THE PHILOSOPHY OF GABRIEL MARCEL
IN ITS RELATIONS WITH CONTEMPORARY FRENCH THOUGHT

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M. Marcel's vision of the universe may rightly be defined as a "pluralistic personalism". The convinced enemy of all Monisms, he sees reality as composed of a multiplicity of spiritual units or "selves", of which God is the "Absolute Self", and including groups and communities in so far as they constitute spiritual units. His description of the spiritual unit brings him close to Leibnizian Monadism, while at the same time separating him from Leibniz, in that Marcel's "monads" are in constant communication.

In his important article on _Evaluation tragique_ (1) Marcel describes the unit of reality as "une certaine unité à la fois actuelle et idéale et qui peut toujours être pensée sur le modèle d'une conscience, disons, si l'on veut, d'une unité spirituelle". (p. 70.) Such a unit may be a person, a family, a nation, etc. Further, "cette unité spirituelle pourra dans tous les cas être regardée comme une volonté qui tend vers certaines fins plus ou moins clairement représentées, qui pour le moins se veut elle-même". (p. 71.)

In short, the unit of reality is a spiritual centre, a force,

(1) Note sur _l'évaluation tragique_, Journal de Psychologie, January - March, 1926.
"will" or "cause", realising itself and actualised in Space and Time. Marcel hesitates to employ the terms "Form" or "Cause", but such indeed it is, with the important reminder that it is no mere generality or "essence" in the Platonic sense, but strictly an individual, its prototype being the person or individual consciousness. The late J.L. Stocks describes the Form or Cause in like manner. "It is certainly," he writes, "no mere particular; but its universality is not that of an essence;" adding that "most modern attempts to assert a timeless or eternal order, on which the temporal order is dependent, have failed to give adequate recognition to individuality and to its unique importance as the principle which perpetually brings novelties into the temporal process (1)." Marcel is one to whom this failure cannot be attributed.

There is involved in this rehabilitation of the spiritual unity of the self, as of the other ultimate realities of the universe, a certain "substantialism", as M. Wahl has pointed out; a reaction against the Vitalist doctrines of modern times, as represented by Nietzsche, Gide and Pirandello, against what Marcel calls their "agnosticisme logique et moral". (Ibid., p. 76.) In the article Tragique et Personnalite already referred to, he criticises the thesis of Pirandello, reproduced by A. Tilgher, of the "infinite personality", according to which "l'individu cesse d'être une (1) Time, Cause and Eternity, pp. 157-8.
réalité aux contours rigides et bien définis: il apparaît comme un polype de personnalités variées et contrastées qui se superposent, se fondent, se repoussent, s'harmonisent entre elles (1)." This reduction of the self to what is an infinite succession of states marks, in Marcel's view, the ruin of personality:

Par delà le romantisme, c'est tout une scolastique périmée que les thèses de M. Tilgher tendent à ressusciter, et ce que je me permettrai d'appeler un substantialisme vide de tout contenu, un substantialisme sans substance... D'un mot, la scission qu'elle introduit au sein même de l'individu entre un courant vital, un "ineffable" d'une part, et des formes particulières, inadéquates de l'autre, me semble aboutir inévitablement à l'abolition même du tragique auquel on tend au fond à substituer une simple dialectique intellectuelle. (T.P. p. 40.)

In such a thesis the empiricism of Hume reaches its logical conclusion; it ends up in a new form of that Scholasticism which it set out to ruin. For Vitalism destroys "substances" only to end by substantialising the courant vital itself. It is, moreover, bound up with that "réalisme du temps" which is central to the Bergsonian position, and which leads to the negation of Transcendence, to a philosophy of pure Immanence.

Against such views Marcel rehabilitates the "substantial unity" of the self, as "Form", "Cause", "Will", and transcendent essence:

Je pense d'une part que la personne n'est pas et ne peut pas être une essence, et d'autre part qu'une métaphysique édifiée en quelque

(1) Adriano Tilghér, Studi sul teatro contemporaneo, Rome, 1923, pp. 59-60, quoted by Marcel, op. cit.
sorte à l'écart ou à l'abri des essences risque de s'évanouir comme un château de cartes (1).

Not that the self is a substance in the Scholastic sense, that is an abstract generality (and that is the sole force of the qualification in the passage quoted); rather a concrete individuality, what Marcel calls a "toi", whose content is wholly affective and which is to other selves a "presence" - a centre of spiritual energy, feeling and volition:

C'est qu'en effet l'unité d'un être, n'est probablement ni celle d'une loi ni celle d'une substance; elle est celle de ce que j'oserai appeler ici, d'un mot insolite mais indispensable - un toi: et j'entends par là quelqu'un qui ne répond pas seulement à mon appel (c'est le cas d'un dictionnaire ou d'une affiche) mais qui en tous sens dépasse, déborde les réponses qu'il adresse à l'acte par lequel je les sollicite - bien plus, quelqu'un qui entretient avec lui-même cette vivante relation, ce nourrissant dialogue faute duquel il se réduirait pour les autres comme pour soi à un thème de discours, même à un objet de notice indéfiniment morcelable en paragraphes discontinus. Les personnages de Pirandello ne sont toi pour personne. (T.P. p. 42.)

The self is but the prototype of all the spiritual units or ultimate realities which constitute the universe. These are the transcendent, timeless, space-less Essences with which life and experience are informed. As already shown, they are immanent in experience, actualised and revealed only in the spatio-temporal process from which they cannot be dissociated. They are, as Marcel says, "at once actual and

(1) Acte et Personne, Recherches Philosophiques IV, 1934-5.
ideal" (E.T. p. 70); thereby underlining, in conformity with his existential standpoint, what Dilthey calls the "immanence of order and form in the matter of our experience (1)."

This immanence replaces the Kantian dualism of form and experience. Not that the transcendent is in any way eliminated; the integrity of the transcendent and the "formal" is preserved, as witnessed by the fact, stressed in a previous discussion, that there is always a "something over" not wholly actualised or exhibited in the spatio-temporal instant of experience. Marcel's thought is fully expressed by J.L. Stocks when he declares that the Eternal and Formal is in "causal" relation with the temporal of experience.

The Eternal, the latter writes "is guaranteed as standing in a causal or functional relation with the temporal. It is formally definable in general terms as that higher level of being for the realisation of which time and the time-process provide the means and the necessary vehicle, as that by which they are justified, that in which they are perfected (2)."

It is precisely this insistence on the immanence of Being in experience and in the temporal process, the

(1) Quoted by Boucher, K.W.F. Solger, p. 237. Cf. de Corte: "...la permanence ontologique dont il est ici question demeure investie dans un donné psychologique qu'elle polarise."
(2) Op. cit., p. 66.)
recognition that Being is only to be grasped within the actual and concrete of such experience, which serves to differentiate the philosophy of Marcel from that of his French contemporaries, such as M. Louis Lavelle. In a general way, Marcel’s definition of the self as Cause or Will brings him into line with French Spiritualism. Like Maine de Biran, Lavelle conceives the essence of the self as spontaneity and will, revealed in the immediate self-awareness of the acting subject; Being as "Pure Act" (the analogy between Lavelle’s philosophy and Gentile’s doctrine of the "Pure Act" is obvious). Similarly, he insists that the "being" of self can be recaptured only by a recovery of the present, in which alone it becomes a "présence totale" to self. In developing this existential thesis, however, Lavelle’s theory takes quite a different direction. According to him, only the present exists; past and future exist only in so far as they participate, by memory or by anticipation, in the present. In other words, past and future lose all reality, and Time is deprived of its value; the actual, the concrete is eliminated and we are left with a doctrine of the Absolute; Time is, as it were, absorbed into the Eternal and dissolved in it. The very expression – "présence totale" indicates the divergence of viewpoint. It is much the same point that M. E. Levinas fastens upon in his excellent review of Lavelle’s book, La Présence totale (1). He is quite

(1) Recherches Philosophiques IV, 1934-5. The influence of Malebranche, it may be said, is very apparent in Lavelle.
justified in declaring that the author ends by emerging completely from Time into the order of Eternity, in short, the realm of the possible and the ideal.

Marcel, on the contrary, maintains the irreducible character of Time; his is a philosophy of the actual and the concrete. For him, past and future, however deep the existential experience, preserve a reality of which they cannot be robbed. His "present", in whose recovery memory and anticipation play a similar role, remains the point of intersection between Time and Eternity, the actual and the possible. Being, although fully present to the feeling subject, is never wholly present to such a point that the self is, as it were, detached from spatio-temporal limits. Marcel’s philosophy is opposed to that of Lavelle, as is "plénitude" to "totalité".

The source of Lavelle’s philosophy is French Spiritualism, and like it it results, or would ultimately result, in a mysticism or a doctrine of "contemplation" and absorption in the Absolute. (From this point of view, Ravaisson is the natural and logical outcome of Maine de Biran). Spiritualism, like most other Idealisms, ends up in a depreciation of the spatio-temporal, which it is precisely the aim of Existentialism to avoid. It is this which accounts for the "optimism" of Lavelle’s philosophy, as M. Levinas calls it, in contrast with the "pessimism" of the Germans; of Marcel too, if by "pessimism" is meant fidelity to the real conditions of
experience and human life. Marcel preserves, together with the integrity of the Eternal Order, the reality of Time and therefore of despair; he will not misconstrue the "indigence ontologique" of the human mind. For, as he sees it, only this "indigence" gives value to plenitude; only despair gives value to hope. His philosophy, like Pascal's, recognises both the "misère" and the "grandeur" and, in the presence of both, the necessary condition of a truly religious evaluation of man's position in the universe.

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Given the above definition of realities as centres of spiritual energy, there arises the problem of the nature and status of matter and body. We must bear in mind, to begin with, that, for Marcel, the body is itself sensation - I am my body. At the root of the experience of self is no Cartesian duality of soul and body, but a unity, implicated in the initial fact of "incarnation". By virtue of this unity, the body constitutes a "médiateur absolu" on the one hand, permitting direct participation in the real. On the other hand, as an instrument, it is the centre of the various activities of "having" and of "objectification". It would seem then that the body, and matter in general, have no strictly autonomous status, but serve rather to define the condition of man as a created being with its accompanying
"indigence ontologique". A view which is borne out by the 

description of Space and Time as mere "modes de l'absence".

In other words, body and matter have meaning solely in 

relation to modes of apprehending the real. The ideal state 
of Being is that "super-consciousness" wherein reality is 

wholly permeable and transparent to thought; an ideal limit, 

but one which the subject approaches in proportion as he 

exploits the depths of spatio-temporal experience, and 

transcends Objectivity in Existence, and thus, by an act of 

"fidelity", secures the "presence". In contrast is the 

"objective" mode of thought, which, using Space and Time as 

agents of dispersion, renders the reality "absent", committing 

thereby the sin of "treason". Between these two extremes 
of "fidelity" and treason, of "presence" and "absence" is an 
infinite scale of participation; and therein the spatio-

temporal condition, either as "modes de l'absence" or as 

means of securing the "presence", play the role that body 

and matter play in a more naive mysticism.

Such a view of the material and the bodily, however it 

may appear, does not in any way destroy their positive 

character. Rather, by the transference of the notion from 

the sphere of gross objectivity to the inner existential 
sphere (1), this positive nature and value is enhanced. "We 

(1) "L'orphisme rilkien nous livre ici un de ses plus purs secrets: la pesanteur n'est pas dans les choses, elle est 
en nous. Il faut nous en libérer, comme on secoue un joug 
trop longtemps toléré, pour accéder à la réalité des choses 
qui est candeur, et pour participer en notre être même à cette 
innocence immarcescible." (H.V. p. 357.)"
are confronted with an essentially positive theory of evil in terms of "treason" and "absence", the betrayal of the life of the Spirit. A conception in complete keeping with the philosophy of Existence, for which the ultimate factor in experience is the mode of approach to reality. M. de Corte, speaking of the difficulty of determining the status of "treason" in Marcel's philosophy, concludes that the author is still the prey of Idealism. But the danger which besets Idealism and error into which it so often runs is the denial of the positive character of evil, and incidentally of the material, and their conversion into illusions. Marcel's philosophy neither runs this risk nor falls into this error. The material, of which spatio-temporal limits are so to speak the spiritual expression, although capable of being transcended, remains the irradicable datum of human existence. And the fact of evil, which is bound up with it, is at the hard core of human experience. Marcel is voicing the inner intuition of the Christian religion, which places evil within mind itself, having its centre in the very spirituality of the creature.

None the less, besides this inner spiritual significance, which is the essential one, besides its "ontological" status, matter has, in his philosophy, a very definite physical status. Given a universe of realities, which are in their ultimate essence units of spiritual energy, matter appears what Bergson terms "degraded energy". Marcel's universe, as suggested before, is the universe of contemporary science, of the new
"physics of energy" which has cast aside the outworn dualism of mind and matter and explains reality in terms of a universal "energy" of infinitely varying degrees.

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Marcel's doctrine is a Pluralism. It contrasts with the Leibnizian Monadism in that his spiritual units, or "monads", are open to one another, in constant communication, and immediate participation. As in the universe of Claudel, there is a constant "co-naisance de nous au monde". Such immediate relationships Marcel describes as "invocations" or "appels". In these incessant, though brief communications and contacts, occult phenomena play a large part. As already described, telepathy, premonition, suggestion are all instruments of such supra-normal participations. We may quote here a passage from the *Journal*:

J'ai entrevu aujourd'hui, par cette claire et merveilleuse journée de printemps, que les notions de la science dite "occulte" contre lesquelles la "raison" affecte de se révolter, sont en réalité à la racine de nos expériences les plus ordinaires... les plus indiscutées: l'expérience sensible, l'expérience volontaire, l'expérience mnémonique. Que la volonté "agisse" comme suggestion, disons suggestion magique, qui en douterait? et les corps ne sont-ils pas, je ne dirai pas des apparences, mais des apparitions, des matérialisations? Et enfin l'expérience mnémonique n'implique-t-elle pas la negation effective et réelle du temps? Tout cela est trop clair. Trop clair pour le demi-jour de notre psychologie.

*(J.M. pp. 129-30.)*
Such a passage reinforces what has already been said about the "personnalisme magique" of Marcel. We might apply to Marcel the term Berdyaev applies to Dostoiewski, when he calls him a "pneumatologist" rather than a psychologist. His description of Dostoiewski's novels is equally applicable to Marcel's dramas, indeed to the whole universe as his philosophy conceives it: "Beneath common life there was always hidden an unconscious world... (mysterious bonds between characters hidden in their unconscious life)... there is nothing contingent in their relationship, no place for the accidents of an empirical realism: it seems as though the meeting of these beings were ordained from all eternity by a higher will, that they are branded with the mark of a fate that must be fulfilled (1)."

In conclusion, a universe of spiritual centres "energising" in Space-Time; all so many "persons", linked by mysterious bonds, communicating in sudden mystical participations; a dynamism of living centres of energy; on its physical side, resembling the universe of a Whitehead and the contemporary physicists (2); on its spiritual side not unlike the universe of William James. A Pluralistic Personalism may aptly describe it.

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(2) Described by Professor D. Emmet as "a maze of interrelated processes which can only be seen through the medium of minds which are themselves immersed in the process." (The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking, London, Macmillan, 1945, p. 217.)
In his last two works, Marcel has clarified further his conception of the pluralistic universe and universe of personal relations in a series of highly detailed phenomenological investigations (1). They serve to fill in the detail of our sketch and are necessary for the comprehension of the final orientation of his thought.

