PHAVISMINDA Journal
Volume 19 (2020 Issue)
Pages: 134 - 164

OF MORAL HEROES AND SAINTS IN THE TIME OF A PANDEMIC: AN ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH JEAN-LUC MARION

Ben Carlo Atim
Saint Paul Seminary Foundation
Silang Cavite
bencarloatim@gmail.com

Abstract
This paper aims threefold: first, to show that Marion's phenomenology of sacrifice is one of the essential conceptual resources of his ethical view. His treatment of sacrifice strongly supports an argument for a superfluous act or known as supererogation. I will argue that Marion's view of sacrifice can be understood ethically in the light of superfluous ethics; second, to correctly identify using Marion's ethical view of sacrifice those persons that we consider as "moral saints and heroes." To do this, I will show that a clear distinction must be made between the duty-bound and non duty-bound form of sacrifice. For Marion, persons who are considered "moral saints and heroes" belong to the latter form; third, following the said views, I will show the possible implication of such an act in society's moral and political formation, especially in the time of a pandemic.

Keywords: *supererogation, sacrifice, Marion, saints and heroes*

As many countries around the world remain steadfast in battling against the deadly COVID-19, we have seen how a pandemic serves as a litmus test to gauge various institutions' strengths and weaknesses. As Slavoj Žizek asks, "[w]hat is wrong with our system that we were caught unprepared by the catastrophe despite scientists warning us about it for years?"[1] The pandemic

[1] Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World* (New York/London: OR Books, 2020), 12.

unveils the thick layers of pretenses that cover the inner core of a society's political life and leadership.[2] Despite the looming darkness of uncertainty and horror we experience today; we are comforted by the fact that there are heroes and saints among us whose exemplary deeds have saved thousands of human lives around the world. We have then come to ask ourselves: what have we become of us today? That being said, many are quick to pick up arguments about the pandemic, and numerous academic institutions and organizations here and abroad made the pandemic the subject of their current inquiry. The pandemic has seized our moment to reflect on what we are doing. We have come to revisit and evaluate the operating socio-economic and political systems responsible for regulating the complex activities of life and reflect upon how we have come to this situation, what we could have done, and what we can do in the future.

Slavoj Žižek explains that social mobility or movement of people contributes to the spread of the virus due in part of "globalization, the capitalist market, the transience of the rich."[3] But more importantly, the pandemic paves the way for the "arrival of a form of Communism."[4] While this is the case for Žižek, Noam Chomsky, a rabid critic of neo-liberalism, thinks that despite the pandemic's tremendous adverse effects on the world, it reveals its good side as well, bringing "people to think about what kind of a world do we want."[5] He also argues that the crisis has worsened due to "the treachery of the political systems that did not pay attention to the information [sic] they were aware of."[6] Quite a controversial position was made by Giorgio Agamben when he criticized the techno-medical despotism of the Italian government as a "pretext for

[2] Jovito V. Cariño, "The Place of Philosophy and Thought during the Coronavirus Crisis," (*Opinion, Rappler* March 30, 2020, https://www.rappler.com/voices/imho/opinion-philosophy-community-quarantine-coronavirus.

[3] Žižek, *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World*, 22.

[4] Ibid., 110.

[5] Al Jazeera, "Noam Chomsky: 'Coronavirus pandemic could have been prevented,'" (April 3, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/3/noam-chomsky-coronavirus-pandemic-could-have-been-prevented).

[6] Ibid.

withdrawing rights and privacy from citizens."[7] The ongoing crisis for Agamben is a clear manifestation that "our society no longer believes in anything but bare life… Bare life – and the danger of losing it – is not something that unites people, but blinds and separates them."[8] Catherine Malabou's take on being an 'individual' in the time of a pandemic gives positive sense to solitariness and loneliness,

> not out of any individualism but because I think on the contrary that an *epoché,* a suspension, a bracketing of sociality, is sometimes the only access to alterity, a way to feel close to all the isolated people on Earth. Such is the reason why I am trying to be as solitary as possible in my loneliness.[9]

But more than these realizations of what the pandemic has brought to people around the globe is the apparent global and domestic negative effects to various aspects of societal and human life. The World Health Organization describes the impact of Covid-19 "unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work," added to this is the "devastating" effect of the pandemic to the socio-economic condition of all affected countries which led to "tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year," and this COVID-19 pandemic "has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide."[10] As RJ Naguit

---

[7] Christopher Caldwell, "Meet the Philosopher Who Is Trying to Explain the Pandemic," (*Opinion, The New York Times,* August 21, 2020 https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/21/opinion/sunday/giorgio-agamben-philosophy-coronavirus.html

[8] Giorgio Agamben, "Clarifications," translated by Adam Kotsko (March 17, 2020 https://itself.blog/2020/03/17/giorgio-agamben-clarifications/).

[9] Catherine Malabou, "To Quarantine from Quarantine: Rousseau, Robinson Crusoe, and "I"," (*Critical Inquiry*, March 23, 2020, https://critinq.wordpress.com/2020/03/23/to-quarantine-from-quarantine-rousseau-robinson-crusoe-and-i/?fbclid=IwAR2t6gCrl7tpdRPWhSBWXScsF54lCfRH1U-2sMEOI9PcXH7uNtKVWzKor3M).

[10] World Health Organization, "Impact of COVID-19 on People's Livelihoods, their Health and our Food Systems," October 13, 2020, https://www.who.int/news/item/13-10-

observes, "the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the long-standing symptoms of a weak and inequitable public health system in the Philippines"[11] which obviously greatly affect the vulnerable sectors of the society. It is then important to "strike a fine balance between protecting health, preventing economic and social disruption, and respecting human rights."[12] But despite this depressing condition, he applauds the sense of solidarity and volunteerism that many Filipinos have shown through innovations such as converting spaces like dormitories, hotels, cafes, and schools as quarantine facilities and accommodation for health-workers and stranded people. But the same situation is being taken advantage by other leaders to advance their political agenda which adds more serious problems and anguish to people. Thomas Pepinsky of Cornell University, responding to the question of Shreeya Agarwal about the impact to the economy and politics in Southeast Asia of the COVID-19, describes the pandemic as a moment where some governments afford to employ "new tools to clamp down on mass mobilization and political opposition [b]y restricting the public sphere in the name of public health" at the same time "making it easier for governments to advance unpopular policies or take illiberal actions without public scrutiny." Pepinsky then concluded that "[t]his is how governments find themselves able to crackdown on their opponents, as in the Philippines, which has used Covid-19 as an opportunity to press further in its war against the New People's Army."[13]

2020-impact-of-covid-19-on-people%27s-livelihoods-their-health-and-our-food-systems. According to Worldometer as of January 14, 2021 the Philippines has a total of 494, 605 Coronavirus cases, 459, 252 had recovered, and 9, 739 died (https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/philippines/) while the world has a total of 92, 914, 567 Coronavirus cases, 1, 990, 050 died, and 66, 439, 925 had recovered (https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/.

