONA DEI* AS ICONIC COUNTER-INTENTIONALITY IN JEAN-LUC MARION'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF GIVENNESS

Marion's reading of the Nicholas of Cusa's *eicona dei* finds its fundamental place—and as a critical response to Emmanuel Falque (see Pizzi 2019, 106–24)—in his work “Seeing, or Seeing Oneself Seen: Nicholas of Cusa's Contribution in *De visione dei*.” Among the various topics addressed, the phenomenological status of visibility in the Cusan proposal appears as the key issue. This is directly related to a series of formulations about the “icon” as a saturated phenomenon. On this horizon, the Cusanus *eicona dei* appears, on the one hand, as an antecedent to Marion's proposal. We see a kind of mirroring between the two authors, because through the problem of the “icon” they build common concerns. On the other hand, in *De visione dei* we find “numerous contemporary debates concerning visibility in general . . . the dimensions of phenomenality . . . questions concerning the icon as a type of phenomenon, the reversal of vision into a countervision, the distinction between the object or the nonobject of the seen, and the possibility of seeing the other” (Marion 2016, 305).

In the first section of his article, entitled “The All-seeing,” Marion warns that the objective of *De visione dei* is to offer an experience beyond the *ratio* understood as “a paradoxical accessibility” (Marion 2016, 306). In this context, Marion emphasizes the fact that the icon of Christ offered by



Nicholas must be understood as a “phenomenological praxis” that seeks to investigate and deepen the limits of visibility (Marion 2016, 308). Said *eicona*, whose gaze sees in all directions, is constituted as an *aenigma* of the “absolute gaze” (*visio absoluta*) from which all vision gets its meaning and being, since human vision is an *imago* of the absolute vision of God. In each human vision shines, in a contracted way, that infinite and non-contracted vision of God (see Beierwaltes 1978, 7). For this reason, in human seeing, man sees not only his own limitation, but also, in an enigmatic way, the creative seeing of divinity, thus becoming a *speculum vivum* (see D’Amico 2011, 109).

This distinction constitutes, for Marion, the heart of the “phenomenological praxis” of the icon exposed by Nicholas of Cusa. This means that through “sensible gaze” it is possible, although *coniecturaliter* and experimentally, an understanding of the “absolute gaze” of God, because as Cusanus points out in *De visione dei* (hereinafter abbreviated as *De vis. dei*): “whatever is apparent with regard to the icon-of-God’s sight is truer with regard to God’s true sight” (*De vis. dei*, h VI, 5; my translation).<sup>4</sup> Hence God is called theos, because he sees everything,<sup>5</sup> and the seeing of him is the enfolding (*complicatio*) of all finite gazes. But at the same time, and in a paradoxical way, he is beyond them, as an absolute gaze. For this reason, the vision of the icon cannot reach the absolute vision of God, although said icon behaves as an invitation, a *directio speculantis*, a *manuductio* that allows to make the invisible visible in an invisible way. Our seeing is only possible through the *visio absoluta* of God.

Marion’s primary goal is to offer a relationship between the cusan notion of the *eicona dei* and his own phenomenological conception of the icon. Marion finds in this cusan *eicona* experience an invisible gaze that invokes from the invisible, and not an attempt to probe different foreshortenings of a visible object under the mode of an indefinite summation (see Marion 2016, 314). In this context the “profiles” (*Abschattungen*) of the perception does not function. Originally, the icon implies a counter-intentionality that re-sends us a meaning. A central point of the Marionian reading of the *De visione dei* can be seen in the fact that “Nicholas of Cusa not only raises the notion of the icon to the level of its concept, but, by thus granting

4. “Primo loco prasupponendum esse censeo nihil posse apparere circa visum eicona dei, quin verius sit in vero visu dei.”

5. *De vis. dei*. c.1 (h VI, 5): “Deus etenim, qui est summitas ipsa omnis perfectionis et maior quam cogitari possit, theos ab hoc dicitur, quia omnia intentar.”

it a universal meaning, justifies in advance its approach by contemporary phenomenology” (Marion 2016, 317).

Precisely, because it defies the limits of phenomenality, it turns out that “how the iconic doctrine of the *visio Dei* in its turn allows us, through its phenomenological rigor, to take up the classic phenomenological aporias not so much of the vision of God, but of the other in general. And perhaps to indicate the conditions for their solution” (Marion 2016, 318). All of this is possible for the following reasons. On the one hand, the *eicona dei* challenges the traditional notion of visibility, to the point of offering a mode of visibility in which no objects are manifested. Thus, and as we can deduce from this, the Cusan notion of *visio* challenges and takes to the limit the paradigm of objectuality, since the *videre* and the *videri* (seeing and being seen) make visible something of the order of the invisible.