In his introduction to *Du Refus à l'Invocation*, Marcel has attempted to show how the Idealism of a Léon Brunschvicg leads to a veritable philosophy of depersonalisation. Quoting from the communication to the Union pour la vérité already mentioned, he shows how such an Idealism substitutes for a world of persons a "sujet dépersonnalisé", namely that "conscience intellectuelle" of his which is nothing but "la monade, conçue comme subjectivité infinie de la réflexion". (R.I. p. 10.)

What is this philosophy but a philosophy of "thought in general"? And what does it signify but a radical failure to take into account and to make room for the experience of personality and communion? A thought, or consciousness, so emptied of individual content and figure cannot be the basis of an "authentic spiritual communion", whose character is the paradox of unity within multiplicity:

> En réalité, il n'y a pas de communauté véritable dans un cas de ce genre, et cela pour cette

(1) *L'Être incarné; Appartenance et Disponibilité; Ebauche d'une philosophie concrète; Sur l'Être en situation; Le Transcendant comme métaproblématique. (Du Refus à l'Invocation; Moi et autrui; Le Mystère familial. (Homo Viator;)*
simple raison qu'on n'est là en présence d'aucune pluralité véritable, d'aucune distinction reconnue comme telle. (Ibid., p. 13.)

What, indeed, characterises the religious consciousness as opposed to this intellectual consciousness, detached from the "concrete substructures" of experience, is the apprehension of a certain "universal existent", a plural world of Being, experienced as the "sommation de l'Etre à l'âme qu'il investit". (Ibid., p. 16.) It is in the form of a pluralistic Realism, if we may so call it, that Marcel's philosophy, as opposed to a subjective Idealism, develops its most characteristic features:

Pour moi, comme pour M. Maurice Blondel, la pensée pensante ne se constitue que par une sorte de ravitaillement incessant qu'assure sa perpétuelle communication avec l'Etre même. (Ibid., p. 22.)

The primary affirmation of a "concrete philosophy", a "philosophy of participation" is a negation - the negation of the Schopenhauerian thesis that the world is my representation: "je ne suis au monde que pour autant que celui-ci n'est pas une représentation, pour autant, dirai-je, qu'il m'informe." (Ibid., p. 44.)

The elucidation of the "engagement" implicit in immediate experience starts from the central "mystery" of self-consciousness. But this theme is taken up anew from the point of view of personal relationships. This is the characteristic manner of Marcel's dialectic, which develops, so to speak, musically, by intermingling and repetition of themes on various planes and with infinite variations:
Au départ de cette investigation, il nous faudra placer un indubitable, non pas logique ou rationnel, mais existentiel; si l'existence n'est pas à l'origine, elle ne sera nulle part; il n'y a pas, je pense, de passage à l'existence qui ne soit escamotage ou tricherie. (Ibid., p. 25.)

Marcel rejects as valueless for a "concrete philosophy" and for Ontology the Cartesian Cogito which posits as the condition of self-consciousness the substruction of the self from the real world. Valueless in that the contact with reality and existence cannot be regained by subsequent inference:

Ce que je n'ai pas cessé de vouloir marquer le plus fortement possible, c'est qu'une philosophie qui part du cogito, c'est-à-dire du non-inséré, ou même de la non-insertion en tant qu'acte, risque de ne pouvoir jamais rejoindre l'être. (Ibid., p. 90.)

Valueless, too, in that it distorts the primitive datum or "mystery" of experience, which is that of "situation" or "engagement":

Je dirai de ce point de vue qu'il ne saurait y avoir selon moi de philosophie concrète sans une tension continuellement renouvelée et proprement créatrice entre le Je et les profondeurs de l'être en quoi et par quoi nous sommes, ou encore sans une réflexion aussi stricte, aussi rigoureuse que possible, s'exerçant sur l'expérience la plus intensément vécue. (Ibid., p. 89.)

The implications of the ego sum of self-consciousness are all-important. For they point the way to transcendence. Self-consciousness is essentially "intentional" in character, containing a reference to a transcendent order of being and other selves which at one and the same time solicit and command my participation:
Si l'affirmation j'existe peut être retenue, c'est dans son unité indécomposable, en tant qu'elle traduit d'une façon non seulement libre, mais assez infidèle, une donnée initiale qui est non pas je pense, non pas même je vis, mais j'éprouve. (Ibid., p. 25.)

Assurément je puis - par un acte d'abstraction délibéré - me saisir comme pur sentant; je puis même à partir de là conclure que je suis, à la façon cartésienne. Mais lorsque je dis: j'existe, je vise incontestablement quelque chose de plus; je vise obscurément ce fait que je ne suis pas seulement pour moi, mais que je me manifeste; - Il vaudrait mieux dire que je suis manifesté; le préfixe ex, dans exister, en tant qu'il traduit un mouvement vers l'extérieur, et comme une tendance centrifuge, est ici de la plus grande importance. J'existe: cela veut dire j'ai de quoi me faire connaître ou reconnaître soit par autrui, soit par moi-même en tant que j'affecte pour moi une altérité d'emprunt; et tout ceci n'est pas séparable du fait qu'"il y a mon corps". (Ibid., p. 27.)

The fact that Being is in situation is, moreover, determined by the primitive body-self unity - "l'être incarne", the fundamental mystery which eludes the process of reflexion.

This fundamental situation of my body is indeed the manifestation of the nexus which binds me to the universe, "nexus de ma présence au monde, mon corps n'étant que ce nexus rendu manifeste". (Ibid., p. 32.) For it is by virtue of my incarnation in a body that I participate in other existences: "mon corps est le repère par rapport auquel se posent pour moi les existants, et, ajouterai-je, s'établit la démarcation entre existence et non-existence"; and according as I treat my body as mine or, disrupting the unity, transform it into an object, my participation is or is not realised.
In short, the fundamental situation of existence is the "engagement" by virtue of the body-self unity in a world of things and selves which transcend the self and whose presence is conditional on the maintenance of the bodily presence. And this situation is what is meant by transcendence. "Le propre de l'acte de transcendance pris dans son ampleur est d'être orienté; en langage phénoménologique, disons qu'il comporte une intentionnalité," the latter definable as "une participation à une réalité qui me déborde et m'enveloppe, sans que pourtant en aucune manière je puisse la traiter comme extérieure à ce que je suis." (Ibid., p. 188.)

The transcendence manifest in this situation is bound up with the spatial structure of the latter. Being-in-situation (l'être-en-situation) is placed at the "jonction de l'extériorité et de l'intérieurité." (Ibid., p. 113.) The définition of the spatial location of a place is made in terms of other points in space which serve as "points de repère". Now the very fact that these latter points, external to the place in question, must enter into the definition of the latter, is the formulated expression of a qualitative sense of direction at the heart of all spatial situations:

Un lieu déterminé se situe par rapport à des repères qui lui sont extérieurs: oui, sans doute, mais il faut ajouter que ces repères, ces coordonnées entrent dans l'énoncé grâce auquel ce site se précise. Ici l'emploi du pronominal suffit en vérité à constituer ce qu'on me permettra d'appeler un emplacement pour la réflexion ou comme un dedans virtuel. (Ibid.)

What characterises spatial situation is precisely its
qualitative essence, as opposed to mere local delimitation in the world of objects. The prepositions or prepositional phrases "between", "above", etc., express, when their implications are analysed, this qualitative content:

Une clairière entre des arbres, une vallée entre des montagnes; vivre dans cette clairière, dans cette vallée, c'est à n'en pas douter se trouver dans une situation, ou même à un carrefour de situations dont le mot entre, malgré les apparences, nous présente déjà un schéme, sinon dynamique, tout au moins pré-dynamique. (Ibid., p. 114.)

Therefore:

Dans tous les cas de ce genre, il convient d'être méthodiquement en garde contre l'abstraction stérilisante qui consiste à traiter la place comme simple détermination spatiale, et de reconnaître comment elle devient situation qualifiée. (Ibid., pp. 114-15.)

Spatial situation is then by this qualitative sense of direction and purpose inseparable from a certain finality and intentionality:

Mais, d'autre part, un hôtel ne peut être pensé indépendamment d'une certaine finalité; il est destiné à recevoir des voyageurs. Quand je dis que celui-ci est mal situé, je veux dire que ceux qui y habitent sont exposés de par sa situation dans l'espace précisément à être incommodés par des bruits ou des odeurs universellement considérés comme désagréables. (Ibid., p. 116.)

This intentionality is well expressed in French by the reflexive pronoun in the verb se situer. (Cf. Ibid., p. 113.)

In short, it manifests transcendence, and this it does precisely because no situation in space is mere local determination but is the situation of and for an existing
subject. Being-in-situation may, as transcendence and intentionality, be defined as Being "exposed to". "D'une façon générale, nous sommes en droit de dire que du moment où l'on est dans l'ordre du vivant, être situé, c'est être exposé à..." (Ibid., p. 117.) It is essentially "permeable" or "open":

Lorsque je réfléchis sur le fait que j'occupe une certaine place dans le monde, lorsque je m'applique à mettre à nu ce que recouvre mon écœitén, je suis conduit à reconnaître que ma condition de vivant fait de moi un être non seulement soumis, comme cela va de soi, à des déterminismes objectivement repérables, mais encore exposé, ou, si l'on veut, ouvert à une réalité autre avec laquelle j'entre en quelque sorte en commerce. (Ibid., p. 119.)

The relation of the self to his body, which is the primitive écœité, is itself spatial direction, transcendence and "openness".

To conclude on this first point, "the essence of man is to be in situation", (Ibid. p. 113): and this being-in-situation expresses "beyond the opposition of the subject and the object", beyond all dualism, a cardinal unity of self with body and, through the "absolute mediator" of the body, with things and others. It is not located but exposed, participant, intentionally directed in the sense of transcendence. It expresses, in short, that "fundamental cohesion" which Idealism has disrupted.
In a series of important passages Marcel elucidates the character of the relation which binds the self with reality and the consciousness with other consciousnesses. This he does by way of a phenomenological analysis of the phenomenon of "reception" and the act of "receiving"; for, he declares, his whole philosophy is bound up with the recognition of the "priorité métaphysique du sentir, du je sens". (Ibid., p. 43.)

Generally speaking, receptivity may be understood as a phenomenon which at one limit is mere passivity (pâtir), at the other activity and self-production:

En suivant cette ligne de pensée, on sera amené à reconnaître que le terme de réceptivité s'applique en réalité à une sorte de clavier disposé entre des limites fort éloignées l'une de l'autre. L'une serait le pâtir, auquel je me référerais en parlant de l'empreinte reçue par une cire molle; l'autre serait en réalité un don, et même en dernière analyse un don de soi: celui qui est impliqué dans l'acte d'hospitalité. (Ibid., p. 123.)

But closer analysis shows that reception cannot be equated with pure passivity. This is seen in sensation itself where there is presupposed the interiority of a consciousness whose active reception of the affective phenomena constitutes sensation:

Si nous réfléchissons profondément aux implications d'un donné quelconque - du fait d'être donné, "des Gegebenseyms," - nous voyons bien que l'extériorité qui caractérise ce rapport, en admettant que c'en soit un, suppose une intérieurité essentielle, c'est-à-dire la conscience elle-même. (Ibid., p. 38.)

On this point the Sensationalism of Condillac is easily refutable:
489.

Certes, je ne suis, ou du moins je ne me saisis comme étant - qu'à condition de sentir; et l'on peut admettre aussi que sentir, c'est recevoir; mais il faudra aussitôt spécifier que recevoir, ici, c'est m'ouvrir, et par conséquent me donner; bien plutôt que ce n'est subir une action extérieure. (Ibid., p. 123.)

In actual fact, then, reception is essentially intentional in character: it presupposes an active and willing movement of the mind or self towards the reality it admits into participation with itself and whose presence it aspires to as an end. "Je poserai en principe qu'on ne peut parler de réception et, par conséquent, de réceptivité qu'en fonction d'une certaine pré-affectation ou pré-ordination." (Ibid., p. 120.) It may be described as an act of "hospitality" or admission to the "chez soi" or "zone qualifiée" which constitutes the self and its spatial "ambiance" or "area" (Marcel employs the English term). "Recevoir c'est admettre ou accueillir chez soi quelqu'un du dehors." (Ibid., p. 41.) "S'il en est ainsi, nous devrons dire que recevoir, c'est introduire l'autre, l'étranger, dans cette zone qualifiée et l'admettre en quelque sorte à y participer." (Ibid., p. 42.) Reception is, then, equivalent to a "don de soi" whereby the reality of selves and things is invited to participate in the zone or "plenitude" of the self's immediacy, which is his spatio-temporal subjectivity and which the guest is invited to share:

Il ne s'agit pas en effet ici de combler un vide avec une présence étrangère, mais de faire participer l'autre à une certaine
réalité, à une certaine plénitude. Donner l'hospitalité, c'est vraiment communiquer à autrui quelque chose de soi. (Ibid., p. 123.)

This is sufficient to characterise the intricate type of relationships which selves entertain in the personal universe: a type of "reception" which is both a process of receiving and a process of giving, a "call" and a "response", and which is the condition as well as the medium of self-realisation and self-creation. It is most easily grasped in the phenomenon of artistic creation, where we see at its clearest the "mystère initial et en son tréfonds impénétrable de la 'naissance au réel'", (Ibid.), that is the junction and union of passivity and activity, of what is received from without and what is given from within:

L'artiste s'appradait à lui-même alimenté par cela même qu'il tente d'incarner; en lui se réalise ainsi à la limite l'identification du recevoir et du donner...monde intermédiaire entre le clos et l'ouvert, entre l'avoir et l'être, et dont mon corps apparaîtrait nécessairement comme le symbole ou le noyau matérielisé. (Ibid., p. 124.)

The structure of the universe of personal relationships can be grasped only by analysing the content of what Marcel has called the "area". The area, if we grasp his meaning, is the spatio-temporal locus of the self's immediacy: the point where transcendence and immanence meet in the core of self-hood, where the transcendent being energises, is realised and made manifest in the body-self datum of immediate experience.

Marcel begins to analyse this content by way of a discussion of the meaning of "s'appartenir", "la réalité"
concrète qui m'unit à moi-même'. (Ibid., p. 59) He finds that such a relation is unthinkable without a "duality":

Si, par je n'appartiens, j'entends je suis comptable de moi-même - et cette identification ne se laisse pas effectuer sans un glissement appréciable de la pensée, - je suis amené à penser que tout se passe comme si j'étais deux, comme si j'étais par exemple à la fois laîné et le cadet de moi-même. (J'imagine ici deux frères orphelins dont l'un aurait la charge de l'autre.) (Ibid., p. 60).

Of course, this "duality" must not be thought of as a dualism, as the relation of myself to a self treated as a "he" or as an object, but as a type of relation where, within the duality, a superior unity is incarnated. None the less, the relation of the "I" to the "myself" is unthinkable apart from this "dymorphisme de base", "un dymorphisme de base, qu'il ne faut d'ailleurs pas substantialiser, mais comprendre bien plutôt dans sa valeur fonctionnelle." (Ibid., p. 65) In a word, the datum of self-consciousness is revelatory of a transcendent: the self is a "dyadic relation" with respect to an essential self which transcends the self of consciousness.

This dyadic structure is well brought out if we consider the type of consciousness of the "anarchist". The anarchist is the individual who denies this "duality", this transcendent self within him; who declares he "belongs" to nothing, who recognises responsibility to nothing, not even to himself:
Il semble que la formule dans la bouche de l'anarchiste ait une portée exclusivement négative; elle signifie: je n'appartiens à personne, nul individu, nulle communauté n'a le moindre droit sur moi. Ici, dire moi, c'est dire en vérité personne autre; le contenu moi se détermine par cette exclusion et non point autrement. (Ibid., pp. 61-2.)