[11] R.J. Naguit, "Philippines: COVID-19 as a Public Health Crisis," *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, July 04, 2020, https://www.fes-asia.org/news/philippines-covid-19-as-a-public-health-crisis/.

[12] World Health Organization, "WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Mission Briefing on COVID-19," (Geneva, Switzerland: 12 March 2020) cited in James A. Smith & Jenni Judd, "COVID-19: Vulnerability and the Power of Privilege in a Pandemic," *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, Editorial (2020): 1-3.

[13] Shreeya Agarwal, "The Political and Economic Impact of Covid-19 in Southeast Asia: Interview with Thomas Pepinsky," *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, June 11, 2020,

Other aspects of human activities are heavily affected by the pandemic such as education when schools were caught off-guard of the implication of lockdowns and quarantine protocols that lasted for several months.[14] There is a significant decline of enrollees especially in the private schools nationwide.[15] Both public and private schools were not prepared to go online leading to several outcries such as postponement of the academic year, difficulties on modular and online classes due to intermittent internet connection, and economic struggle to secure gadgets for online classes which some resorted to different selling activities.[16] However, despite all these difficulties and struggles that many have encountered during these trying times, we are still able to find individuals whom we shared the same struggles and fear yet are greater than us such that they give and bring light in the darkness hour of our life and a ray of hope for the hopeless. We find them sacrificing their lives and resources to give strength to the weak, to save the lives of many, and for the society not to perish. We refer to them as moral saints and heroes.

The coronavirus pandemic serves as a test for moral philosophy insofar as its major normative moral and ethical theories are concerned. John Authers argues that it is "a test of where all humans stand" and "forces everyone to confront deep questions of human existence, questions so profound that they have previously been answered, in many different ways, by the greatest

https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-political-and-economic-impact-of-covid-19-in-southeast-asia/.

[14] See Eric Liguori and Christoph Winkler, "From Offline to Online: Challenges and Opportunities for Entrepreneurship Education Following the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy,* Editorial (2020): 1-6, DOI: 10.1177/2515127420916738.

[15] Mariejo S. Ramos, "Private School Enrollment Drops to Less than Half," *Inquirer.net*, September 26, 2020, https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1340346/private-school-enrollment-drops-to-less-than-half.

[16] See the recent article from *Rappler* by Niña Dino Loreta Arroyo, "Filipino Students Resort to Barter, Online Selling to Buy Learning Gadgets," *Rappler*, August 17, 2020, https://www.rappler.com/moveph/filipino-students-resort-barter-online-selling-for-learning-gadgets.

philosophers."[17] Moral or ethical questions are bound to emerge not just among moral philosophers but also among individuals who are confronted with the same dilemmas in this time of a pandemic. Questions about rightness or wrongness of actions, responsibility, obligations, and duties at the individual and institutional levels take center stage in moral philosophizing.

This paper views the pandemic in the context of Marion's phenomenological reflection of sacrifice here argued as an essential ethical characteristic of the superfluous or supererogatory act. Specifically, the paper asserts that (1) Jean-Luc Marion's view on sacrifice understood ethically supports the necessary condition for a saintly and heroic act of supererogation; (2) amidst tremendous dangers and difficulties that this pandemic brought us, there emerged exemplars of higher moral standards whom we consider moral saints and heroes. These moral exemplars are ordinary individuals with great moral values. They go the extra mile – going beyond duty – despite the imminent danger of serving and protecting other people or the country. (3) The implication is that in times of crisis, sacrifice plays a crucial role in a society when the social fabric of the community is on the brink of danger due to fear, discord, and uncertainties and when the ineptness and senility of some political and bureaucratic leaders are threats that weaken political systems.

Jean-Luc Marion and 'New' Phenomenology

Phenomenology constantly challenges our mode of thinking to make a meaningful reflection of our experiences. It remains a vibrant and exciting tradition in Continental philosophy. This is due to several reasons: first, because of its tremendous influence, phenomenology has somewhat dominated the philosophy department of universities in many parts of the world, which has

[17] John Authers, "How Coronavirus Is Shaking Up the Moral Universe," (*Bloomberg Opinion*, March 30, 2020), https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-03-29/coronavirus-pandemic-puts-moral-philosophy-to-the-test.

effectively provided direction to philosophical discourse.[18] As Luft and Overgaard observe, "A quick look at recent developments in science and philosophy confirms that phenomenology has infiltrated nearly all fields of philosophy, several different sciences (natural as well as human), and intellectual and cultural life more broadly."[19] Despite various phenomenological approaches and programs that created internal division and tension between philosophers, phenomenology remains an essential philosophical movement in contemporary time. This is because its "wide impact no doubt accounts for its strong position in intellectual and academic life today."[20] Another reason is its modest but profound aim: to attend to our own experiences by attentively and critically looking at them as they appear to us. Taking this view into consideration, it is not difficult to see why phenomenology, in general, remains vibrant and relevant today. These reasons are simply effects and expressions of the radicality of phenomenological activity which Husserl himself demonstrates.[21] As Moran describes, Husserl's phenomenology is a "bold, radically new way of doing philosophy, an attempt to bring philosophy back from abstract metaphysical speculation wrapped up in pseudo-problems, in order to come into contact with the matters themselves, with concrete living experience."[22]

The current philosophical mode of phenomenological exercise sees a concrete manifestation of this constancy of renewal and newness in what is now

[18] Jeffrey A. Bell, Andrew Cutrofello, and Paul M. Livingston, "Introduction," in Jeffrey A. Bell, Andrew Cutrofello, and Paul M. Livingston, ed. *Beyond the Analytic-Continental Divide: Pluralist Philosophy in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2016), 2.

[19] Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard, "Introduction," in *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, ed. Sebastian Luft & Søren Overgaard (London: Routledge, 2012), 1.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Take for instance, Husserl's view of pure phenomenology: "*Pure* phenomenology represents a field of neutral research, in which several sciences have their roots. It is, on the one hand, an ancillary to *psychology* conceived as an *empirical science*…Phenomenology lays bare the 'sources' from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of *pure* logic 'flow', and back to which they must once more be traced, so as to give them all the 'clearness and distinctness' needed for an understanding, and for an epistemological critique, of pure logic." See Edmund Husserl, *Shorter Logical Investigations,* trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001), I. § 1, 86.

[22] Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2002), xiii.

known as the New Phenomenology. Those familiar with the movement cannot but think of the 20th-century French philosophers such as Levinas, Henry, Chretien, Lacoste, Courtine, Falque, Romano, and Marion among others who are victims of unfair charge of grave intellectual transgressions, labeling their works as hyperbolized.[23] The reason for this is because of their subtle broaching of the limits of phenomenology to accommodate an inquiry that is claimed to be totality outside its scope. Dominique Janicauld calls this as the 'theological turn' in phenomenology.[24]

One of the most influential French phenomenologists mentioned above who represents the so-called 'New' Phenomenology today is Jean-Luc Marion. Famously known as the foremost Cartesian scholar in France, Marion's works can be classified into three divisions: history of philosophy, theology, and phenomenology. His phenomenological works, which manifest his intense scholarship and intellectual creativity, led to another breakthrough in phenomenology through his famous proposal of what David Tracy calls "the new phenomenology of the saturated phenomenon."[25] This led Richard Kearney to consider Marion as "arguably the most original and creative living French philosopher in the phenomenological tradition."[26]

---

[23] John Caputo, "The Hyperbolization of Phenomenology," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, ed. Kevin Hart (Notre Dame, Indiana:University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 67.

