

Abstract

The concept of the gift has received ample philosophical attention in recent decades. Thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion have been major contributors to the conversation philosophically. However, their conclusions around the gift – while generating many fruitful notions – leave the gift impoverished from our ordinary experience. Further, their reflections make it difficult to predicate giftedness of existence. This thesis argues for a need to rethink the gift along different lines which seeks to widen the gift in order to be able to predicate it of existence. In order to make such an argument, the ideas of Kenneth Schmitz on the gift are recovered. Schmitz argues for an understanding of giftedness that includes a notion of reciprocity and receptivity – contra Marion and Derrida. It is this notion of receptivity that makes Schmitz’ framework able to be predicated of existence. Existence, understood as gifted, opens up fruitful avenues for anthropology and ethics, as well as argues for a certain disposition towards reality that is centered in wonder and gratitude.