If and when he affirms "je n'appartiens", then "je n'appartiens est une affirmation qui se détruit elle-même, parce que je n'est plus que la négation de tout contenu saisissable en général -" (Ibid., pp. 63-4.) "D'où à l'intérieur même de sa pensée, une dualité qui ne saurait être résolue puisqu'elle n'est même pas appréhendée." (Ibid., p. 62.)

Moreover, the anarchist is and must be the prey of a temporal "instantanéisme". For, by his refusal to recognise a transcendent essence of self, he thereby denies the value of past and future, whose determination of the present is the condition of that transcendent self's realisation. He is the prey of momentary impulse and caprice. At the extreme limit, if we could imagine an ideal, "pure" anarchist, he would be without self-consciousness. And therein lies the point of contact between self-consciousness and the moral conscience:

Si nous imaginons un être entièrement livré à ses impulsions et à ses caprices, et ne vivant que dans l'instant, il ne semble pas que nous puissions lui appliquer cette distinction sauf d'une façon théorique ou nominale; il se peut d'ailleurs - et ce serait à examiner - que ce ne soit là qu'un cas-limite et qui se situerait à la frontière de l'humain: le cas d'un être dépourvu de toute conscience. Peut-être saisirions-nous ici la signification profonde de ce mot de conscience, peut-être discernons-
The anarchist, the extreme of individualism, is the manifestation of an extreme "self-deification": "Au centre d'un anarchisme conséquent, on trouve une déification de soi qui le plus souvent ne s'avoue point." (Ibid., p. 62.) In him we see the logical aboutissement of a philosophy of "autonomy":

Le principe législateur ou nomothétique ne se confond en réalité que verbalement avec le moi ou le soi dont il semble qu'on veuille proclamer l'indépendance. (Ibid., p. 64.)

The principle of "autonomy" exalted by Kant, experienced by a self which, as we have said previously, seems to be outside time and therefore outside the sphere where ends and purposes may be realised, is perhaps, in Marcel's view, at the root of this type of arrogant individualism and "anthropocentrisme":

On ne le dira, je crois, jamais trop fortement, la révolution copernicienne accomplie par Kant risquait de dégenerer et a dégénéré en fait chez beaucoup d'esprits en un anthropocentrisme du second degré qui ne présentait pas l'ingénuité de l'anthropocentrisme traditionnel, et où l'orgueil de la raison ne trouve pas son contrepoids dans l'affirmation théocentrique de la souveraineté divine. (Ibid., p. 45.)

But, and here Marcel has noted, indeed, a paradox which never fails to strike the onlooker, so powerful is the urge to transcendence even in the most subjective of individualists, the very failure to recognise a transcendent self endowed with deeply felt ends and aims leaves such a void that the individual is obliged to create a substitute in the form of purely abstract revolutionary ideals of truth, justice and humanity - he becomes the slave of ideology:
Mai par là le sens du je m'appartiens se trouvera radicalement transformé; il sera tout près de passer dans son contraire, dans "je ne m'appartiens pas", j'appartiens par exemple à telle idée (à la justice, à la vérité, etc.). (Ibid., p. 63.)

To return to the main topic of the dyad. The term employed serves to stress that the relationship is one of a duality within a unity: "... ne devra-t-on pas dire que ce dyrmorphisme présuppose nécessairement une unité qui le rend possible?" (Ibid., p. 65.) It is a type of primal relationship or "parenté", in this not differing, as we shall see, from the relationship of self to other selves whose unity and equilibrium derive from a sentiment of charity uniting the members in loving acceptance of an authority which makes no oppressive claim - as between the "âne" and "cadet" of a family:

Un équilibre stable est ici réalisé pour autant: 1° que la distinction du cadet et de l'âne est effective, c'est-à-dire que l'âne assume une autorité; 2° que cette autorité est reconnue par le cadet. (Ibid., p. 61.)

In short, what we have is a unity within multiplicity, or multiplicity within unity.

Thereby we may perceive that the content of the "cité-cellule" located in the area of the self's immediacy is not yet fully analysed or exhausted. For the self is there in relation not only with self but with other selves:

... il est d'ailleurs possible que cette relation puisse être regardée comme pluralisable, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'existe pas de rapport familial ou humain qui ne puisse être reconnu sous une forme transposée à l'intérieur de la cité-cellule que je constitue avec moi-même. (Ibid., p. 64.)
The self's immediacy is, indeed, a "city-cell" wherein is located a plurality of persons bound in an initial unity. With the self others are also given in a "présence globale". We have already discussed the implications of the statement made by the child offering flowers: "C'est moi qui les ai cueillies," to show how there is implied therein not only the positing of a self but, as the necessary accompaniment, and even condition of this, the positing of an "other" or "others" claimed as "witnesses":

On ne saurait, je crois, trop insister sur la présence de l'autre, ou plus exactement des autres, qui est impliquée dans cette affirmation: c'est moi qui... Il y a, d'une part, les exclus auxquels tu dois te garder de penser, il y a, d'autre part, ce toi auquel l'enfant s'adresse et qu'il prend à témoin. (H.V. p. 16.)

In the self-immediacy we encounter a phenomenon of "intersubjectivity". To posit the self is simply to "confer an accent" on some particular aspect of this global plural realm:

Si cette analyse est exacte dans son ensemble, il faudra voir dans ce que j'appelle moi, non pas du tout une réalité isolable, que ce soit un élément ou un principe, mais un accent que je confère, non pas, bien entendu, à mon expérience dans sa totalité, mais à telle portion ou tel aspect de cette expérience que j'entends sauvegarder particulièrement contre telle atteinte ou telle infraction possible. (Ibid., pp. 18-19.)

Any final localisation of the self is false and deceptive. It is impossible except in objective thought to assign to it precise frontiers: "C'est en ce sens qu'on a souvent, et à juste titre, fait ressortir l'impossibilité qu'il y a à assigner à ce moi des frontières précises." (Ibid., p. 19.)
In that deceptive localisation is one of the sources of "dread" as "self-encumberment" — born of the "contradiction entre le tout que j'aspire à posséder, à m'annexer, ou même, si absurde que ce soit, à monopoliser — et la conscience obscure de ce rien, de ce néant que je suis malgré tout". (Ibid., p. 20.) And this explains the impossibility of answering the question: "who am I?" For I am at one and the same time a "plénitude" and a "néant". I am only by virtue of the fact that I am given with what is, in a sense, not me and yet is me; that is a transcendent reality of myself and other selves:

...car, encore une fois, je ne peux rien affirmer de moi-même qui soit authentiquement moi-même; rien non plus qui soit permanent, rien qui soit à l'abri de la critique et de la dureté. D'où ce besoin éperdu de la confirmation par le dehors, par l'autre, ce paradoxe en vertu duquel c'est de l'autre et de lui seul qu'en fin de compte le moi le plus centré sur lui-même attend son investiture. (Ibid., p. 20.)

Le meilleur de moi ne m'appartient pas, je n'en suis aucunement propriétaire, mais seulement dépositaire. (Ibid., p. 23.)

Marcel himself quotes as an illustration of this intersubjective communication of selves a passage from his play: Un Quatuor en Fa dièse, where by the intermediary of music the two principal characters, Claire and Roger, come to understand the character of their relationship and to a reconciliation. Roger is Claire's second husband, brother of Stéphane, her first husband, whom she had divorced for infidelity. At the moment of illumination procured by the music they both suddenly grasp that they are linked by this
common communion with Stéphane, and Claire in particular that she loves Roger not only as himself but as his brother:

C. — Toi-même...lui-même... Où commence une personnalité? c'était bien toi tout de même; ne crois-tu pas que chacun de nous se prolonge dans tout ce qu'il suscite?
R. — Il y a comme une douceur dans cette pensée.
C. — Songe: c'était bien toi malgré tout.
R. — Et pourtant c'était lui... (R.I. p. 52,)

It must, of course, be stressed that this theory of the self is the contrary of a mere indeterminism and, above all, of a Monism: we know and are conscious of our self and other selves as multiple, individual "persons" within the unity or intersubjectivity. But we are in the presence of a "mystery", for this knowledge is one with the experience of being. I am and the others are, and in being myself I know it. What we cannot answer is: "who or what am I;" for this disrupts the content of experience and degrades the "mystery" into a "problem". But nothing is further from Marcel's view than to interpret the "intersubjectivity" as a sort of world Geist.

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We turn now to examine within the field of existence and self-realisation the modes and conditions of participation between selves. First and foremost is the relation of self to the essential self. In existence, the attitude of self to self is one of "disponibilité", that is a state of "charity towards myself". Such an attitude is inseparable
from the recognition of the transcendence of self to self.
The relation of self to myself in existence is not one of mere causal mechanism; it is the relation of someone who posits his self as endowed with certain ends and purposes which constitute its essence and who, by his acts, realises these ends and, so doing, this essential self:

"Disponibilité" is such a relationship: it is unthinkable except in terms of personal creation. Indeed the relationship is experienced and made manifest in the "person", who exists only by virtue of such final, purposive action aiming by fidelity at realising transcendent ends immanent within it:

Personality is, at bottom, a "work of art"; it is self-creation and, as in artistic creation, the work transcends the artist even although it is only by his action that it is

(1) It is of interest to recall that Coleridge relates self-consciousness to fidelity in the same manner. "It appears then, that even the very first step, that the initiation of the process, the becoming conscious of a conscience, partakes of the nature of an act. It is an act in and by which we take upon ourselves an allegiance, and consequently the obligation of fidelity; and this fidelity or fidelity implying the power of being unfaithful, it is the first and fundamental sense of Faith." (Aids to Reflection, p. 343.)
brought into existence:

        Comment ne pas reconnaître que la personne ne se laisse pas concevoir en dehors de l'acte par lequel elle se crée, mais en même temps que cette création se suspend en quelque manière à un ordre qui la dépasse? (Ibid., p. 31.)

Personality, therefore, manifests transcendence: it is not "something there" but a constant dépassement: the person is and cannot affirm he is except in terms of a transcendent being which he is not but brings into existence by his act:

        ...il ne semble pas à la rigueur qu'elle puisse affirmer d'elle-même: je suis. Elle se saisit bien moins comme être que comme volonté de dépasser ce que tout ensemble elle est et elle n'est pas, une actualité dans laquelle elle se sent à vrai dire engagée ou impliquée, mais qui ne la satisfait pas: qui n'est pas à la mesure de l'aspiration avec laquelle elle s'identifie. Sa devise n'est pas sum, mais sursum. (Ibid., p. 32.)

Ce que j'ai voulu dire, c'est simplement que la personne ne se réalise que dans l'acte par lequel elle tend à s'incarner (dans une œuvre, dans une action, dans l'ensemble d'une vie). (Ibid.)

Personality is, then, the expression of a relationship of self to an essential self which is transcendent to it and which is both the principle and the final cause of its activity:

        Parce qu'elle participe de la pleinitude inépuisable de l'être d'où elle émane. Là est la raison profonde pour laquelle il est impossible de penser la personne ou l'ordre personnel sans penser en même temps ce qui est au delà d'elle et de lui, une réalité supra-personnelle qui préside à toutes ses initiatives, qui est à la fois son principe et sa fin. (Ibid., pp. 32-3.)

This definition of the relationship of self to self in
existence suffices to bring out its identity with the process of self-realisation. And, as such, its inseparability from spatio-temporal process. "Disponibilité" indeed necessitates both that "patience envers soi-même" which, as we have seen, is dependent on rendering operative past and future in the present; and on the maintenance of that "distance and proximity" with regard to the self which characterises spatial presentation:

> Mais tout ceci n'est possible et ne garde même un sens que là où sont réalisées en soi et par rapport à soi à la fois la distance et la proximité qui définissent l'acte de charité pris en lui-même. (R.I. p. 66.)

Finally, such a relationship, defined as "disponibilité" and "charity towards oneself" transcends, of course, the dualism of objective experience. It is "charity" precisely because the essential self is treated as a reality which, although it transcends myself, is myself because it comes into existence only in and by my act: because I am towards it as towards something which is under my protection, a "seed which I have to bring to fruition" (Ibid.), such a type of experience as may be expressed in the form: "je suis sous ma garde ou sous ma propre tutelle." (Ibid., p. 60.)

In short, such an intricate, immediate relationship is conditional on the self's being treated as a "thou", not as an object. Such an objective treatment may be adopted with the consequent disrupting of the personal relationship of self to self. It may take two forms: either self-love or
self-hate, both of which are forms of "indisponibilité". Both attitudes convert the self into an object divorced from the self and the self's activity. Thereby, they produce an "anxiety" which is at once an effect of this loss of self-creative power and a cause of its continued loss and which results in the complete paralysis of personal effort:

Cette anxiété, c'est le souci comme rongeur, comme élément paralysant, qui vient arrêter tous les élans, toutes les initiatives généreuses. Ce qu'il faut bien voir, c'est que l'anxiété ou le souci peut se résorber dans un état d'inertie intérieure au sein duquel le monde est vécu comme stagnation, comme putréfaction. (Ibid., pp. 76-7.)

Now the personal relationship established in existence between self and self and manifest in self-realisation and "personality" has for its condition, even more than its accompaniment, communion with "others". For if the "person" is created by an activity which realises a transcendent self-acting as its "principle and its end" by virtue of the primitive "intersubjectivity", the final cause of such activity is a transcendent self in communion with other selves and given with it. So that the very condition of personal destiny is not only self-creation and self-realisation but through and by them the realisation of and participation in other selves:

Ma liberté ne peut en vérité, nous l'avons vu déjà, s'affirmer jusqu'au bout, qu'en épousant ma destinée personnelle, bien loin de prétendre la survoler. Mais d'autre part, cette destinée elle-même ne se creuse, ne s'approfondit qu'à condition de s'ouvrir aux autres. (Ibid., p. 46.)
...pour la pensée chrétienne, il ne saurait y avoir de salut individuel au sens privatif et atomique de ce mot. (Ibid., p. 67.)

Thus "disponibilité" is above all a state where the self is viewed or experienced not only as the "germ" of the individual personality but as "un point d'affleurement possible du spirituel ou même du divin dans le monde". (Ibid., p. 66.)

Existence, then, is the field of a nexus of personal relationships and participations whose individual and particular realisations are mutually interdependent. The process of self-creation is at one and the same time a process of other-creation, if we may use such a term.

Marcel institutes several phenomenological investigations bearing upon the relation of self to others in existence, all of which lead to the unveiling of a similar mode of presentation.

First, the phenomenon of "appartenance". In what way may a self be said to "belong" to another self. When the affirmation is made: "je m'appartiens," the meaning is "je t'ouvre un crédit illimité, tu feras de moi ce que tu voudras, je me donne à toi". It is essentially a "don de soi" or an "appel". But it is inseparable from the "réponse" which is comprised in the affirmation of the other self: "tu m'appartiens." Of course, these affirmations may be made on the plane of Objectivity, but then they constitute no longer a "call" and a "response" but serve to define the attitude of a self which gives itself as a "thing" to be disposed of. There is then no intimate relation of mutuality...
and interdependence, no gift of self, no charitable and loving acceptance. There is no "disponibilité" on either side.

A second phenomenon bearing out this structure of self-others communication is admiration. Here Marcel is supplementing Scheler's study of sympathy. Admiration is essentially transcendence: "Il est tout à fait certain que le propre de l'admiration est de nous arracher d'abord à nous-mêmes... Il y a là d'ailleurs un des fondements du réalisme." (Ibid., p. 68.) Moreover, it too manifests a similar type of mutual participation. On the one hand it is an "irruption", a "revelation" of something: "l'admiration est liée au fait que quelque chose se révèle à nous." (Ibid.) It is therefore an "appel", a call from another self. On the other hand, it is a "response" to this "appel" springing from the depths of one's being - "une réaction venue du tréfonds".