[24] Dominique Janicauld, "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology," trans. Bernard G. Prusak, in *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000). See also John Caputo, "Continental Philosophy of Religion: Then, Now, and Tomorrow (Extended Version)," in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* [Special Issue with the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy] 26, no. 2 (2012): 1-24.

[25] David Tracy, "Jean-Luc Marion: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Theology," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion,* ed. Kevin Hart (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 57-65.

[26] Richard Kearney, "The Death of the Death of God: Dialogue with Jean-Luc Marion," in *Reimagining the Sacred,* ed. Richard Kearney & Jens Zimmermann (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 175.

One of Marion's astounding contribution in philosophy is the saturated phenomenon which "in many ways helped redefine the terms of philosophical debate in France in the wake of deconstruction and the 'death of the subject.'"[27] As a thinker of disclosure, [28] Marion wishes to prove that there are unseen parts of phenomena, not because they per se cannot be seen, but because they are unseen due to our incapacity to overcome what impedes our seeing of them. This view results from Marion's critical engagement with Husserl and Heidegger, particularly on givenness and intuition. In seeing the overall character of Marion's works, Hart describes it as a "response to two major philosophical events: the beginning of phenomenology and the end of metaphysics."[29] While Gschwandtner finds Marion's works "characterized by the desire to carry further Heidegger's (and contemporary philosophy's) 'destruction' of metaphysics with the aim of liberating talk about the divine and the human subject."[30]

Marion on Ethics and the Phenomenology of Sacrifice

Natalie Depraz comments that "Marion was briefly mentioned as [a] contemporary French philosopher who develops moral views/philosophy, but the discussion is not clear in establishing this view."[31] Simmons and Benson wonder how phenomenology fits into the equation of ethical discourse when what phenomenology does is to describe the phenomenon being experienced rather than prescribed them. The latter is the distinctive nature of normative ethics. In other words,

[27] Ian James, *The New French Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 18.

[28] Kevin Hart, "Introduction," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion,* ed. Kevin Hart (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 3.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Christina Gschwandtner, "Jean-Luc Marion: Phenomenology of Religion," in *Continental Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion,* edited by Morny Joy (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 166.

[31] Natalie Depraz, "The Return of Phenomenology in Recent French Moral Philosophy," in *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy: A Handbook,* ed. John J. Drummond & Lester Embre (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002): 528.

> If phenomenology is primarily about description rather than normativity, as proposed by Husserl and Heidegger, or about possibility rather than actuality, as explained by Marion, then it is worth asking whether issues of practical moral, political and social concern are available for phenomenological analysis at all.[32]

Initially, both think that "the real contribution that phenomenology makes…is at the level of *propaedeutic stage setting*. In this sense, phenomenology might be a [prolegomenon] to applied philosophy, but not a direct contributor to such philosophy."[33] But Simmons and Benson are quick to counter the view asserting that the new phenomenology "does more than merely anticipate or invite further work on ethics and politics" for two reasons:

> First…the new phenomenologists all understand that description is always a normative venture and that this connection is likely morally and politically invested; Second, some new phenomenologists— Levinas, Derrida, and Henry, in varying ways—are *explicitly* morally, politically, or socially normative.[34]

We must take note that (2) excludes Marion. When speaking about moral and political issues, this exclusion shows Marion's distance from or remote position in the said philosophical fields. In fact, when Ian James mentions Marion concerning French philosophers' engagements with politics, it is to exclude him: "to think the conditions of political transformation and to affirm[,] facilitate[,] or bring about political change itself (this is true for all the philosophers discussed here with the *exception, perhaps, of Marion and Laruelle*)."[35] However, it is

[32] J. Aaron Simmons & Bruce Ellis Benson, *The New Phenomenology* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 291.

[33] Ibid., 291. Emphasis added.

[34] Ibid., 294-295.

[35] James, *The New French Philosophy,* 13.

understandable why James and others are quick to emphasize the exception because of the apparent absence of ethical and political discussions in Marion's work. However, we cannot immediately dismiss the idea that Marion and others do not carry in themselves the ethical and political genetic imprint. The comment of Gutting about French philosophers need not exempt Marion: "It is as natural for French philosophers to take political stands as it is for American actors and entertainers."[36] The impression of Gutting is that French philosophers are thinkers who are engaged in reality who hate to practice "logical skills of argumentative acuity and imaginative counter-examples"[37] but love political activity.

In a dedicatory essay on Marion, Christina Gschwandtner says that there has been a minimal amount of Marion's insights on ethics and politics. That is why Marion "has been criticized for his lack of interest in ethics and politics."[38] However, despite the scant and scattered ethical and political insights in Marion's works, Gschwandtner provides an informative and illuminating presentation of Marion's possible ethical views and locates some primary resources where these views can be found. According to her, there are two primary reasons why Marion did not take ethics seriously in his works: first, the idea that ethics remains to be metaphysical, and second, it has already been done or completed by Levinas.[39] She continues to expound on these reasons and, while trying to connect some of Marion's concepts to ethics, directs her

[36] Gary Gutting, *Thinking the Impossible*: *French Philosophy since 1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19.

[37] Ibid., 9.

[38] Christina M. Gschwandtner, "Jean-Luc Marion," in *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, ed. Hugh LaFollete (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2013), 3157.

[39] I tried to clarify this statement from Prof. Gscwandtner through an email last October 17, 2020. When asked about whether those two claims are related and whether Levinas's ethics is metaphysical or not, and the seeming Hegelian tone, in my opinion, of her statement that 'Levinas has completed ethics,' her response was "No, those claims are not related. I don't think Marion considers Levinas' thought metaphysical (at least not explicitly so); Levinas is the route we must go if we do not want to do 'traditional' ethics…Neither Levinas nor Marion are Hegelian." Christina Gschwandtner, "Reply to Email" (October 20, 2020).

readers to some crucial sources where Marion's views are quite explicit.[40] Gschwandtner also points out that she is convinced that Marion's moral position is akin to Levinas. It is obvious to say that Marion is heavily influenced by Levinas. In fact, Marion would consider Levinas as "the greatest of French philosophers since Bergson and also the first phenomenologist who had seriously tried to liberate himself from his origin, that is to say from Heidegger"[41] while according to Badiou, "[i]t is to him [Levinas] that we owe, long before the current fashion, a kind of ethical radicalism."[42] But it is far from obvious how deep is Levinas' influence on Marion's ethical thinking. One thing is quite clear for Marion, Levinas' ethics remains universal since the Other cannot be specified or individualized. It is this issue of specificity of the Other that Marion tries to overcome in his treatment of charity or love and sacrifice.[43] Lastly, Gschwandtner summarizes Marion's position on ethics as follows: "it implies a critique of ethics as linked to a eudaimonic… or utilitarian… metaphysics."[44]

Another serious examination of Marion's ethics is from Gerard McKenny, who argues that Marion's ethical pronouncements are grounded on his idea of love and the other. One of the essential points that McKenny offers is Marion's impulse to "preserve the ethical against the nihilism of modern thought" even though the ethical no longer assumed a privileged status unlike in Levinas.[45] Marion considers ethics as just an instance of phenomenality, which is why he "insists on removing the ethical from its privileged position."[46] In the words of

---

[40] See Jean-Luc Marion, *Prolegomena to Charity*, trans. Stephen Lewis (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002)."