Thus, the experience of the *eicona dei* reveals that which can never be brought into the field of objects: the Other. From this, Marion maintains that “the radical decisions undertaken in order to open the *visio Dei* could allow the opening of the vision of the other, with the case of the *icona Dei* becoming a model for envisaging the face of the other” (Marion 2016, 323). The reason for this is threefold. Firstly, because the *visio Dei* cannot be objectified. Thus, we would be outside the domain of objects. Secondly, and here lies the key point of Marion’s argument, from the in-objectifiability of the *eicona dei* follows the possibility of all possible objectifiable vision. Thirdly, this double movement is only possible because in God seeing and loving are equivalent.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, and in a gesture of affiliation with Cusanus thought, Marion points out that “the intentionality of the icon thus operates from the outset in terms of what I have elsewhere thematized as the reduction to givenness and the erotic reduction—it aims (and constitutes) only insofar as it loves” (Marion 2016, 330). This treatment of love in Nicholas is directly related to his notion of erotic phenomenon (Marion 2003, 37-48). The approach between the philosophy of Nicholas de Cusa and his notion of love presents his latest conclusions in his work *D’ailleurs, la revelation* (see Marion 2020). In other words, Marion defends the Cusan identification between seeing and loving, since “according to Nicholas of Cusa, by passing from the intentionality of objectivity to the intentionality of love, Jesus pierces through the vision of the other limited to his accidents, to go as far as the vision of the other . . . in his final essence as lover” (Marion 2016, 330).

6. *De vis. dei.* c.7 (h VII, 10): “videre tuum est amare.”

## CLOSING REMARKS

To conclude, we can ask the following question: what is the status of intentionality in Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenology of givenness? As we have noted, in his early work *Dieu sans l'être* (1982), Marion tries to rethink the concept of intentionality based on the problem of visibility. In this sense, he finds a new notion of intentionality, defined as the counter-intentionality of the icon. Unlike the idol, the icon reverses the traditional order of intentionality. In this context, Marion appeals to various sources of the Christian Neoplatonic tradition (see Marion 2013b, 196–244).

However, we cannot forget that already in his *L'Idole et la distance* the concept of icon appears as a criterion to reformulate the history of philosophy, and in turn, to explore the possibility of a non-metaphysical theology. From this point of view, all metaphysics implies the appeal to the concept, and in the context of the problem of the divine, an idol/concept. Based on this, Marion proposes an iconic conception of the divine as a non-predicative language. For this, and taking up the importance of Christian Neoplatonism, he recovers the notion of "praise" from Dionysius the Areopagite. The icon then appears as a way of rethinking metaphysics as a whole. Dionysius the Areopagite appears too as a decisive influence. In his early work *L'idole et la distance* (1977) Marion finds in the Mystical Theology of Dionysius, specially in the dionysian notion of "praise" some keys to formulate a non-predicative language that could offer a way to "denominate" (*dénomme*) the "distance" of the Icon (Marion 2013b, 196–244). In turn, Dionysius appears in *Dieu sans l'être* (1982) as an antecedent of Marion's conception of icon in relation to the problem of language, as it can be seen in *De divinis nominibus* (Marion 1982). These two early readings by Marion make up the first moment of her proposal for a non-predicative language (Pizzi 2020b, 1–13). His last systematic reading of Dionysius can be found in his writing *De surcroît* (2001). There he reinterprets Dionysian thought as a "pragmatic theology of absence" (Marion 2001a, 187–188).

We can not forget Jean-Luc Marion's phenomenological approach to Saint Augustin. In this case, he also indicates that the Augustinian *confessio* must be understood as a modality of "praise" (Marion 2008, 33). As we can see, this concept is one of the key concepts of his reception of Christian Neoplatonic tradition.

Getting into the systematic project of the phenomenology of givenness, the icon is defined as a "saturated phenomenon" (*phénomène saturé*), namely, certain phenomena in which intuition surpasses (*outrepasse*) the concept (Marion 2013a, 370). In other words, Marion argues that there is a field of phenomenality, which subverts the primacy of intentionality, thus

opening a set of phenomena defined by an excess of intuition. Regarding the transformation of intentionality, the icon appears as an exemplary case. “Saturated phenomena” are intended to show the possibility of a non-objectual field of phenomena. In this context of non-objectual phenomena, intentionality must be redefined as counter-intentionality. And this because in the field of saturation the subject, defined as *adonné*, far from constituting objects as a transcendental subjectivity, only acts to the extent that it receives that “gift” prior to every object.

Within the framework of these problems, Marion offers a reading of the Neoplatonic tradition as a source to think and deepen on saturated phenomena. The cusanus *eicona dei* appears, as we could see, as a particular case of his general reading of medieval thought, and also as a decisive influence that allows to broaden contemporary problems concerning phenomenological discussions about otherness. In this interpretation offered by Marion we find the relationship between affectivity and counter-intentionality, since love plays a decisive role, leading to a renewal of the famous debate about the mystical theology, that is, the discussion of the affectus-intellectus dispute in the mystical theology of Dionysius the Areopagite (see Ludueña 2005, 109–15). Following Nicholas, Marion holds a relationship between visibility and love in relation to the counter-intentionality of the icon.

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