This mutual creativity of admiration is borne out by the consideration of the negative incapacity to admire. The latter has its source in a "lancinante préoccupation de soi", an "indisponibilité" or "spiritual atony" which accompanies self-absorption. For on such a self the "irruption" or the "call" has no effect and can induce no "response":

...cette irruption ne peut se produire qu'au sein d'un être qui ne forme pas avec lui-même un système clos, hermétique, dans lequel rien de neuf ne peut plus pénétrer. (Ibid.)

The subject is divorced from the other and can consider him
only in comparison with his own self: whereas the essence of admiration is to be absolute, prior to any comparison:

...l'admiration, pour autant qu'elle se laisse traduire sous forme de jugement, est précisément l'affirmation d'une supériorité non pas relative, mais absolue.

Ce n'est que par un mouvement réflexe que je peux être amené à me penser par rapport à cet absolu et à m'inquiéter de la position que j'occupe par rapport à lui. (Ibid., p. 69.)

To resume, then, the personal relationships obtained in existence are mutually interdependent: they constitute an intricate, mystical complex of "calls" and "responses" as between "I" and "thou", and "thou" and "thou". This mutual and mystical connexion of personal substances can only be broken up by the conversion of the "thou" into the "he" or "substitut de l'autre", as illustrated in the characters of Proust. Such is the price paid for man's "moral egocentrism".

The universe of personal relations is only upheld when man refuses to see in his self the "répaire de l'originalité" and experiences it rather as the focal point of mysterious presences, as essentially the realm of "dons" which are and yet are not himself; when he realises that the task set his self in this world is to assist those substances to achieve their destiny as persons and that, in so doing and only by so doing, can his own self be affirmed and it too brought to plenitude of being:

Pour mieux le comprendre, il faut faire intervenir ici la notion injustement discreditede des dons. Le meilleur de moi ne m'appartient pas, je n'en suis aucunement propriétaire,
For the individual personality can be realised only in conjunction with the realisation of other selves, by an "engagement" or "fidelity" towards a transcendent which englobes the self and others:

Je m'affirme comme personne dans la mesure où j'assume la responsabilité de ce que je fais et de ce que je dis. Mais devant qui suis-je ou me reconnais-je responsable? Il faut répondre que je le suis conjointement devant moi-même et devant autrui, et que cette conjonction est précisément caractéristique de l'engagement personnel, qu'elle est la marque propre de la personne. (Ibid., p. 25.)

Responsibility is but another name for "fidelity", the instrument of self-realisation. It implies a temporal immediacy where the present assumes responsibility for past and future. But such a present instinct with responsibility contains a reference not only to past, present and future of the self but to those of all the selves who have accompanied the self in its existence. It gathers up in itself all the "appels" heard on its way, and in the sudden miraculous immediacy of the "instant" some such "call" may and does by
its insistence demand its "response" and work upon the
subject its mysterious ways for his salvation, reclaiming
and self-comprehension:

Disons encore que je tends à m'affirmer
comme personne dans la mesure où, assumant
la responsabilité de mes actes, je me
comporte comme un être réel, participant à
une certaine société réelle (et non pas
comme un rêveur qui détiendrait le singulier
pouvoir de modifier ses rêves, mais sans
avoir à se demander si cette modification se
répercute dans l'au-delà hypothétique où
existent les autres). Nous pourrions dire
encore, et du même point de vue, que je
m'affirme comme personne dans la mesure où
je crois réellement à l'existence des autres
et où cette croyance tend à informer ma
conduite. (Ibid., p. 27.)

The self is bound irrevocably in a chain: "Personne -
engagement - communauté - réalité." (Ibid.) The destiny of
the individual depends on his capacity to "give himself", to
become "disponible" or open to such "appels", "une aptitude
à se donner à ce qui se présente et à se lier par ce don,"
and in proportion as it denies and distorts this "intime
connexion entre ce qui est de moi et ce qui est de l'autre",
it loses substance and "inclines towards death". (Ibid.,
p. 29.)

So at the bottom of all self-realisation is this
intimacy with the plural universe of other selves, and this
again depends on the initial intimacy with the body:

De même qu'il est de mon essence en tant que
vivant d'être en situation, il est de l'essence
de mon corps en tant que mien d'être la
substance de l'épreuve qui est à la lettre
constitutive de moi-même, puisqu'au terme je
serai ou ne serai point. (R.I. p. 136.)
It must here be recalled that Marcel's personalism is bound up with the conviction that meta-psychical phenomena play an active role. He appeals to his own experience (he has been gifted with certain mediumistic powers as he relates; cf. R.I. p. 47-8). He believes that the present may become the focal point of presences or "appels" from past or future, transcending temporal succession, and, transcending space, from distant selves, or from beyond the grave itself. There exist such experiences, he believes, and they cannot be accounted for merely on a theory of the subconscious mind; they are essentially "invocations" and have the power to accomplish "une certaine transformation intérieure, ou encore un afflux mystérieux, une pacification ineffable". His plays abound in such experiences illustrating such transformative action, as in the play already quoted, the Quatuor en Fa dièze.

Taken as a whole, his universe is out and out personalistic; it is a drama of mysterious, sudden participations, "appels" and "réponses", of mutual and interrelated creativity.

Like all personalist philosophers, Gabriel Marcel has been much preoccupied by the problem of the family. In Le Mystère familial we have a lengthy and fascinating study
of the ontological significance of the family which illustrates admirably his personalist theories.

The family is essentially a "mystery", an example of "incarnation":

...l'acte infiniment mystérieux par lequel une essence prend corps, acte qui déjà faisait cristalliser autour de soi la méditation d'un Platon, et dont les philosophes modernes ne tendent à détourner leur attention que dans la mesure où ils ont perdu la grâce essentielle de l'intelligence, qui est celle de l'émerveillement. (H.V. p. 97.)

If I elucidate this mystery, that is my situation as member of a family, I recognise that I am linked with my family as a "response" to an "appeal":

...j'incarne la réponse au double appel que des êtres se sont jetés dans l'inconnu, et que sans s'en douter ils ont lancé au-delà d'eux-mêmes, à une puissance incompréhensible qui ne s'exprime qu'en donnant la vie. Je suis cette réponse d'abord informe, mais qui peu à peu, à mesure qu'elle s'articulera, se connaîtra elle-même comme réponse et comme jugement. (Ibid., pp. 98-9.)

I am placed within a reality which constitutes an "amont de moi-même", linked to a nexus of persons by a complex of relations both temporal and spatial:

C'en est assez cependant pour que, suivant ce fil ombilical de mes antécédents temporels, je voie se former devant moi et pourtant en arrière de ma vie un réseau indéfini qui, à la limite, serait peut-être coextensif au genre humain lui-même. (Ibid., p. 99.)

Relations which are not strictly causal but constitute veritable "occult realities":

...entre mes ascendants et moi, il doit exister une relation infiniment plus obscure et plus intime, j'ai part à eux comme ils
Here then is a primary "situation" or "engagement":

Par cet ensemble inextricable de rapports et de pressentiments se définit le mystère familial où je suis engagé par le fait même que je suis: à l'articulation d'une structure dont je ne discerne que les premiers lineaments, d'un sentiment qui module entre l'intime et le métaphysique — et du serment consenti ou refusé par lequel je suis appelé à faire mien le voeu diffus qui est comme le centre de fomentation magique de mon existence personnelle. Tel est mon site, à moi créature jetée en ce tumulte, telle est mon insertion en ce monde impénétrable. (Ibid., pp. 99-100.)

It is precisely the loss of this consciousness of "my situation" which explains the dissolution of the family in modern times. At its root there is a phenomenon of "décroyance" bound up with an individualism which has lost the "sens du sacré" and comes to see in the family relationship a mere contingency.

What has been lost is the knowledge that the family is a "value" and a "presence". A value, in that it demands an act of recognition and fidelity; a certain "fierté" conceived as "une certaine réponse jaillie du fond de moi-même à une investiture dont il s'agit pour moi de rester digne". (Ibid., p. 106.) The family is a value because elle est une hiérarchie reconnue, dans laquelle je n'ai pas seulement à m'intégrer en reconnaissant l'autorité qui s'incarne en son chef: j'y suis pris dès l'origine, j'y suis engagé, j'y ai mes racines et mon être même. (Ibid.)

Secondly, it is a presence, a personal reality transcendent yet immanent within the self's experience. And that
implies a presence in time and in space. It is a "nous archetype et privilégié, qui ne se réalise normalement que dans la vie familiale. Un nous qui n'est d'une façon générale aucunement séparable d'un chez nous", (Ibid., p.107); the latter linked with the "conscience spontanée, immédiate d'un toujours, d'une perennité vécue qui s'attache aux objets familiers parmi lesquels nous vivons..." (Ibid.) The "sens de l'habitat" is essential to the sense of the family. Without it the latter withers, but no less the possibility of any self-realisation. For, isolated from the habitus which compose the foundation of his being, the individual is removed from the beneficial action of space and time as instruments of "éternisation", or "continuance", to employ Macmurray's expression; he becomes subject to a fundamental "incoherence":

Il est manifeste au surplus que la disparition de l'habitat, ou plus exactement du foyer, est inséparable de l'évanouissement des traditions. Celles-ci sont en effet à l'homme intérieur ce que le cadre familial est à l'homme visible. On ne peut pas dire seulement qu'elles l'environnent, elles contribuent à le faire; sans elles il risque d'être le jouet des influences auxquelles le livrent les rencontres de hasard; son devenir est exposé à tous les risques de l'incohérence. (Ibid., pp. 108-9.)

There is, we have seen, a cosmic rhythm or "rythme vital" which is the spatio-temporal duration in which all realities energise. The process of despiritualisation in modern times is bound up with the acceleration of this vital rhythm which forbids the "lente sédimentation des habitus"
(Ibid., p. 109,), that "patience" which allows the past to operate in the present for realisation of self-hood:

Il existe au surplus un lien étroit entre l'accélération du rythme vital et l'apparition d'une humanité de plus en plus pauvre intérieurement, de plus en plus interchangeable. (Ibid., p. 111.)

In the large cities of modern times we find substituted for the cosmic rhythm the rhythm of the machine "non point supra, mais infra-organique". (Ibid.) That is a rhythm which is, at bottom, a discontinuity, a series of shocks, reducing the individual to a state of incoherence, where neither fidelity nor hope can come into play:

Chacun a pu constater comme une intimité peut perdre sa transparence, comment le courant qui portait deux êtres et les unissait dynamiquement peut perdre sa fluidité, si bien que les individualités qui tout à l'heure encore se sentaient fondues, enveloppées au sein d'un élément tutélaire et vivifiant, s'insularisent à présent, se heurtent en une succession de discordances instantanées dont chacune a la brutalité d'un coup. Je ne puis n'empêcher de conjecturer qu'entre l'homme et la vie, il s'est produit au cours de ces derniers siècles dans notre civilisation, un dissentiment du même ordre, et qui s'apparente aux obscures, aux organiques mésintelligences où finissent par sombrer tant d'existences conjugales. C'est ainsi que la famille s'est trouvée en fin de compte atteinte dans le double ressort de sa vitalité propre: la fidélité et l'espoirance. (Ibid., p. 113.)

Given this destruction of the vital rhythm with its slow organic development, the essential conditions of spirituality are sapped. Man becomes a prey of ennui, "lié non seulement à une inaction, mais à un démantèlement". (Ibid., p. 115.)

On the contrary, we must posit "l'existence d'un pacte, j'irai
512.

jusqu'à dire d'un lien nuptial, entre l'homme et la vie". (Ibid., p. 116.) And it is precisely in the family that this pact finds its expression.

What characterizes the family is the fact that it grows and endures in conformity with the vital rhythm, thus providing the temporal and spatio-temporal structure within which the individual may construct his self in a present instinct with memory and alive with anticipation:

C'est une union qui s'opère non pas seulement dans l'instant, mais pour durer; c'est un établissement. Une famille se fonde, elle s'édifie comme un monument, dont la pierre angulaire ne saurait être ni un instinct qu'on assouvit, ni une impulsion à laquelle on cède, un caprice auquel on s'abandonne. (Ibid., p. 117.)

Moreover, it is itself a transcendent reality, created in space and time by a long process of fidelity on the part of its members from out temporal change. And it is in the fidelity of each member, his collaboration in the creation of the family that he himself can achieve self-realisation, whose condition, as always, is the accepted presence of other selves alive, dead and yet to be born - creating his own personality within the supra-personality or community of persons related to himself by immediate and occult bonds.

And this supposes the recognition of the "caractère proprement sacramental du lien contracté". (Ibid.) It is here that marriage has its true religious significance, as something more than a natural or legal pact, as involving a responsibility of continuing the family. Marcel denies that marriage is only concluded with a view to procreation - both
marriage and procreation are complementary phases "d'une certaine histoire que chacun de nous a à vivre, et à travers laquelle il accomplit sa destinée d'être créateur". "...la collaboration active qu'il est donné à chaque être libre d'apporter à l'oeuvre universelle qui s'accomplit dans notre monde et sans doute infiniment au delà." (Ibid., p. 121.) It is a supreme example of the "attestation créatrice". In brief, the family is the instrument of "éternisation", of the edification of personality and destiny within the personal universe:

Peut-être est-on en mesure de discerner maintenant pourquoi il est vrai de dire que le mystère familial est un mystère de fidélité et d'espérance: à l'origine de la crise des institutions familiales, l'analyse découvre une méconnaissance de plus en plus profonde de ces vertus en lesquelles se consomme l'unité de notre destinée à la fois temporelle et supra-terrestre. (Ibid., p. 123.)

Its foundations are ontological, and mankind, in denying the family, cuts away his "attaches ontologiques". What it manifests is religio in the pagan sense, the primitive religious consciousness basic to all religions, and now lost to us and which even dogmatic Christianity has done much to screen from us:

Mais en contre-partie, je serais très disposé à croire qu'il existe une religio dont les païens eux-mêmes nous ont laissé d'admirables témoignages, une piété envers les morts et les dieux du foyer, qui, en deçà de toute spiritualité proprement chrétienne, assure la solidité de ce pacte entre l'homme et la vie auquel j'ai eu si souvent l'occasion de me référer... Je suis tenté de croire que c'est cette religio qu'il faut d'abord recouvrer,
et malheureusement une superstructure chrétienne, qui n'est trop souvent qu'un camouflage, peut fort bien en dissimuler l'insuffisance néfaste. (Ibid., p. 127.)

The family indeed "en tant qu'elle est la matrice de l'individualité, se situe vraiment à l'articulation du vital et du spirituel". (Ibid., p. 130.) It is nourished upon a certain "piety towards life", not understood in any racial or empirical sense, rather a piety towards those personal realities and communities of which the family is the chief, as being themselves transcendent and instruments of transcendence:

En d'autres termes, contrairement à l'illusion tenace qu'entretient l'humanisme, il y aurait lieu d'affirmer que les relations familiales, comme les choses humaines en général, ne présentent par elles-mêmes aucune consistance, aucune garantie de solidité; c'est seulement là où elles sont référencées à un ordre surhumain dont il ne nous est donné ici-bas de saisir que les indices qu'elles revêtent un caractère authentiquement sacré. (Ibid., p. 131.)

C'est qu'en vérité l'humain n'est authentiquement humain que là où il est soutenu par l'armature incorruptible du sacré: faute de cette armature, il se décompose et il périt. (Ibid., p. 132.)