[41] Jean-Luc Marion, "From the Other to the Individual," in *Transcendence, Philosophy, Literature and Theology Approach the Beyond*, trans. Robyn Horner, ed. Regina Schwartz (London: Routledge, 2004), 43.

[42] Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (New York: Verso, 2001), 18.

[43] See Robyn Horner, *Jean-Luc Marion: A Theo-logical Introduction* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), footnote 47, p. 70.

[44] Gschwandtner, "Jean-Luc Marion," 3159.

[45] Gerald McKenny, "(Re)placing Ethics," in *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion,*342.

[46] Ibid., 342.

McKenny, this "deprivileging of ethics does not entail indifference toward ethics, much less hostility."[47] He further argues that the ethical resources where we can find Marion's explicit articulations of the ethical are in his discourse on love. For Marion, it is not justice that is the first virtue, but love or charity. This view already sets him apart from other philosophers and "sets him against much of modern moral philosophy." The primacy of love over justice is seen in how Marion understands the nature of love and of loving. The main point, according to McKenny, is that one cannot render justice to others without love, since it is love that "determines whether I will deal with the other as an object that returns my gaze or as a counter-gaze." Taking the views from Marion's marginal works, McKenny suggests that love preserves the ethical against modern nihilistic tendencies. At the end of his essay, McKenny summarizes his view with a biting challenge:

> In principle, [Marion's] claim that love is a condition of the possibility of justice and that love completes justice point in the direction theology and philosophy should move if they are to overcome the split between love and justice that is characteristic of much of modern ethics.[48]

While McKenny looks at love as the opening field for a more robust discussion and thematization of a Marionite ethics,[49] Kevin Hart finds a different area without neglecting the role of love in ethics. For Hart, love provides an answer to moral problems, "yet we might wonder if love… tells the whole story of ethics; it may be 'first ethics'… but it may not be a decent guide to how to live concretely with other people."[50] This field, which Hart suggests were to cultivate or develop Marion's ethics where the focus, according to Hart, has to do with a

[47] Ibid., 346.

[48] Ibid., 353.

[49] Kevin Hart, "How Marion Gives Himself," in *Breached Horizons: The Philosophy of Jean-Luc Marion*, ed. Rachel Bath, Antonio Calcagno, Kathryn Lawson, and Steve G. Lofts (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018): 21.

[50] Ibid.

discourse on values rather than merely on the ethical. Hart sees the discussion of ethics as a particular discourse that can be subsumed under the category of axiology. He even suggests developing a comparative analysis between Marion's ethics and its relation to what is known in modern ethics as intuitionist ethics.

No one from Marion's respected commentators and scholars identifies sacrifice as a possible locus of proper articulation. This paper aims to show that Marion's account of the phenomenology of sacrifice offers a basis for developing his ethical view. To be sure, this paper follows the direction of Hart's analysis of Marion's ethics. Marion's ethical views are classified as axiological. I will now present Marion's account of sacrifice. In doing so, a brief remark on some crucial concepts is needed.

One way of understanding the saturated phenomenon is to consider it as "excessive, extraordinary, and bedazzling, to the point where they sometimes strike us blind with the intensity of their light."[51] Marion calls it paradoxes. And since saturated phenomenon saturates intuition, the human intention is rendered helpless to capture or synthesize what has been received. It questions the capacity of the subject, which constitutes the object being experienced. There are important elements of this phenomenological process that are put on hold or even considered unnecessary, such as the horizon's role, intentionality, and the constituting subject. In effect, what saturated phenomenon tries to accomplish is to account for a particular experience beyond our capacity to constitute them. Marion reverses the function of constitution in his account of the saturated phenomenon. Because of its bedazzling, blinding light, the constituting subject is rendered captive and powerless to articulate what has been received. In this case, it appears that saturated phenomenon based on its characteristics outstrips the subject of "epistemic integrity."[52]

---

[51] Gschwandtner, "Jean-Luc Marion: Phenomenology of Religion," in *Continental Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion,* ed. Morny Joy (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 179.

[52] Kristof Oltvai, "Another Name for Liberty: Revelation, 'Objectivity,' and Intellectual Freedom in Barth and Marion," *Open Theology,* 5 (2019): 434. Oltvai observes that many believe that "the saturated phenomenon's claim might be so powerful…that its reception

Marion's idea of the gift started to develop in his early writings especially in *The Idol and Distance.* Marion says that "[r]eceiving the gift and giving it come together in one and the same operation, redundancy."[53] Such statement means that when a person receives the gift, that same person also simultaneously gives something to the giver. Both the giver and the receiver receive a gift, which seems paradoxical if you do not think of a gift as simply as something being received. A simple question arises: when one receives a gift, what sense that s/he too gives? The answer might be found in the following passage where Marion describes the gift in this particular sense: "To receive the gift amounts to receiving the giving act, for God gives nothing except the movement of the infinite kenosis of charity, that is, everything."[54] This means that in receiving the gift, you do not just receive what is being given; included in it is the very act of giving itself—the very self of someone who gives.

One of the essential characteristics of Marion's notion of the gift in this early work is the idea of redundancy. Although informed by theological background, this view remains operative in his later works when he transposes the analysis to a phenomenological field. In the Villanova Conference, Marion and Derrida confronted the issue concerning the gift. They both attempted to clarify what seems to be a misunderstanding of their views.[55] Derrida, in the roundtable discussion with Marion, clarifies his view of the gift by invoking the Kantian distinction between knowing and thinking as a point of comparison in

transforms the recipient's own constitution as metaphysics understands it" (Ibid., 442). But he objects against this view because the criticism on saturated phenomenon "not only overlooks the fact that the epistemological subject's transformation in the light of saturation's brilliance is always, for Marion, able to be refused, but also that the saturated phenomenon's excess inaugurates not a dogmatic restriction of meaning but a corresponding excess of signification itself—the infinite hermeneutic" (Ibid., 443).

[53] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and Distance,* trans. Thomas A. Carlson (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 166.

[54] Ibid., 166.

[55] Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, "On the Gift," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism,* ed. John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999).

understanding the gift.[56] Derrida argues that the gift can be thought but cannot be known. One can think of the gift, but one cannot know it. What interested Derrida in the problem of the gift is precisely "to check the limits and possibility of phenomenology"[57] since he suspects Marion of not doing phenomenology at all.

One important point of contention that Marion clarifies is establishing the fact about the phenomenon as given. Marion clarifies, "I am not trying to reduce every phenomenon to a gift and then to say that, after that, since this is gift."[58] Derrida is skeptical of Marion's idea that part of the phenomenon of the gift is its unrepeatability. For Derrida, "repetition is part of the singularity" of an event and so remains entangled with presence. But when Marion thought of unrepeatable occurrence, he was referring to the structure of experience involved in the event and in the process of giving. At the macro-perspective level, it is true that there is a repetition of the event but not so in a micro-perspective when we consider the aspects of giving, such as manner, mode, place, and the like. You may gift the person the same thing all over again, but the manner of giving such a gift is not the same as you give it the first or the second or the third time around. Unlike Derrida, who sees the gift as an impossible event, Marion considers gifts as a possible event. What constitutes an event being impossible is that it "cannot be foreseen a priori"[59] explains Marion. Hence, any foreseen phenomenon excludes impossibility. The very reason why people utter expressions like "That is impossible to happen!" is because such happening is unforeseen or predicted a priori. We can infer that what Marion considers as events are those that are unpredicted, unexpected, but possible. This view implies that not all things considered as events are for Marion really events;

[56] Ibid., 60.
[57] Ibid., 71.
[58] Ibid., 70.
[59] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Rigor of Things,* trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 170.

"majority of things that one calls events (those that the media announce each day) are precisely not events."[60]

The discussions on the saturated phenomenon and the gift are essential in Marion's phenomenological view of sacrifice as self-abandonment, which implies that sacrifice is a form of redundancy of the gift. For Marion, sacrifice should not be thought of merely as a ritual conditioned by economic reciprocity and exchange. Instead, sacrifice is understood "as a variation of the gift, which one might rightly call the *giving up* [*l'abandon*]."[61] Contrary to what other thinkers think of sacrifice as mainly something that operates within the domain of exchange and reciprocity, Marion contends that such view does not relieve the self from emptying itself because an act of sacrifice – that is of self-abandonment, can only be achieved when one unties oneself from the cycle of exchange or reciprocity. A genuine form of sacrifice is analogous to a gift which for Marion is purely gratuitous, that is, freely given without a return.

In *Negative Certainties*, Marion offers a phenomenological account of sacrifice as a variation of the gift. He negates the view of sacrifice as a plain "destruction of goods" or annihilation of what is "functional and purposeful" such as the act of terrorism.[62] For him, there remains a paradox to an act of sacrifice when sacrificing or giving up one's life, for instance – the terrorist, that "abolishes property, innocent people, and the terrorist himself." It does not authenticate abandonment of the self instead it secures the self of its barbaric desires and inclinations. There is no abandonment in the strictest sense of the term when one destroys goods or things whatsoever since all of these is for the

[60] Ibid., 170.

[61] Jean-Luc Marion, *Negative Certainties*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 121.

[62] Ibid., 115-116. See also Jean-Luc Marion, *The Reason of the Gift*, trans., Stephen E. Lewis (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011). The latest version of his account on sacrifice with the title: "The Unconditioned and the Variations of the Gift," is in NC while the early version is in *The Reason of the Gift* with the title "Sketch of a Phenomenological Concept of Sacrifice". Although the latest version has longer discussion because Marion added an account on forgiveness, but his view on sacrifice remains the same with the earlier version.

fulfillment of the self. As he explains, "the definition of sacrifice as the destruction of a good as such not only explains nothing of sacrifice but could actually explain its opposite – the self-appropriation of autarchy."[63] The sacrificial act turns the "destruction of a good" into "a construction of the self" where the self affirms autonomy and power over the thing destroyed. Next, Marion proceeds by presenting another sense of sacrifice: the dispossession of the self for the other as its defining characteristic. The self has dispossessed itself for the other who ratifies the acceptance of the said dispossessed self. Even so, Marion contends that sacrifice "even defined within the horizon of the other… is not enough to account fully for the possibility of sacrifice."[64] This is because the self's dispossession understood in the context of the horizon of the other remains within the horizon of exchange and reciprocity. For the self to dispossess itself for the other's sake requires the other's acceptance and recognition. For instance, I am willing to suffer insofar as you recognize my suffering for your sake and your sake alone. The self, although it may entirely give itself to the other, to be dispossessed of whatever it has in itself, without any expectations from the other of a return, but when the other recognizes and authenticates this act and reciprocates it, the sacrifice is again caught up in the logic of exchange. In these two senses of sacrifice, Marion claims that such senses of sacrifice are constituted by reciprocity as the "decisive presupposition."[65] That is why Marion thinks sacrifice should be thought of as like a gift that once one gives the gift, it disappears without return. A sacrifice must be thought of in this context. As Marion explains,

> Sacrifice supposes a gift already given, the point of which is neither destruction, nor its refusal, nor even its transfer to another owner, but, instead, its return to the givenness from which it proceeds, and whose mark it should always bear.[66]

[63] Marion, *Negative Certainties,* 117.
[64] Ibid.,119.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 126.

In this sense, sacrifice is a re-giving of the gift or a redundancy. A case in point is the story of Abraham and Isaac. God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, which Abraham undoubtedly obliged. Later, it turned out that God wanted a ram as a sacrifice instead of Isaac. According to Marion, the supposed sacrifice of Isaac is not a sacrifice under the logic of exchange. Instead, it is a sacrifice in a phenomenological sense. It means that Isaac was not sacrificed as a good – a possession owned by Abraham because, in the first place, Isaac was not strictly speaking Abraham's son but God's. It was a sacrifice in the sense of re-giving of the gift to God. Sparing the life of Isaac is another gift being re-given to Abraham.