For the family is

l'acte de création perpétuellement renouvelé par lequel la famille tout ensemble se maintient dans l'être et dispense à l'âme qu'elle forme et qu'elle oriente le redoutable pouvoir de l'accomplir, mais aussi, hélas! de la renier. (Ibid.)

And the structure of the family reveals with utmost clarity the conditions of mutuality which govern the personal life in its hope and aspiration towards plenitude of being:

L'espérance, disais-je, n'est pas séparable d'une expérience de communion, et en même temps du
Such a personal universe has much in common with that of Martin Buber and, in British philosophy, of John Macmurray. Marcel himself admits an influence of Hocking. (R.I. p. 46.) It has this in common with all these that the personal universe transcends the merely ethical and opens on to the religious. (Quoting Minkowski: "Le phénomène j'appartiens à ne vise aucunement les formes particulières de là vie sociale. Il n'en constitue pas moins leur base commune, et rend plausible leur existence. Comme tel, il se trouve en rapport étroit avec l'élan éthique (1)," Marcel adds: "là où Minkowski parle d'élan, je préférerais pour ma part parler de religion." (R.I. p. 129.) Indeed, Marcel's approach to religion is not unlike that of Macmurray in his Structure of religious experience, in that the approach is made by way of a philosophy of personal substances and personal relationships dependent on a mode of "being real in one's feelings". "The field of religion," writes Macmurray, "is the field of personal relations, and the datum from which religious

reflection starts is the reciprocity or mutuality of these (1)." "The religious attitude sees the relationship of the self to other selves as the centre of valuation and values everything else in relation to this... The religious activity of the self is its effort to enter into communion with the other (2)."

And this leads to a final all-important aspect of Marcel's universe of personal relations - the knowledge of a personal God and His place in this universe.

We have seen that the question "who am I", treated as the matter for a problem, admits of no answer. It is an intellectual distortion of what is a "mystery", the central ego sum. In the latter, on the contrary, the "who am I" is an expression of the primary self-consciousness in its intentional nature, or of the act whereby I posit myself as open to the other: "Le propre de l'acte de transcendance pris dans son ampleur est d'être orienté; en langage phénoménologique, disons qu'il comporte une intentionnalité." (R.I. p. 183.) It is properly a "call", admitting no "answer" (for only a problem has an "answer") but bearing within itself its own "response". And this response is precisely the transcendent revealed.

Now, if we interpret Marcel correctly, each and every subjective experience manifests the presence of the

(1) The Structure of Religious Experience, Terry Lectures at Yale University 1935, London, Faber and Faber, p. 43.
(2) Ibid., p. 47.
transcendent and the other. But each and every experience
involves the revelation of an Absolute Other, the "Absolute
Thou", or God, as the Person in whom all finite personal
relationships have their ground and being:

La transcendance de Celui que j'invoque s'affirme
par rapport à toute expérience possible, ou même
à toute supputation rationnelle qui ne serait
encore que de l'expérience anticipée et
schématisée. (Ibid., p. 189.)

The expression: transcendent "to every possible experience"
does not of course imply that God is a mere logical universal
or logical ground, rather that the Absolute Person is implicit
in all experiences, actual or possible, where the self is
given with others. God as the Absolute universal personality
is certainly no idea. If He is the universal, it is as a
"universal person to whom the self stands in universal
relation (1)." "God is not primarily apprehended as an
idea, but in life which is centred in the intention of
mutuality, as that infinite person in which our finite human
relationships have their ground and their being (2)." He is
every whit a Person, in intricate personal relationship with
the self, and manifest in the latter's personal, individual
activity, as the Absolute universal personality, the trans-
cendent Being in whom the being of the self and the selves
stands by participation, since the finite person "participe
de la plénitude inépuisable de l'être d'où elle émane".

(H.V. p. 32.)

(1) J. Macmurray, op. cit., p. 80.
(2) Ibid., p. 81.
In this recognition and affirmation of the Absolute personality as the absolute "response" to the absolute "call", the affirmation I am is replaced by the sole affirmation which can ground it and give it significance - the I am, God is of the Cartesian philosophy, which is both the affirmation of the self's fullness of being by its participation in the Divine Being and of the self's néant with respect to this Being:

Que suis-je? Toi seul en vérité me connais et me juges; douter de Toi, ce n'est pas me libérer, c'est m'anéantir. Mais ce serait douter de Toi, bien plus, ce serait Te nier que de regarder Ta réalité comme sujette à problème; puisque ces problèmes ne sont que par moi et pour moi qui les pose, et qu'ici c'est moi-même qui suis mis en question dans l'acte sans retour par lequel je m'efface et me soumets. (R.I. pp. 189-90.)

The complex relations of mutuality obtaining in this universe of selves are seen to be grounded in the primitive mutual relationship of selves to the Absolute self. This primal ontological relationship in which all personal relationships are based may be denied and broken by the process of objective thought, which would transform God into a "he" and, by breaking this primary bond, destroy the personal bonds which depend upon it, for "assurément il y a une intermittence de la conscience religieuse ou de l'expérience mystique - liée elle aussi à la structure même de la créature que je suis" (Ibid., p. 53); but in so far as the individual realises his being he can do so only inasmuch as this "refusal" is surmounted and "invocation" is restored.
It is in God that the intention inherent in the self's consciousness, and by virtue of which he transcends his self in existence, finds its ultimate "object" as a presence, perhaps "veiled" in the self's fragmentary experiences of personal life, but made fully actual in the fully developed religious consciousness which is none other than the personal consciousness become explicit. "Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne me possédais."

At that culminating point, the ethical plane is transcended, a passage secured to the plane of religious and mystical devotion. What has appeared hitherto as, epistemologically, intentionality, as, ontologically, transcendence, as, ethically, fidelity, now appears, from the highest standpoint of religion, as "invocation" and "adoration".

Mai il s'agit de savoir précisément si entre la métaphysique et la mystique, en fin de compte, il existe une frontière préciciable. Les phrases auxquelles j'ai eu recours ne décrivent nullement une expérience; elles traduisent une situation fondamentale que le philosophe doit reconnaître, quelle que soit la confession à laquelle il appartient en fait, quelle que soit sa propension personnelle ou au contraire son inaptitude à l'effusion intérieure...

Il est temps pour le métaphysicien, s'il veut sortir définitivement de l'ornière épistemologique, de comprendre que l'adoration peut et doit être pour la réflexion une terra firma sur laquelle il est tenu de prendre appui, même si, en tant qu'individualité empirique, il ne lui est donné d'y participer que dans la mesure chétive que comporte son indigence naturelle.

S'il en est ainsi, une philosophie de la transcendance ne se laissera nullement
séparer, même en droit, d'une réflexion qui s'exerce sur les modalités hiérarchisées de l'adoration et qui culmine non certes dans une théorie, mais dans une reconnaissance de la sainteté, appréhendée non comme manière d'être, mais comme donnée significante au plus pur de son intention. C'est là en effet, et là seulement que le problématicque est surmonté, et en même temps que l'imminence de mort s'annule dès cette vie en une plénitude qui est l'être même. (Ibid., pp. 190-1.)(1)

(1) On the similarity between the religious Pluralism of Marcel and the final philosophy of Maine de Biran, cf. Introduction.
CHAPTER X

PERSONALITY AND FIDELITY

For Marcel the ethical problem is merged in the metaphysical one. One sole problem interests him: in what measure the actions of the individual are expressive of the Essential Self. In Existence alone resides value; it therefore provides the sole principle of evaluation of human conduct. The purely ethical principles of evaluation in terms of "good" and "bad", in so far as these relate to "normes éthiques formulables", find no place in his system. They belong indeed to what he calls the "order of for and against" which the Existentialist seeks to transcend by a superior, tragic viewpoint which carries us beyond "good" and "evil". The Existentialism of Marcel involves a "transmutation of values" similar to that of Nietzsche.

We may take as basis of our discussion Marcel's important article Acte et Personne (1). In this paper he discusses the nature of personality in its relation to the act. The method of enquiry he employs is strictly phenomenological: "par voies et approches concrètes, aussi spécifiques que possible" (p. 155). An act, as distinct from a mere velleity or "gesture", engages the doer, the latter assuming the responsibility for it. An act is, by essence, "mon

(1) Recherches Philosophiques, IV, 1934-5.
acte", otherwise it would cease to be an act and become 
"a sort of gesticulation". It follows therefore that there 
is no such thing as an "acte gratuit":

Un d'autres termes il n'y a pas d'acte sans 
responsabilité; et il suit immédiatement 
de là que les mots acte gratuit sont en 
réalité contradictoires. (p. 153.)

Thus at the very outset Marcel puts himself in opposition 
to André Gide, whose ideal is a state of complete moral 
"disponibilité" on the part of the person, of immediate 
response to the momentary impulse. Such a state would, in 
Marcel's view, signify the destruction of personality in its 
true sense, inasmuch as the latter involves, of necessity, 
a "permanence ontologique" and therefore a certain formal 
continuity.

Finally, acts may be said to constitute a hierarchy in 
value, according to the degree in which they are "incorporated 
in the totality of what I am":

Un acte est d'autant plus acte, dirai-je, 
cu'il m'est moins possible de le répudier 
sans me renier intégralement moi-même; et 
ceci encore fait apparaître la radicale 
impossibilité de l'acte gratuit. On 
pourrait dire que plus une vie sera 
monnayée, c'est-à-dire distribuée en 
démarches discontinues, moins elle comportera 
d'actes, moins elle sera assimilable elle-
même à un acte. Inversement, moins elle 
sera monnayée, plus elle sera, au sens 
profond du terme, consacrée, plus elle 
tendra à prendre toute entière la figure 
d'un acte unique. (p. 155.)

In the light of this elucidation of the act, Marcel 
proceeds to examine the nature and status of the "person". 
He distinguishes first of all between the "person" and what he calls the "on", the anonymous individual. The person is a responsible agent; he "confronts" a certain situation, in other words "evaluates" it, and, in the act by which he reacts to the situation, assumes the responsibility for his act. The act is thus the means whereby the self realises itself as a "person":

C'est dans l'acte que se réalise le nexus par lequel la personne se conjoint à elle-même, mais il faut ajouter aussitôt qu'elle n'est pas hors de cette conjugation. Un être qui ne serait pas conjoint à lui-même, serait au sens strict aliené - et par là-même incapable d'agir. (p. 159.)

The "personne absolue", or God, is one in whom the act of "affronting" a situation and of "assuming responsibility" for his acts are identified; "qui se pose comme intégralement responsable de l'histoire." (p. 159.)

Now what exactly is the metaphysical status of the person? For the self does not constitute a person in his own right. The self does not and cannot always express in his acts his Essential Being. The activities of practical living require him to be an "or", an anonymous individual, whose acts degenerate into mere "operations", in other words "objects" indifferent to the self (1). For man is a "prey

(1) On the "person" and the "thou" cf. Kierkegaard, That Individual in The Point of View (Oxford Univ. Press, 1939). In Berdyaev too there is a similar distinction between personality, which is a "spiritual-religious" category, and the "individuum", which is a "biological" and "sociological" category. (Cf. The Origin of Russian Communism, transl. by R.M. French, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1937, pp. 216-7.)
to history"; he is liable at any moment to disperse his self and his actions over Time and Space and to lose that contact with his essential being which is the very basis of personality.

What, then, is the ontological status of the "person"?

Either it is a pure "fiction":

Peut-être au sens le plus fort n'y a-t-il pas de personne humaine et ne peut-il pas y en avoir; ce ne serait alors qu'en Dieu que la personne deviendrait réalité. Chez nous autres elle ne serait qu'un aspect qui risque toujours de dégénérer en une attitude, une anticipation palpitante mais qui à chaque pas peut se dégrader, se durcir en un déguisement, se parodier en une mascarade sacrilège. (p. 162.)

Or we must assume that the person remains

corrélatif de cet élément anonyme ou masqué qu'elle affronte et qu'en Dieu, en qui cet élément disparaît, précisément parce qu'elle émerge en pleine lumière, elle s'abolit. (p. 163.)

It is this latter solution that Marcel adopts. Personality is never entirely unaccompanied by an element of "anonymity" and "objectivity"; it is not given to the creature to realise fully the plenitude of personality; God alone, who alone is wholly His Eternal Essence, is a "personne absolue". We can know only a "scintillement existentiel". (R.I. p. 225.)

It is the very condition of our finite existence that the plane of "having" cannot be totally nor continuously transcended:

Une condamnation sans appel de l'avoir équivaudrait au fond à la plus téméraire répudiation de l'existence finie par l'être fini lui-même; celle-ci ne saurait être prononcée sans un excès d'humilité qui
But in proportion as the self transcends the "objectivity" and eliminates the "on" within him, he realises personality to a greater or less degree.

It follows from this that human personality involves a double state: it implies momentary possession and recurrent loss of Being. The drama of Existence is a drama of discontinuity. Certainly, as a spiritual unity existing beyond Space and Time, the self in its fully realised state is one with its essence. But, given the limitations of human experience, the self has only rare moments of Existence when it can realise this essential self in its acts and constitute a person; these all too brief moments of Existence are lost in a sea of "anonymous" living. Human personality involves, therefore, an additional factor not yet taken into account: the factor, as it may be termed, of edification or construction. For if personality is, in the absolute sense, a "donnée absolue", the presence of Being, human personality is something more: it is also edification and construction. In other words, it involves a continuity established and maintained between the moments of Existence over and above the recurrent losses of true personality; a continuity which may reflect something of the unity of the essential self or of the Divine Being. As we have suggested, Divine existence may also be defined as fidelity or self-creation, but this further factor of edification proper to
man is entirely absent from the Divine Personality which is, in the full and unreserved sense of the term, a "donnée absolue".

It is this problem of edification and construction which constitutes the real concrete problem of personality (the Divine Personality constitutes no problem). It is the problem as to what constitutes the principle of edification of personality which now confronts us. The answer is to be found in "fidelity". The elucidation of fidelity is at the very core of Marcel's Existentialism, not only in that it offers an explanation of personality, but also that it marks the passage from what would be a mere phenomenology to a properly religious philosophy. Fidelity has already been defined as the "reconnaissance d'un permanent". (E.A. p. 138.) It is the common denominator of all participations; and as such it is already at the basis of personality, in so far as personality constitutes a "donnée absolue". But to this definition must be added yet another. Fidelity is more than a "donnée absolue", it is also the principle of elaboration, edification and construction of personality. It provides the means of preserving the vision of the essential self over and beyond the gaps in existential experience, over and beyond the "interrittences du coeur" described by Proust:

Je prends aussi une conscience de plus en plus claire du rôle de la volonté dans la foi. Il s'agit de se maintenir dans un certain état qui, sur le plan humain, correspond à la grâce.
Fidelity is the principle of continuity, enabling the moments of plenitude to be, as it were, linked and perpetuated over and above the gaps, or "vides" in Existence. And as such it has its source in the will.

We must pause here to note rather a curious point. If our interpretation is correct, the problem of personality raises a somewhat new and even paradoxical aspect of fidelity.

Fidelity has already been described as the instrument of existence. All moments of existence involve a transcending of temporal succession in duration whereby the present becomes the focal point of willed activity aiming at perpetuation and self-realisation. All moments of existence are themselves the result of "fidelity". But, given the essential discontinuity of human experience, personality involves a further and additional type of fidelity aimed at filling the gaps in existential experience. Thus hope (synonymous with fidelity) is to be defined in this sense:

On voit par là pourquoi il est légitime de regarder l'espoirance comme une vertu: c'est que toute vertu est une spécification d'une certaine force intérieure, et que vivre en espérance, c'est obtenir de soi de rester fidèle aux heures d'obscurité à ce qui ne fut peut-être à l'origine qu'une inspiration, une exaltation, un ravissement. (H.V. pp. 84-5.)