> God regives Isaac to Abraham, gives him a second time, presenting a gift by a redounding [*don par une redondance*], which consecrates it definitively as a gift henceforth shared and, ultimately, transparent between the giver and the recipient. The abandonment redoubles the gift and consecrates it as such for the first time.[67]

To qualify the ethical dimension of Marion's phenomenological treatment of sacrifice, I will use Moshe Halbertal's concept of "sacrifice for" as a category where Marion's view of sacrifice can be categorized. Halbertal explains that there are two related senses of sacrifice: "sacrifice to" and "sacrifice for." [68] The former is the primary use of sacrifice, which is exclusively religious, while the latter is used to mean "the sacrifice *of* the self is an effort to act above and beyond self-interest, aiming at the realm of self-transcendence."[69] The sense of "sacrifice for" can be construed as well as "indirectly as a giving of a gift by the individual to the nation or for the good of others."[70] This sense of sacrifice

[67] Ibid., 131-132.
[68] Moshe Halbertal, *On Sacrifice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1.
[69] Ibid., 114.
[70] Ibid., 2.

according to Halbertal belongs to the realm of the "political and moral spheres." Halbertal likens self-sacrifice to a gift and an unopened love letter:

> Sacrifices can become like gifts that not only are unreciprocated but also merely accumulate and become a burden or love letters that are not only ignored but never opened as well. Each of these gifts and letters is another proof of the giver's annihilation.[71]

Habertal acknowledges that a genuine gift is outside the cycle of economic exchange but remains within the domain of reciprocity as "only a moral duty."[72] He justifies the reciprocal condition of the gift saying,

> If it were a legal duty for a person to reciprocate a gift, a duty that can be enforced by law, this would taint the act of giving, turning it into something driven by an instrumental calculation in the first place.[73]

In the case of Marion, any form of reciprocity is suspect of metaphysical determination and thus excluded from the gift. The same is required in sacrifice when self-abandonment secures the impossibility of a return. Any sacrifice that is calculating and manipulating is a sacrifice informed by the logic of exchange not for the sake of the self to be emptied of any self-interestedness but rather to secure more firmly its grounding. Nevertheless, we may still insist that Marion's view of sacrifice, despite its higher demand and ideality, can be categorized as a form of "sacrifice for" which, in turn, a kind of sacrifice that is geared toward fulfillment and practice of ethical or moral life.

To determine whether Marion's notion of sacrifice under the rubric of "sacrifice for" proposed by Halbertal is duly constituted within the bounds of

---

[71] Ibid., 21.
[72] Ibid., 25.
[73] Ibid., 25-26.

duty-based morality or not requires a discussion of an ethical concept of superfluous act or supererogation. Once this concept has been defined and clarified, it would be easy to determine from what category we can identify Marion's concept of sacrifice.

Superfluous Ethics or Supererogation

To relate what moral philosophy can share about the crisis today is to shape one's outlook of the issue using the normative moral/ethical theories available to us such as, consequentialism, deontology, naturalism, and virtue ethics. However, this paper takes a different ethical discussion, which is not so much discussed compared to the said prescriptive ethical theories.

There are two main aspects of moral discourse: the agent and the act. The former refers to aretaic, while the latter is deontic moral discourse. The deontic refers to the ethical rules or principles, moral obligation, duty, and other moral ascriptions such as the rightness or wrongness of an act. In contrast, the aretaic discourse covers values, virtues, and moral ascriptions like praiseworthiness and blameworthiness. While the aretaic discourse is open-ended and does not prescribe rules and principles for human conduct, the deontic discourse is not. Deontic discourse provides action-guiding principles or rules for moral judgment, whether they are good, bad, permissible or not, or obligatory or not. It is in the context of deontic moral discourse that J.O. Urmson challenges the traditional approach to understanding moral action. He argues that the traditional approach excludes some other actions that have positive moral worth but are outside the bounds of the traditional classification of moral duty. Among these actions, Urmson calls saintly and heroic. Based on the traditional view, there are three types of action, namely: (1) "duty, or obligatory," (2) "permissible…but that are not morally required of us," (3) "actions that are wrong, that ought not

to do."[74] Urmson believes that this trichotomy is limited and inadequate. He then introduced another type of action known as supererogation, or in common expression, going beyond the call of duty. Put simply, supererogation, or 'going beyond the call of duty' means that some actions are desirable to do and non-obligatory but not doing it is not bad.[75] Such action has positive moral worth when performed but its omission cannot be considered bad. Such a proposal is not counterintuitive. Experience has it that when we think of those people who performed admirable acts that we could not imagine to be doing 'in excess of duty,'[76] we tend to praise their actions as noble and worthy of emulation. Giving a share of your salary to a charity organization is not an institutional duty one has to do, nor is it considered bad not to give to the charity. If one wishes to share what one gains from work to a charity institution, it is out of one's kindness or generosity that one does so. Such an act is considered admirable and so supererogatory. Yet, they are not equally at par with heroic and saintly acts. Why is that so? Urmson considers heroic and saintly acts as two paragons of higher morally worthy supererogatory actions. He defines a saint as one who "does actions that are far beyond the limits of his duty, whether by control of contrary inclination and interest or without effort"[77] while a moral hero is someone who "does actions that are far beyond the bounds of his duty, whether by control of natural fear or without effort."[78]

A hero or a saint, despite their difference in terms of disposition because a saintly act involves "resistance to desire and self-interest" while a heroic act involves "resistance to fear and self-preservation," does a non-obligatory well-

[74] J.O. Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," in *Ethics, History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Peter Mackie (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 699. This essay was originally published in *Essays in Moral Philosophy*, ed. A.I. Melden (Seattle, Wash: University of Washington Press, 1958).

[75] Roderick M. Chisholm, *Brentano and Meinong Studies* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1982), 99. The title of a chapter in this book is "Supererogation and Offence".

[76] Joel Feinberg, "Supererogation and Rules," *Ethics* 71, no. 4 (July 1961): 276-288.

[77] Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," 700.

[78] Ibid., 701.

doing[79] acts. Although they are non-obligatory, they are deemed to be "actions were good things to do."[80]

Chisholm distinguishes supererogatory acts that are trifling or frivolous from supererogatory acts that are heroic and saintly. Frivolous supererogatory acts are those acts that occur in the ordinariness of daily life, such as giving a share of one's salary to parents or buying food for some street dwellers. The difference lies in the higher demand that a saintly or heroic act presupposes. This demand requires an agential sacrifice, a "self-effacing life in the service of others which is not even contemplated by the majority of upright, kind, and honest men, let alone expected of them."[81] Heroic or saintly supererogation therefore involves the agent's awareness of the risks involved in the act. As M.W. Jackson puts it "it is sacrifice in risking self-preservation that demarks heroic supererogation from obligation."[82] Further, the act of self-sacrifice does not require rational "calculation of declining marginal returns on the cost of social enforcement,"[83] such that one acts heroically for the sake of a recognition or compensation. Even so, this loss of one's welfare alone is "not a sufficient condition for an act to be an act of self-sacrifice"[84] according to Overvold. An act of self-sacrifice must satisfy the following conditions: (1) "the loss must be anticipated," (2) "the act must be voluntary," (3) "the act must be contrary to the agent's self-interest."[85] Given these conditions, it disqualifies some *prima facie* heroic or saintly acts if such acts revealed an inner motive for self-gratification or glorification on the part of the agent. In other words, we do not consider, based on Overvold's conditions, those individuals whose intention is to act heroically or saintly for the fulfillment of their interest. For him, this kind of

[79] Chisholm, "Supererogation and Offence," 100.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," 701.

[82] M.W. Jackson, "The Nature of Supererogation," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 20 (1986): 292.

[83] Ibid., 292.

[84] Mark Carl Overvold, "Self-Interest and the Concept of Self-Sacrifice," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (Mar 1980): 109.

[85] Ibid.

intention remains egotistical. Hence, it is not genuinely heroic or saintly. Although several authors criticize Urmson's claim about the moral worth of some actions outside the bounds of moral duty and the need to add a new category for moral action, this will not be taken up here for it requires lengthy discussion.

The main points that I want to emphasize here are: first, regardless of whether supererogation should be classified independently of the traditional moral categories or not does not matter here. This paper affirms that there are such actions called supererogatory or superfluous act. This moral fact affirms both those who recognized the limitations of Urmson's view and those who revised his view. Such a gesture implies the existence of a moral fact of supererogation. Secondly, given the existence of supererogatory acts, what matters here is the sort of supererogation it subscribes to, which is the heroic and saintly supererogatory acts. It involves demands on the effacement of one's interest for the interest of others. This view of supererogation is seen in Jean-Luc Marion's concept of sacrifice categorized as "sacrifice for."

Given the account of Marion's sacrifice as giving of something to the other without return and self-effacing or emptying falls under the non-duty-bound form of sacrifice whom Urmson considered as actions deserving to be called saintly and heroic. As argued not all supererogatory acts are saintly and heroic since many of such acts though beyond the call of duty are driven by personal interest and do not bring danger or threat to one's life. For Urmson, supererogatory acts that are saintly and heroic are acts that are not just beyond one's call of duty to perform such act but most importantly require the person to choose to do the act knowing the danger it may cause him/her and without regard to what he/she can benefit from doing it. This is, in Marion sense, a pure gratuitous act. Therefore, it follows that the kind of sacrifice Marion proposes, understood ethically, is outside the bounds of the classical category of duty. To be sure, there are forms of sacrifice that are within the domain of duty-based actions. Feinberg, for instance, explains that some duty-based actions have a

sacrificial element, which "does not necessarily exceed that in the performance of a duty. True, some sacrificial acts are bounded by duty such that one can skip a meal or two to finish the task. In fact, Feinberg considers some sacrificial acts as supererogatory but duty-bound which he calls oversubscriptions."[86] These are different from acts of sacrifice that are "a meritorious, abnormally risky non-duty" set of superfluous or supererogatory acts.

The Role of Sacrifice and Moral Saints and Heroes

It is said that supererogatory acts that are saintly and heroic set a kind of moral standards that are difficult to achieve by majority of moral agents. When we acknowledge the saintly or heroic acts of some people, we also consciously or unconsciously commit ourselves to aim the same moral perfection, inculcating within ourselves "the dispositions and habitual virtues which give rise to and provide the mainspring for actions."[87] What seems to be difficult is that we rarely commit to cultivating the said moral ideals. In times of crisis, we come to witness a wide array of human behaviors and moral actions. It is not difficult to find in this time of crisis individuals who exemplified meritorious acts worthy of being called saintly or heroic. A genuinely supererogatory act is aptly described by McGoldrick as "like genuine acts of gift-giving" which is "inspired by something like benevolence and love."[88] Further, the "saint and the hero in their different ways bestow upon others the free gift of their service."[89] This kind of supererogatory act requires an actual act of sacrifice, which, when given, is given wholly without any return. Such kind of act can be seen as how healthcare workers extend their service to treat patients with deadly infection beyond their duty to treat. As Heidi Malm and others argued that the duty to treat in times of a pandemic poses some challenges as to whether health workers are bound to

[86] Feinberg, "Supererogation and Rules," 282.

[87] Patricia M. McGoldrick, "Saints and Heroes: A Plea for the Supererogatory," *Philosophy* 59, no. 230 (1984): 524.

[88] Ibid., 527.

[89] Ibid.

perform their duty despite the impending danger or threat to their health safety.[90] Still, we have seen many of them around the world went beyond such duty to take care of the infected patients.[91] These are people who are committed to performing actions that are non-obligatory yet went an extra mile to do so, without thinking about an imminent danger they were facing, and emptied themselves of self-interest just so to protect the interest of others and the entire community. These people who offered themselves as sacred sacrificial victims to thwart the looming destruction of the whole community are moral exemplars. Anyone who fits into this description is considered a moral saint or hero.

What does this type of supererogatory act tell us? Sacrifice in a sense of self-giving and self-effacing plays a crucial role in society, especially in times of crisis where the society's social fabric is on the brink of destruction because of fear, discord, uncertainties, and the ineptness and senility of those who are responsible in taking care of the whole community. It happens when society's systems are condemned or busted and so no longer able to protect its people. Such inoperative society has, as René Girard describes, "lack of firm [sic] system."[92] In times of pandemic, moral saints and heroes play a crucial role in safeguarding and protecting the society's systems from falling apart. This is not romanticism but realism. We have witnessed how people with exemplary moral values and ideals emerged in times of crisis. We have pandemic narratives showing how some individuals sacrificed themselves for others and the public interest. If the same moral ideals are also present in many of our political leaders, it would not be difficult to imagine how it would be easier for people to survive

[90] Heidi Malm, et. al., "Ethics, Pandemics, and the Duty to Treat," *The American Journal of Bioethics* 8, 8 (2008): 4-19.

[91] In the Philippines according to online news agency *Rappler* as of August 3, 2020, 38 died due to the virus while 4, 576 out of 5, 008 cases as of August 1, 2020 had recovered. See Sofia Tomacruz, "PH Health Workers Infected with Coronavirus reach 5, 008," *Rappler*, August 3, 2020, https://www.rappler.com/nation/health-workers-coronavirus-cases-philippines-august-3-2020.

[92] René Girard, *The Girard Reader*, ed. James G. Williams (New York: A Crossroad Herder Book, 2000), 87.

and maintain the proper workings of various systems in place. Indeed, a life, according to Urmson, "without its saints and heroes would be impoverished."[93]

Conclusion

What I have shown in this paper are the following: first, Jean-Luc Marion may not be explicit in articulating his views on ethics but taking a closer look at his phenomenological reflection on sacrifice reveals that it has an ethical dimension by categorizing his view under the category of "sacrifice for" as proposed by Halbertal and thus connects quite well to an ethical discussion on supererogation or superfluous ethics. Second, I have argued that Marion's sacrifice is considered outside the duty-bound form of sacrifice as shown above. Third, the implication of such act is twofold: (1) it could mean positively that such acts are moral ideals that everyone should strive to cultivate in themselves, and (2) when such an act becomes common in times of crisis, it shows moral ideals but at the same time a symptom of society's decadent life. In this light it is further revealed that such a society is inoperative and a failure because its systems cannot protect its people from impending destruction or danger without such heroes and saints.

REFERENCES

Agamben, Giorgio. "Clarifications." *An und für sich* (blog). March 17, 2020, https://itself.blog/2020/03/17/giorgioagamben-clarifications/.

Agarwal, Shreeya. "The Political and Economic Impact of Covid-19 in Southeast Asia: Interview with Thomas Pepinsky." *The National Bureau of Asian Research*. June 11, 2020, https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-political-and-economic-impact-of-covid-19-in-southeast-asia/.