Its mode of operation is essentially the same. It is an
"attestation créatrice", appealing to the creativity of essential being, accepting responsibility in the present for past and future in terms of the ideal purposes whose achievement the self hopes for by its voluntary and present activity. But it differs in that this act of will, fidelity or hope has to be made "aux heures d'obscurité", at moments when the self no longer experiences the plenitude of existence.

In this extended form, fidelity becomes the principle of an existence of the second degree. There are moments when we must act not so much as existing beings, but "as if" we exist. This is the further condition of personal life and continued stable personal relationships. The expression "as if" would no doubt be repugnant to Marcel, but by using it it is not intended to suggest that personal life is merely artificial. The "as if" is not used in the sense in which Vaihinge uses it, but to underline how fidelity involves in the life of the self or person what we have called edification, something which, at first sight at least, seems to imply an arbitrary element.

It is perhaps, we suggest, in part at least to make room for this element in fidelity and for the extension of fidelity to cover the enlarged field of existence, that Marcel has come to speak in terms of hope rather than of fidelity proper.

In any case, fidelity as a principle of edification cannot exist in the Divine Being in whom there are no "brèches" or "fissures" — although His existence is, no less than human existence, a self-creation or fidelity in the
first sense.

Now, as such, as a principle of edification centred in will-power, fidelity raises countless problems; problems raised in any type of fidelity, but in their acute form in this type. First and foremost its relation to sincerity. The whole course of contemporary French thought, in its most intimate aspect, is dominated by the ideal and pursuit of sincerity; and the problem of sincerity has given rise to endless discussions. Marcel here intervenes in a renowned debate between the partisans of an "absolute" sincerity, of whom Jacques Rivière is the principal representative, and those who place before sincerity itself the claims of personality, construction and continuity, such as Ramon Fernandez. Marcel's contribution is highly important from the point of view of this debate, as well as for the present discussion.

The debate (1) centres round the problem: whether personality resides in a pure state of "disponibilité", in the maintenance of the essential mobility of the self; that is in what Rivière and Gide both term "sincerity" (as, for example, when Gide, contrasting the French and Russian attitudes in their moral judgments, declares: "Nous sacrifions la vérité (c'est-à-dire la sincérité), à la

(1) Cf. J. Rivière et R. Fernandez, Moralisme et Littérature. For a detailed analysis of the debate and a discussion of the ethical problems involved, cf. the present writer's article, Personnalité et Relativité, Rev. de Mét., July, 1937.
continuité, à la pureté de la ligne (1);" or whether, on the contrary, personality does not rather reside in voluntary construction, edification and choice, as Fernandez puts it, the "product (albeit unstable) of a tension (2)." In short, the choice is between an amoralism or, as Fernandez prefers to call it, a "pré-moralisme" (3), which aims at preserving intact the multiple virtualities of the ego unhampered by any moral principle of evaluation or choice, and a "moralisme" which sees in personality the result of a "decret" imposing form upon what Gide terms the "informe" (4).

Marcel proceeds from this starting-point. Fidelity implies "engagement", the engaging of one's word, to make a promise. To make such a promise is to commit one's feelings in advance, to decree that a present state of mind will repeat itself at a future date. Fidelity involves a decree and what would seem an arbitrary decree:

Je ne peux m'empêcher de me demander si, aux yeux d'une éthique de la sincérité pure, comme celle que l'on professe le plus communément autour de moi, ce décret ne se présente pas comme un scandaleux coup de force. (E.A. pp. 69-70.)

(2) Moralisme et Littérature, p. 91.
(3) Ibid., p. 10.
(4) This problem is but one form of a more general problem on which contemporary French thinkers are divided, the problem of the "virtual" and the "actual", to which the present writer has devoted an initial study, Le Relatif et l'Actuel, Rev. Phil., November-December, 1937. The terms in which this problem is posited are those of Paul Valéry who, incidentally, is a defender of "form" over and against the "informe".
Does it not then involve a manifest insincerity? "Comment justifier cette dictature qu'au nom d'un certain état présent je prétends exercer sur mes actes à venir?" (E.A. p. 70.) Such precisely is the viewpoint of a Jacques Rivière or an André Gide. In their pursuit of a total sincerity they refuse to recognise the authority of an engagement which would impose limitation upon the fluidity and devenir which for them characterises the essence of the self. "Purity of heart", in their eyes, is a condition of complete "disponibilité", obedience to what is most immediate in the momentary impulse. Any attempt to impose "form" on the self is a sin of insincerity. It is this cult of an absolute sincerity which accounts for Gide's ideal "acte gratuit". It is, as he defines it in the Caves du Vatican, the type of the *acte pur* or the *acte désintéressé*, the immediate expression of an inner virtuality, for between it and the vital urge there is no intervention of the will or the intellect and consequently no deformation of the pure tendency (1).

Such a thesis, in so far at least as Gide is concerned, seems to involve that identification of the self with Time and Change, already mentioned, at the root of the "infinite personality" of Pirandello and Tilgher and their great predecessor, Schelling. Marcel refuses to subscribe to it for (1) It is interesting to remark that Valéry, in his M. Teste and Léonard de Vinci, has transferred the notion of the "acte gratuit" to the plane of intellectual relations.
the reasons already discussed. In his view it boils down to a mere abandonment to the dispositions of the moment. It involves the inadmissible assertion: "Je coïncide avec ma vie," (E.A. p. 283) - I am wholly that contingent, empirical self that is involved in Time. On the contrary, the self is not identifiable with its devenir; the true self, although involved therein, transcends it. Therefore, fidelity is quite compatible with sincerity. For beyond sincerity to one's devenir is a deeper sincerity to the essential self, the transcendent "form" or "reality" as it is revealed from time to time in existential experience:

Cette unité c'est moi précisément: c'est un même et unique principe - forme ou réalité - qui exige sa propre permanence. Fidélité non plus à un devenir, ce qui n'a point de sens, mais à un être que je ne vois pas la possibilité de distinguer de moi. (E.A. p. 74.)

Qu'est-ce que c'est que mettre son point d'honneur à remplir un engagement sinon justement poser cet accent sur l'identité supra-temporelle du sujet qui le contracte et l'exécute? (Ibid.)

Like Pirandello and others, Gide is the victim of the Bergsonian "réalisme du temps". He sees as the sole substance common to selves and things Time, change and novelty. Hence what Marcel calls the "instantanéisme gideien". For him Time and the temporal instant are ends in themselves. "Heureux, pensais-je, qui ne s'attache à rien sur la terre," says Nathanaël, "et promène une éternelle ferveur à travers les constantes mobilités (1)." For Marcel, (1) Nourritures terrestres, p. 80. My italics.
Time and the instant are only means to the end, which is the recovery of the eternal timeless self, alone real.

Fidelity thus, far from being incompatible with sincerity, is itself the only true form of sincerity, for it alone provides the voluntary principle whereby, over and above the contingencies of Time, the brief contacts with the transcendent being of self may be linked up so as to exhibit the continuity and the structure which is the essential feature of a human personality:

"If man is wholly relegated to the time process," writes Berdiaev, "if nothing of eternity and for eternity exists in him, then the image of man, the image of personality cannot be preserved (1)." And if we admit the eternal in man as alone providing a proper basis for the concept of personality, we must at the same time admit a principle of edification and construction having its seat in the will.

Fidelity, in short, is essentially transcendence. It marks a triumph over Time and temporal succession:

(1) *Origin of Russian Communism*, p. 222.
La fidélité ne s'affirme vraiment que là où elle défie l'absence, où elle triomphe de l'absence, et en particulier de cette absence qui se donne à nous - peut-être, sans doute fallacieusement - comme absolue et que nous appelons la mort. (R.I. p. 199.)

It aims at preserving within the flight of time the "presence" of self and others:

Lorsque j'affirme de tel ou tel: c'est un ami fidèle, je veux dire avant tout: c'est quelqu'un qui ne fait pas défaut, quelqu'un qui résiste à l'épreuve des circonstances; bien loin qu'il se dérobe, lorsqu'on est dans l'adversité on le trouve présent. (Ibid., p. 200.)

Moreover, its true nature is manifest when it is linked with hope and the modes of hope - faith, love and charity.

Hope, we have seen, is inseparable from a certain consciousness of time as process, a certain "patience" or "recognition of time" - "faire confiance":

... un subtil respect de la durée ou de la cadence vitale propre à l'autre, tend à exercer sur ce dernier une action transformante analogue à celle qui parfois récompense la charité. (H.V. p. 54.)

It involves a consciousness of time as other than a pure succession of instants, as a process of realisation of the transcendental in the présent vécu.

Fidelity is then a mode of hope and faith, as it implies a certain "credit" accorded to the temporal process, a confidence in the willed temporal activity as being the means whereby the foundation of being may become actual. It is intentional in character, as it posits as the aim of its activity and as implicit in that activity ideals which
transcend the actuality and are given within it, for hope "transcends the fact". (H.V. p. 88.) And what constitutes the paradox of personality and all personal edification is precisely the fact that even in the "hours of obscurity", when this consciousness of time as process is obscured, yet by the exercise of fidelity, hope and faith, the loss may be redeemed, the attitude of "patience" preserved while awaiting the further gift of existence, so that a final continuity be secured.

But this is to say that fidelity involves an element of risk and the will to assume a risk:

Peut-être la condition humaine se caractérise-t-elle non seulement par les risques qu'elle comporte et qui sont liés, après tout, à la vie elle-même considérée jusque dans ses plus humbles manifestations, mais encore et bien plus profondément par la nécessité d'accepter ces risques, et de s'interdire de croire qu'il serait possible et, en dernière analyse, avantageux de parvenir à les supprimer. (Ibid., p. 73.)

The rationalism of the modern world has lost hope precisely by this refusal:

Mais il y a lieu de remarquer que l'attitude de celui qui, au nom de la raison, prend position contre l'espérance est en tout point comparable à celle de l'homme qui prétend échapper au risque. (Ibid.)

And if the rationalist does so, it is because he remains within the field of immanence and temporal instantaneism. Thus he demands reasons or motives for hoping, and as he does not find them within the false actuality of the disrupted instant, he refuses hope. He does not see that the motives
for hoping are included in the willed act of belief, trust and fidelity which is an act transcending the false actuality and bearing implicit within it possibilities of being transcending the fact which is their means of realisation. Thus, to the mother who affirms: "John will return," seemingly against all reasons and without motive, he replies by an objective judgment: "Non, objectivement parlant, ce retour doit être considéré comme impossible." (H.V. p. 88.) But this judgment on the mother's part is something more than a judgment: it is an act of hope and fidelity whose reasons cannot be explicited in objective terms but are one with a recognition of possibilities transcending the fact:

And that is to say that fidelity and hope partake of the "mystery" and not of the "problem". Only to the objective thought of a self which "se détache en quelque façon de son espérance" can the act of faith become the matter for question and calculation. As to the reasons for hoping:

But for a self "engaged" in the act of hoping the affirmation is itself the act and the sufficient reason by virtue of its
transcendent and intentional reference:

Ce qui est donné dans l'espoir, c'est cette simple affirmation: Tu reviendras. Et sur ce "tu reviendras", la critique objective est dépourvue de prise, elle ne s'exerce légitimement que là où il est traduit dans un langage qui est celui de la prévision ou du jugement de probabilité.  
(Ibid., p. 88.)

Fidelity of any sort, to church, nation or to the self in the construction of personality involves this same act of hope and faith in a being and realm of possibilities transcending the temporal actuality but to which that actuality provides the "voie d'approche". Without this element, the consciousness of permanence and self-identity would be impossible and no less the deeper, truer sincerity. Moreover, this transcendence of hope and fidelity renders unthinkable their assimilation to a mere fideism and subjectivism. For if they at first appear unmotivated, they are really, to employ Marcel's term "surmotivated". They are the very contrary of an arbitrary, gratuitous act of will-power.

For if Marcel finds himself in opposition to Gide on this score, he is almost equally at loggerheads with Fernandez on another. Fernandez sees in personality essentially a construction, but one which is purely the labour of the individual's will-power, having its principle in what he calls the "tension du vouloir". "La résistance personnelle," he writes, "le refus d'être ceci ou cela, c'est là le point de contact entre l'imaginaire et le réel, la
Such a voluntarist view deprives the personality of any ontological value; which, again, is the reverse of Marcel's viewpoint, in that personality is in some sort the expression of an eternal reality or Form. In certain respects, selfhood is and must be a "donnée absolue". According to Fernandez's proposition, personality, fidelity itself would be merely "gratuitous", an assertion which Marcel vigorously rejects:

This notion of a "prise de l'être sur nous", of a "remise", occupies a progressively important place in Marcel's philosophy. Indeed, we have now come to what might be termed the grand climacteric of his thought. This notion serves not only to indicate the transcendent element in Selfhood (it is this aspect with which we have been previously concerned), but, as the context shows, introduces a new order of thought. Marcel is asserting that personality, however

(1) De la Personnalité, p. 35.
much it may involve an element of construction, is no mere
gratuitous elaboration of the will, but is itself a gift.
In short, the true nature of fidelity can only be understood
in its relation to faith and grace:

Acte de transcendance avec contre-partie
ontologique qui est la prise de Dieu sur
moi. Et c'est par rapport à cette prise
que ma liberté même s'ordonne et se définit.
La mystérieuse relation entre la grâce
et la foi existe partout où il y a fidélité;
et là où toute relation de ce genre fait
defaut, il n'y a place que pour une ombre
de la fidélité, une contrainte peut-être
coupable et mensongere à laquelle l'âme
se soumet. (E.A. p. 76.)

Hence it is that fidelity is devoid of pride; it consists
in no obstinate attachment of self to self, but in the
humility that befits what is ultimately a gift of grace:

La fidélité, précisément là où elle est la
plus authentique, là où elle nous montre
le visage le plus pur, s'accompagne de la
disposition la plus contraire à l'orgueil
qui se laisse imaginer; la patience et
l'humilité se reflètent au fond de ses
prunelles. (Ibid., p. 79.)

The identification of the orders of morality and grace
brings Marcel close to Maurice Blondel, with whom he has
indeed much in common as a thinker. For if he admits that
morality is an "expérience personnelle" with Frédéric Rauh,
and sees in action expressive of the true self the very
essence of morality, he does not limit himself to a mere
"morale de l'action". On the contrary, with Blondel, he
finds in the "méthode de l'immanence" a method which leads
to the vision of a Transcendent; he brings together and
finally identifies morality and faith, attributing to them ultimately a common source in God himself. The domain of moral experience opens up the wider vistas of religious revelation.

Thus it is that Marcel passes finally from the realm of Ontology, in the narrow sense, to the realm of grace. His thought culminates in a religious philosophy, the fruit of his own religious experience and conversion. For although the present discussion has been concerned primarily with personality, it has the widest application. Fidelity is the common denominator of all other participations. They all involve for their sustenance and for their continuity the same principle of edification which has its roots in the individual's will, but its ultimate source in the Divine gift of grace. In Marcel's vision of things God becomes the ultimate giver not only of personality, but of all "being" and all "Existence".
CHAPTER XI
GRACE

In Marcel's final view of the human situation, the domain of Existence opens on to a transcendent order of grace. What has hitherto been described as a participation is seen properly to be a revelation operated by Divine grace. The passage is accomplished, as in the philosophy of Maine de Biran, from sensation and feeling to grace and faith itself. If at first fidelity, which is the common denominator of all participations, has been defined in terms of will-power, as having its source in an act of will on the part of the individual, we are now made aware that this exercise of will-power is itself dependent on the gift of grace. The will-power, says Marcel, is "lié à la possession d'une sorte de grâce": as such it is the "bien en soi". It is indeed false to see in its exercise a "tension"; rather does it mark an attitude of surrender to a Transcendent which invades and takes possession of the self. "Je pense que vouloir, c'est au contraire se détendre et non pas se crispser (1)."