Al Jazeera. "Noam Chomsky: 'Coronavirus pandemic could have been

[93] Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," 706.

prevented.'" April 3, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/3/noam-chomsky-coronavirus-pandemic-could-have-been-prevented.

Authers, John. "How Coronavirus Is Shaking Up the Moral Universe." *Bloomberg Opinion*. March 30, 2020. https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-03-29/coronavirus-pandemic-puts-moral-philosophy-to-the-test.

Badiou, Alain. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. Translated by Peter Hallward. New York: Verso, 2001.

Betz, John R. "After Heidegger and Marion: The Task of Christian Metaphysics Today." *Modern Theology* 34:4 (Oct. 2018): 565-97.

Caldwell, Christopher. "Meet the Philosopher Who Is Trying to Explain the Pandemic." *The New York Times*, August 21, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/21/opinion/sunday/giorgio-agamben-philosophy-coronavirus.html.

Caputo, John. "Continental Philosophy of Religion: Then, Now, and Tomorrow (Extended Version)." *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* [Special Issue with the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy] 26, no. 2 (2012): 1-24.

Caputo, John. "The Hyperbolization of Phenomenology." In *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, edited by Kevin Hart. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Cariño, Jovito V. "The Place of Philosophy and Thought during the Coronavirus Crisis." *Rappler,* March 30, 2020. https://www.rappler.com/voices/imho/opinion-philosophy-community-quarantine-coronavirus.

Chisholm, Roderick M. *Brentano and Meinong Studies.* Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1982.

Cutrofello, Andrew and Paul M. Livingston, eds., *Beyond the Analytic Continental Divide: Pluralist Philosophy in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Depraz, Natalie. "The Return of Phenomenology in Recent French Moral Philosophy." In *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy: A Handbook*, edited by John J. Drummond & Lester Embre, 517-532. Dordrecht: Springer, 2002.

Derrida, Jacques and Jean-Luc Marion. "On the Gift." In *God, the Gift, and*

Postmodernism, edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, 54-78. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Dooley, Mark. "Marion's Ambition of Transcendence." In *Givenness and God: Questions of Jean-Luc Marion,* edited by Ian Leask & Eoin Cassidy, 190-198. New York: Fordham University Press,2005.

Feinberg, Joel. "Supererogation and Rules." *Ethics* vol. 71, no. 4 (July 1961): 276-288.

Girard, René. *The Girard Reader*. Edited by James G. Williams. New York: A Crossroad Herder Book, 2000.

Gschwandtner, Christina M. *Reading Jean-Luc Marion: Exceeding Metaphysics*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007.

Gschwandtner, Christina. "Jean-Luc Marion: Phenomenology of Religion." In *Continental Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Morny Joy, 165-186. Dordrecht: Springer, 2011.

Gschwandtner, Christina M. "Jean-Luc Marion." In *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, edited by Hugh LaFollete, 3155-3162. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2013.

Gutting, Gary. *Thinking the Impossible*: *French Philosophy since 1960.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Halbertal, Moshe. *On Sacrifice.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Hart, Kevin. "Introduction." In *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, edited by Kevin Hart, 1-52. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Hart, Kevin. "How Marion Gives Himself." In *Breached Horizons: The Philosophy of Jean-Luc Marion,* edited by Rachel Bath, Antonio Calcagno, Kathryn Lawson, and Steve G. Lofts, 13-27 . London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Horner, Robyn. *Jean-Luc Marion: A Theo-logical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Husserl, Edmund. *Shorter Logical Investigations.* Translated by J. N. Findlay. London: Routledge, 2001.

Jackson, M.W. "The Nature of Supererogation." *The Journal of Value Inquiry,* 20 (1986): 289-296.

James, Ian. *The New French Philosophy.* Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012.

Janicauld, Dominique. "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology." Translated by Bernard G. Prusak. In *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate,* Dominique Janicauld et al., 1-86. New York: Fordham University Press, 2000.

Kearney, Richard. "The Death of the Death of God: Dialogue with Jean-Luc Marion." In *Reimagining the Sacred,* edited by Richard Kearney and Jens Zimmermann, 175-193. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Luft, Sebastian and Søren Overgaard, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Malabou, Catherine. "To Quarantine from Quarantine: Rousseau, Robinson Crusoe, and 'I'." *Critical Inquiry* (blog). March 23, 2020. https://critinq.wordpress.com/2020/03/23/to-quarantine-from-quarantine-rousseau-robinson-crusoe-and-i/?fbclid=IwAR2t6gCrl7tpdRPWhSBWXScsF54lCfRH1U-2sMEOI9PcXH7uNtKVWzKor3M.

Malm, Heidi, et. al., "Ethics, Pandemics, and the Duty to Treat." *The American Journal of Bioethics* 8, 8 (2008): 4-19.

Marion, Jean-Luc. *Negative Certainties*. Translated by Stephen E. Lewis. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

_____. *Idol and Distance.* Translated by Thomas A. Carlson. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.

_____. *The Rigor of Things*. Translated by Christina M. Gschwandtner. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.

_____. "From the Other to the Individual." In *Transcendence, Philosophy, Literature and Theology Approach the Beyond*, translated by Robyn Horner, edited by Regina Schwartz, 43-59. London: Routledge.

McKenny, Gerald. "(Re)placing Ethics." In *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion*, edited by Kevin Hart, 339-356. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

McGoldrick, Patricia M. "Saints and Heroes: A Plea for the Supererogatory." *Philosophy* 59, no. 230 (1984): 523-528.

Milbank, John. "Only Theology Overcomes Metaphysics." *New Blackfriars* 76, Issue 895 (July 1995): 325-43.

Moran, Dermot. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Naguit, R.J. "Philippines: COVID-19 as a Public Health Crisis." *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*. July 04, 2020, https://www.fes-asia.org/news/philippines-covid-19-as-a-public-health-crisis/.

Oltvai, Kristof. "Another Name for Liberty: Revelation, 'Objectivity,' and Intellectual Freedom in Barth and Marion." *Open Theology,* 5 (2019): 430-50.

Overvold, Mark Carl. "Self-Interest and the Concept of Self-Sacrifice." *Canadian*

Journal of Philosophy 10, no. 1 (Mar 1980): 105-118.

Simmons, J. Aaron and Bruce Ellis Benson. *The New Phenomenology*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Tracy, David. "Jean-Luc Marion: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Theology." In *Counter-Experiences: Reading Jean-Luc Marion,* edited by Kevin Hart, 57-65. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 200

Urmson, J.O. "Saints and Heroes." In *Ethics, History, Theory, and Contemporary Issues*, edited by Steven M. Cahn and Peter Mackie, 322-231. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

World Health Organization. "Impact of COVID-19 on People's Livelihoods, their Health and our Food Systems." October 13, 2020. https://www.who.int/news/item/13-10-2020-impact-of-covid-19-on-people%27s-livelihoods-their-health-and-our-food-systems.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World*. New York: OR Books, 2020.