The victory over Time and Space whereby the self transcends the contingencies of ordinary living and

(1) Quoted by Mme. R. Bespaloff, Notes sur Gabriel Marcel in Cheminements et Carrefours, Paris, Vrin, 1938, p. 85. Mme. Bespaloff describes it well as a sort of "active non-résistance". 
participates in Being, is ultimately the product of faith; its essential condition is the vision of God and the receipt of His grace. Faith is the ultimate axis of reference by which all other fidelities and participations may be comprehended. This plane attained, what hitherto appeared as a "donnée" is seen now to be a "don": "la donnée devient don". Existence opens on to a revelation.

In this higher view of Existence, where the self appears recipient, there is no place for the notion of liberty in so far as the term implies an "autonomous" self. Autonomy belongs to the order of "Having". It is when the self converts the real into an object and isolates it in Space and Time for the gaining of power over it, that it may be said to be autonomous:

Je crois en réalité que l'idée d'autonomie, quoiqu'on en ait pensé, est liée à une sorte de réduction ou de particularisation du sujet.
(E.A. p. 253.)

And in all such situations, the self is a mere "soi", a victim of the "autocentrisme" already described. For a self, however, in immediate participation with Being, this "autocentrisme est entièrement résorbé dans l'amour". (Ibid., p. 254.) Here the self is "engagé" or "investi" by a Presence which encloses it all about and absorbs its every activity:

Dès que nous sommes dans l'être, nous sommes par delà l'autonomie. Voilà pourquoi le recueillement, pour autant qu'il est reprise de contact avec l'être, me transporte dans une zone où l'autonomie n'est plus concevable;
et ceci est tout aussi vrai de l'inspiration, de tout acte qui engage globalement ce que je suis. (L'amour pour un être rigoureusement assimilable à l'inspiration sous ce rapport.) Plus je suis, plus je m'affirme comme étant — moins je me pose comme autonome; plus je parviens à penser mon être, moins il m'apparaît comme relevant de sa juridiction propre. (Ibid., pp. 192-3.)

The fact of liberty is no less central in the metaphysics of Marcel than in that of Berdyaev, that great apostle of freedom in the contemporary world. He is not loth to define metaphysics as "une logique de la liberté". (R.I. p. 40.) Human liberty, indeed, is grounded in the structure of human existence, with its alternating moments of achievement and failure:

L'ordre ontologique ne peut être reconnu que personnellement par la totalité d'un être engagé dans un drame qui est le sien tout en le débordant infiniment en tous sens — un être auquel a été impartie la puissance singulière de s'affirmer ou de se nier, selon qu'il affirme l'Être et s'ouvre à lui, ou qu'il le nie et du même coup se clôt: car c'est en ce dilemme que réside l'essence même de sa liberté. (E.A. p. 175.)

For Existence is a world of discontinuity, rupture and antinomy; a world where both the empirical self and the true existential self cohabit. And it is in the struggle of the self to obtain, and above all to maintain possession of its being, and in the choice which such a struggle involves in face of the temptations of Objectivity and the Dasein that
liberty alone resides. The anguish and despair which beset man are but the external sign of this freedom; Marcel might well describe anxiety in Kierkegaardian terms as the "possibility of liberty". Existence is the result of a "choice" (the term is Jasper's) on the part of the self, a choice whereby the latter opts for Existence, for a particular existential situation, hope, love, despair — assuming it as his own, rendering himself responsible for his act, and thus realising the Eternal within him(1). Such is the sense, as Wahl points out, of Jasper's Grenz-Situationen or "boundary situations" (2). They are what Marcel calls


(2) Le Problème du choix, l'existence et la transcendance dans la philosophie de Jaspers, loc. cit., pp. 412-15. Cf. Jaspers: "Here man finds himself the subject of tensions regarded as definitely the outcome of limitary situations that are inevitable in life, these becoming manifest with the peremptoriness of selfhood. If man be no longer recognised as being (which he is), then he finds himself cognitively in the suspense of absolute possibility. Therein he experiences the appeal to his freedom, in virtue of which he is able to become what it is possible for him to become but what he is not as yet. As freedom he conjures up being as his latent transcendentalism." (Man in the Modern Age, p. 171.) It is, for Jaspers, precisely the failure of the individual involved in the limitary situation to comprehend himself in terms of objective knowledge which reveals his inner transcendence and entails the appeal to freedom whereby the existential situation freely chosen opens up the way to self-realisation. "Man is always something more than what he knows of himself. He is not what is simply once for all, but is a process; he is not merely an extant life, but is, within that life, endowed with possibilities through the freedom he possesses to make of himself what he will, by the activities on which he decides... (Ibid., p. 159.) "The 'grasping' of a situation modifies it, insofar as the grasping of it renders possible the adoption of a definite attitude towards it and an appeal to the tribunal of action." (Ibid., p. 24.)
"options radicales" (1).

The fact of liberty is consequently bound up with the presence of sin and evil and the possibility of sin and evil. Freedom is essential in a "monde cassé", a world of rupture and contradiction, where at each and every moment "treason" and "absence", betrayal of the transcendent and eternal essence of the self, is a possibility. It is all the more cardinal in a Christian metaphysics which puts the fact of sin at the very root of human existence. For "Christianity", to quote Berdyaev, "is the religion of freedom (2)." "The Thou meets me through grace," as Martin Buber puts it, "it is not found by seeking. But my speaking of the primary word to it is an act of my being, is indeed the act of my being (3)."

Now this primary freedom is essentially unconditioned. It is contained in the moment of dread when the fascination of time and death is experienced at such a level that time itself is transcended in a feeling of utter nihilism and by virtue of this gap or temporal void freedom of choice can come into play:

Le désespoir absolu auquel me convie en quelque manière ma condition mortelle restera pour moi de façon permanente une tentation dont il n'est

(1) Cf. Situation fondamentale et situations limites chez K. Jaspers, Recherches Philosophiques, II, 1932-3. (This article is reproduced in Du Refus à L'Invocation, from which the quotations are taken.) Cf. also M. Boucher, Jaspers et l'Existenz-philosophie, loc. cit., p. 364.
(2) Dostoiewsky, p. 71.
(3) I and Thou, p. 11.
Freedom at this moment is a "faculté de détente" (H.V. p. 62) transcending all representation and all conditions, by the suspension of the consciousness of the past and of all motivation. For in this initial moment, what Marcel calls the "réflexion du second degré", being can be affirmed or denied by arbitrary choice. Marcel describes this moment of free choice in quite Kierkegaardian terms as the instant of "absurdity" and "paradox":

There is, therefore, in Marcel's philosophy, as in Kierkegaard's, a rôle or function to be filled by free-will, freedom of choice or liberum arbitrium; but this rôle or function is preliminary and restricted. It does not constitute the essence of human freedom, of the higher human
freedom.

For, if Existence is a product of an act of unconditioned liberty, it none the less culminates in a surrender to a transcendent reality which operates a "prise" upon the self. Inasmuch as I realise participation in my true being, or in the being of other selves I submit to a transcendent which invests me and may be said to take possession of me more than I take possession of it. It is this "prise de la réalité sur nous" which Marcel conceives as resulting from the action of grace, as constituting a "don" rather than a "donnée".

In this intimate relation of grace the pure possibility of the subject confronted by the existential situation is replaced by or, more accurately, is conjoined with the "necessity" of a state where the subject is invested by the Transcendent (1). Such a "necessity" does not involve any determinism destructive of human freedom. The recognition of the "prise" of the Transcendent in no way impairs the initial liberty of the self. "La liberté," says Berdyaev, "précède chez l'homme l'action de la révélation et de la grâce. L'action de la grâce suppose la liberté de l'homme, elle se distingue par cela même de l'acte de la création du monde. Un transcendantisme conséquent, poussé jusqu'au bout,

est impossible; il nie la possibilité d'une vie religieuse et la compréhension juridique des rapports existant entre Dieu et l'homme en montre fort bien les résultats. Le fait même de l'expérience religieuse suppose déjà un certain immanentisme, l'existence de la conscience religieuse et de la liberté d'esprit dans la nature humaine (1)." The intervention of grace demands the cooperation of the human will. A higher form of freedom is attained at a deeper level than the former. The relationship between the two has been described by Saint Augustine in terms of a libertas minor and a libertas major; the one, freedom to choose the good, the other freedom in the good (2). The relation of the Transcendent to the self in Existence is akin to the relationship obtaining in love, where there is no external compulsion but an intimate surrender on the one hand and possession on the other, the two movements fused and constituting a freedom in necessity. It is precisely this freedom within necessity which characterises the relationship between selves in the pluralistic personalism of Marcel and, in particular, the relation between selves and God, the Absolute Self:

Un ordre de la liberté et de l'amour où les rapports d'être à être, loin de s'intégrer en un système rationnel unique qui après tout ne sera jamais qu'une nature, demeureraient les expressions d'individualités solidaires et distinctes qui participent à

This concept of freedom as necessarily accompanied by the action of grace is fully developed in Marcel's later works. It is indeed essential to his whole metaphysical position.

The primary act of freedom is, Marcel believes, the starting-point of a more positive freedom whereby the self, having chosen existence, proceeds to exist effectively: "Ce contrepoids ontologique ne peut résider que dans l'usage positif d'une liberté qui devient adhésion, c'est-à-dire amour." (R.I. p. 187.) The choice once made, the way is open to what Kierkegaard calls "repetition", and Marcel fidelity and hope. Moreover, the freedom which such fidelity exhibits is not of choice, but in choice, and is necessarily the product of a cooperation of grace and the will.

Marcel's personal universe may be described as a system of "échanges". (H.V. p. 82.) As we have seen, self-creation is inseparable from the action of other selves. The self can exist only in so far as it makes the "response" to the "call" of the transcendent other. And it is this mutual relationship which can be conceived, according to Marcel, only in terms of a grace received, the "don". Hope or fidelity,

(1) La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce, Rev. de Mét., 1919, p. 246.
it proclaims, are far from being a mere assertion or claim on the part of an autonomous self: they claim no rights and no due, they make no demands as such. Rather are they attitudes of self-effacement on the part of a self which knows that its own realisation and existence demand submission to the other and its active transforming power:

Peut-être justement l'espérance présente-t-elle cette originalité, et, ajouterai-je, cette dignité souveraine de ne pas revendiquer, de ne pas s'arroger de droits. Et il est permis d'évoquer ici par analogie la situation d'un être qui attend un bienfait, une grâce, d'un autre être, mais seulement de la libéralité de celui-ci, proclamant tout le premier que cette grâce demandée est une grâce, c'est-à-dire précisément le contraire d'une obligation à acquitter. (H.V. p. 74.)

Moreover, the cooperation of grace and will which this entails inaugurates a higher type of freedom than the liberum arbitrium preceding existence; it is a freedom not of choice but in choice, the libertas major of Saint Augustine. True, effective liberty involves liberation of the self from objective necessity, the reign of determinism and constraint, and the acceptance of a higher "necessity" which does not constrain but indeed frees the will and is the essential condition of its free action:

Tout seul, on ne serait point parvenu à s'en dégager, mais la présence de l'autre opère ce miracle, pourvu qu'on lui donne son consentement, qu'on accepte de ne pas la traiter comme simple intrusion - par rapport à soi-même - mais comme réalité. Rien de plus libre, au sens véritable de ce mot, que cette acceptation et ce consentement. (R.I. pp. 72-3.)
True freedom is, then, a certain "response" to a "call": "Je crois quant à moi que le terme de réponse devrait être réservé à la réaction tout intérieure que suscite l'appel." (Ibid., p. 73.) This cooperation of grace and will is already manifest within self-consciousness where the type of freedom within necessity which yet excludes determinism may be clearly seen. The latter, as already noted, is characterised by a duality of self and essential self, the process of self-realisation involving a certain type of "belonging" to one's self which is fidelity. Now, this "appartenance" manifests precisely the cooperation of a grace with human will-power such as we are dealing with. For the self is realised by its activity, but this activity is governed by the transcendent purposes of the essential self. And when we say "governed," the type of determinism implied is not a constraint, for the determining motives do not subject the self's will but on the contrary bring it into action and are the very condition and means of self-creation. In Marcel's doctrine of liberty, the free act lies beyond the categories both of determinism and free-will, for it transcends both the motives and the will.

Here, then, we have exemplified this type of pure activity, which is the "response" to a "call" and where the "call" evokes the "response". For without this impulse proceeding from a transcendent being, the self-creating activity of the individual self would lie dormant. The very condition of the self's being and existence is a submission
to a grace:

Au fond, je ne puis dire valablement, je m'appartiens que dans la mesure où je crée, où je me crée; c'est-à-dire, reconnaissions-le, où métaphysiquement parlant, je ne m'appartiens pas. (Ibid., p. 130.)

This is what Marcel calls "appartenance ontologique":

...appartenance à ce que je suis, appartenance ontologique. Mais je pourrais dire tout aussi bien: appartenance créatrice; et ces deux expressions ont à mes yeux exactement la même valeur... Plus on y réfléchira, plus on se convaincra, je crois, que c'est à l'intérieur de l'appartenance que s'effectue le passage de la contrainte à la liberté.

(Ibid., p. 130.)

Now, by virtue of the self's "openness" to other selves and the inextricable relations which link the self's existence with that of other selves, the realisation of the self comprehends a similar type of "belonging" to others. And here again, since the presence of others is necessary to self-realisation, we have an infinite activity of grace calling forth and bringing into effect the will of the self: "la question fondamentale restant celle de savoir si tu fais appel à ma liberté en tant que liberté, ou si au contraire tu la veux aliénée." (Ibid., p. 58.) Here, as always, fidelity is inseparable from a certain grace or active presence of others conditioning the hopeful activity of the subject and being the condition of his self-realisation:

"Dès lors il est inexact de prétendre que l'espérance est un simple stimulant objectif, elle est au contraire un aspect vital du processus même par lequel une création s'accomplit." (H.V. p. 77.)
We can now see clearly how, in the personal universe envisaged by Marcel, human freedom is essentially a freedom in necessity. For that reason, it becomes effective, this higher freedom, only in time, thereby differing from the preliminary "instant" of choice which is accomplished outwith time and by virtue of a total transcending of time in the experience of dread at its limit. This freedom in existence is that of a self submissive to the transcendent investing it and cooperating with that transcendent in a process of mutual creation and liberation. This is true "disponibilité". It is at bottom "créativity", that is in process: "disponibilité et créativité sont des notions connexes." (R.I. p. 75.) It is and must be a "création continue". In this, the "disponibilité" of Marcel differs from that of Gide.

Between the categories of grace, transcendence and process on the one hand and those of nature, immanence and successivity on the other there is an intimate link. It is the merit of Marcel's philosophy to have brought out this link and established this connection.

Now, looking at the world of personal relations as a whole, it is a world not only of communications and mutual creativities but a world shot through with the working of grace. It is not ultimately explicable in terms of the natural order, for the latter everywhere conceals the supernatural:

C'est à la conscience de ces échanges, de cette mystérieuse et incessante circulation
que je n'ouvre dans l'espérance – conscience prophétique, nous l'avons dit, mais diffuse, et qui pour autant qu'elle prétendrait se commuer en prévision, risquerait de s'oblitérer. (H.V. p. 82.)

A world of grace, charity and love, of relations which constrain without necessitating, call up the pure activity of the individual members and so realise their essence and being.

But this grace which so operates has and must have its source in God, the Absolute Person, by whom all other beings exist. Fidelity and hope have their foundation in "absolute hope" and "absolute faith". Only there can despair be finally exorcised, the "instant" of being and existence recovered and the "presence" secured:

Dès le moment où je m'abîme en quelque sorte devant le Toi absolu qui, dans sa condescendance infinie, m'a fait sortir du néant, il semble que je m'interdise à tout jamais de désespérer, ou plus exactement que j'affecte implicitement le désespoir possible d'un indice de trahison tel que je ne pourrais m'y abandonner sans prononcer ma propre condamnation. (H.V. p. 63.)

Ce Toi absolu en qui je dois espérer, mais que je garde aussi toujours la possibilité, non pas abstraite, mais effective de renier, est au coeur de la cité que je forme avec moi-même et qui, l'expérience nous l'atteste tragiquement, reste investie du pouvoir de se réduire elle-même en cendres. (Ibid., pp. 81-2.)

Here, in faith in God, fidelity and hope can alone find their basis and their validity.

But this faith is, as is fidelity proper, a submission to grace, to the Divine Grace from which all grace flows as between being and beings: it is the absolute "response" to
the absolute "call":

Cet appel suppose une humilité radicale du sujet; humilité polarisée par la transcendance même de celui qu'elle invoque. Nous sommes ici comme à la jonction de l'engagement le plus strict et de l'attente la plus éperdue. Il ne saurait s'agir de compter sur soi, sur ses propres forces, pour faire face à cet engagement démesuré; mais dans l'acte par lequel je le contracte, j'ouvre en même temps un crédit infini à Celui envers qui je le prends, et l'Espérance n'est pas autre chose. (R.I. pp. 217-18.)

Here, in its acute form, is raised the problem of the relation between Divine grace and the human will. It is solved in the way described (1).

For the transcendent action of Divine grace acts as a "call" to man's freedom, to the possibilities within him which it brings into effective existence:

Il faut ajouter cependant qu'un don quel qu'il soit n'est jamais purement et simplement reçu par un sujet qui n'aurait qu'à lui faire place en lui-même. La vérité est bien plutôt que le don est un appel auquel il s'agit de répondre; c'est comme s'il faisait lever en nous une moisson de possibles, parmi lesquels nous aurons à choisir, ou plus exactement à actualiser ceux qui s'accordent le mieux avec la sollicitation qui nous a été adressée du dedans, et qui n'est au fond qu'une médiation entre nous-même et nous-même. (H.V. p. 84.)

The will remains "free" to refuse to respond to the call,

(1) It is worthy of note that Marcel considers the relation of grace and dependence obtaining between God and man as identical with the type of relation between man and man. In this he agrees with Macmurray. The religious consciousness, writes the latter, "must affirm both the freedom of Man and the omnipotence of God, both free choice and free grace, both responsibility and impotence. But what is expressed is a universal fact of human experience, in spite of the contradiction." (Structure of Religious Experience, p. 69.)
remaining, to employ the Augustinian term, enslaved to the delectation of the flesh:

C'est de cette observation générale qu'il faudrait partir pour reconnaître qu'il est à la fois vrai et faux de dire qu'il dépend de nous d'espérer. À la racine de l'espérance, il y a quelque chose qui nous est littéralement offert; mais nous pouvons nous refuser à l'espérance comme à l'amour; et sans doute pouvons-nous aussi renier l'espérance, comme nous pouvons renier et dégrader notre amour. Ici et là le rôle du Kairós semble être de donner à notre liberté l'occasion de s'exercer et de se déployer comme elle ne pourrait le faire si elle était abandonnée à elle-même — hypothèse au surplus peut-être contradictoire. (Ibid., p. 84.)

The relation between the self and God is a relation of love, not of constraint:

...c'est justement en tant qu'Il n'est pas, en vérité, quelqu'un d'autre qu'Il s'arroge sur moi ce droit, mais bien en tant qu'Il n'est plus intérieur que moi-même. Ce droit, c'est en fonction de l'amour et non point du tout de la puissance qu'il se laisse comprendre. (R.I. p. 134.)

For God is "interior" to the self and motive power of the self's very liberty and possibility of realisation through the exercise of that liberty:

En vérité, qui suis-je pour prétendre que je ne T'appartiens pas? C'est qu'en effet si je T'appartiens, cela ne veut pas dire: je suis Ta possession; ce n'est pas sur le plan de l'avoir que ce mystérieux rapport se situe, comme ce serait le cas si Tu étais une puissance finie. Non seulement Tu es liberté, mais Tu ne veux, Tu me suscites moi aussi comme liberté, Tu m'appelles à ne creer. Tu es cet appel même. Et si je me refuse à lui, c'est-à-dire à Toi, si je m'obstine à déclarer que je n'appartiens qu'à moi-même, c'est pour autant comme si je me murais; c'est comme si je m'attachais
à étrangler de mes mains cette réalité au
nom de laquelle je crois te résister. (Ibid., p.135.)

So that the self cannot exist except by cooperation with the
"gift" of grace, and the acceptance of this necessity without
constraint is no less the true form of his freedom and free
activity:

S'il en est ainsi, reconnaître que je T'appartiens
à Toi, c'est reconnaître que je ne m'appartiens
du même qu'à cette condition, - bien plus,
que cette appartenance est identique, et
qu'elle se confond avec la seule liberté
authentique et plénère à laquelle je puisse
prétendre: cette liberté-là est un don;
encore faut-il que je l'accepte; la puissance
qui n'est départie de l'accepter ou de la refuser
n'est pas séparable de ce don, et il y a pour moi
une façon de revendiquer cette liberté qui
revient à un refus, et ce refus portant sur
cela même qui le rend possible a les caractères
distinctifs de la trahison. (Ibid.)

In his views on the harmony of grace and freedom, Marcel
seems to follow the Augustinian trend, as illustrated in the
French religious thought of the 17th century. It involves
the rejection of the liberum arbitrium of the Molinists.
Freedom of the will consists not in free choice but the power
to act according to the solicitation of the good. Yet this
is no necessitarianism. In the state of sin, solicited by
the delectation of the flesh, man is the slave of evil. In
the state of salvation, solicited by the delectation of grace,
he is no longer a slave, for the end he pursues is the true
end of his being and nature, so that in submitting to the
Divine solicitation, he is freeing himself from the only
truly described necessity in order to accomplish his destiny
and realise his being and his freedom. "C'est ainsi que
Dieu dispose de la volonté libre de l'homme sans lui imposer de nécessité; et que le libre arbitre, qui peut toujours résister à la grâce, mais qui ne le veut pas toujours, se porte aussi librement qu'inafaiilliblement à Dieu, lorsqu'il veut l'attirer par la douceur de ses inspirations efficaces (1).

In both cases he is "determined", but in the former this is a necessity, in the latter a liberation. In both cases he is "free" in that he pursues his purposes, but in the former case this freedom is illusory, the purposes failing to express his true nature, in the latter authentic and fruitful ontologically, his purposes being one with his being and destination which is God himself. It is within this Augustinian and specifically 17th century framework that Marcel's religious philosophy is situated, as we shall see more fully later.

In fine, Marcel's metaphysics involves the "moral wager" of a Pascal and a Kierkegaard, and one which, like theirs, is not the expression of an autonomy within the self, but rather synonymous of a submission to the invading reality, an act of surrender to Being. It finds its culmination, therefore, in

(1) Pascal, Lettres Provinciales, ed. Havet, Delagrave, 1919, Vol. II, p. 250. M. J. Laporte defines well the efficacious but non-necessitating character of the Divine love as conceived by the Augustinians: "En répandant son amour dans la volonté, il fait qu'elle se porte de son propre mouvement à ce qu'elle préfère, et qu'elle se sente d'autant plus libre dans son mouvement que cette préférence la détermine davantage. (Pascal et la Doctrine de Port Royal, Rev. de Mét., 1923, p. 253.)"
the revelation of an order of grace transcending the order of nature. It is thus not surprising that Marcel should stress his opposition to most modern philosophies of liberty. "Une philosophie de la liberté telle que je la conçois ne saurait être opposée à la philosophie de l'être." (R.I. p. 40.) For all such philosophies are doctrines of Immanence, involving the negation of the Transcendent and the affirmation of the autonomy of the self. In a note appended to the passage already quoted criticising the notion of autonomy, he writes:

Ces propositions présentent un caractère axial pour une métaphysique qui tend à assigner à une certaine humilité ontologique la place que la plupart des philosophies traditionnelles, depuis Spinoza, ont accordée à la liberté, cela tout au moins dans la mesure où celles-ci impliquaient la prétention chez le sujet de s'identifier lui-même rationnellement à une certaine Pensée immanente au Tout. C'est la possibilité même d'une semblable identifica-
tion qui est radicalement niée dans une métaphysique telle que celle que je cherche à définir ici. (E.A. p. 193, n. 1.)

He goes on to subject the Bergsonian philosophy to a vigorous criticism on this score. Liberty, for Bergson, is salvation itself. One-ness with freedom, life and change, as his Immanentism postulates, is the sole religious ideal, as it tends to be that of the Modernists. As already indicated, this Immanentism fails to account for the eternal, transcendent element in the self, with regard to which personality is edified. The failure to account for personality and the failure to recognise an order of grace have a common source in the denial of the Transcendent. For a properly religious philosophy, that is one which preserves
the integrity of the transcendent realm, over and above liberty is salvation, precisely the surrender to a Transcendent reality which takes total possession of the surrendering self:

Pour un bergsonien, le salut est dans la liberté pure, au lieu que pour une métaphysique d'essence chrétienne, la liberté est ordonnée au salut. (E.A. p. 116.)

The Bergsonian philosophy is out and out a philosophy of autonomy. It sees the supreme reality in a subject which knows no law other than itself and its own will. It has no place for the intervention of grace, for it recognises no order other than the natural order. As Berdyaev points out, and as Marcel underlines for his own part, autonomy is the very opposite of true liberty, which is a "spiritual and religious category". Autonomy is, as a viewpoint on the problem of freedom, as deficient as its contrary, heteronomy. As the latter ends up in what Berdyaev calls a "transcendentalism", so the former culminates in a pure "immanentalism"; both are defective, in that they fail to recognise the intimate fusing of the two orders of Immanence and Transcendence on the plane of grace. We cannot do better than quote a passage from Berdyaev: "Mais la liberté est une catégorie spirituelle, elle réside à une profondeur plus grande que toute controverse sur l'autonomie et l'hétéronomie. Un monde dans lequel l'autonomie s'affirme contre l'hétéronomie a perdu la liberté de l'esprit. La conscience autonome est une conscience formelle. Elle correspond à ce
stade de la vie spirituelle où la liberté n'a pas d'objet, où elle n'est pas encore orientée vers un but déterminé, où je veux être libre de toute contrainte et de tout arbitraire extérieur, où je veux me déterminer par ma propre volonté, où je veux vivre selon ma loi. L'autonomie s'oppose non seulement à l'hétéronomie, en quoi elle a raison, mais aussi à la théonomie, en quoi elle a tort (1)." On the moral plane, Bergsonism might lead to a similar deification of the individual, with all its disastrous consequences, as that reflected in Nietzsche and so often portrayed in the characters of Dostoïewska.

It is inspired by the same viewpoint that Marcel criticises certain aspects of Jasper's Existentialism, to which in so many other respects he is obviously much indebted. In his study on Jaspers he suggests that the latter still remains enmeshed in certain Idealist ways of thought. Notably in his failure to integrate in his philosophy properly religious factors: "Nous ne pourrons nous empêcher de nous demander si en fin de compte il ne procède pas simplement à une sorte de laïcisation indue de notions religieuses dans leur essence, mais dont le ressort vital a été en quelque sorte préalablement brisé." (R.I. p. 325.) Thus, for example, the notion of original sin becomes, as the concept of "limitation", the "trace ou résidu abstrait du (1) Esprit et Liberté, pp. 164-5.
pêché originel", (Ibid.) (1). In common with that is his religious indifference and his refusal to admit the orthodox dogma which for the Christian Marcel are part and parcel of a complete Ontology: "La position de Jaspers quant à l'existence tend inévitablement à lui faire rejeter toute idée du canonique et de l'orthodoxie, et ceci même n'est que l'expression, sur le plan spécifiquement religieux, d'une sorte de refus radical de l'ontologique comme tel!" (Ibid., p. 326.)

Jaspers' metaphysics, in fact — and this is at the root of the above-mentioned inadequacy — marks an effort to attain the Transcendent, but an unsuccessful one. In the final assessment it lacks one essential dimension — the religious and, at bottom, the transcendental one: "...on sera amené à réviser toutes les positions de Jaspers et à ajouter aux dimensions de sa pensée une autre dimension qui en transforme entièrement la figure." (Ibid.) Jaspers' philosophy, indeed, as an examination shows, culminates in a purely "negative ontology (2)." In its moments of existential experience the self comes into contact with a dark beyond, an incomprehensible; it is this "incomprehensible", never wholly absorbed in experience, which plays the part of a Transcendent in his philosophy and which becomes the object of what Wahl calls a

(1) On the concept of "limitation" in Jaspers, cf. Wahl, op. cit., pp. 416-7. Wahl makes a similar criticism. (Ibid., p. 443.) We might well apply to himself this comment which Jaspers makes in a somewhat different context: "The epoch has produced a vast number of persons devoid of all faith and receiving their stamp exclusively from the apparatus." (Man in the Modern Age, p. 159.)

"croyance ambigue (1)." Nothing is further removed from the positive Ontology of Marcel. Jaspers' final position is, in fact, similar to Marcel's initial starting-point at the Idealist stage. Moreover, this "negative ontology" is accompanied by a "negative theology", again similar to the theology in Marcel's first phase. On the one hand, it brings us back to the "agnosticism" of Kant's Critical Idealism. More especially, Jaspers' definition of the Absolute Being as "das Umgreifende" and "das Eine", pure undifferentiated Being, echoes the One of Plotinus (2). Jaspers denies personality proper to God: "Wenn diese mythische Persönlichkeits-vorstellung als Chiffre einen Augenblick zur Gegenwart werden kann, so wehrt sich trotzdem das echte Bewusstsein von Transcendenz dagegen, Gott schlechthin als Persönlichkeit zu denken (3)." A definition quite foreign to the positive theology of Marcel, where God is by essence the "personne

(1) Cf. Wahl's criticism of this "negative ontology", op. cit., pp. 441-2. Existence-philosophy, writes Jaspers, "can only have a possible significance if it remains unfathomable in its uncircumstantiality. It awakens what it does not itself know; it illustrates and gives impetus, but it does not fixate." (Man in the Modern Age, p. 187.) The transcendent is the realm of what Jaspers calls the "nameless powers". This "nameless" is both "Being" and "Nullity": "It is the straightforwardly sinister, which promotes unrest through the uncertainty against what and on behalf of what one is fighting." (Ibid., p. 203.)

(2) Cf. H.L. Miéville: Le problème de la transcendance et de la mort dans la philosophie existentielle de Karl Jaspers, loc. cit., pp. 89-90. The author remarks: "Une étude complète de la pensée de Jaspers demanderait sa confrontation avec la doctrine plotinienne, la théologie négative de Denys l'Aréopagite et le kantisme." (Ibid., p. 90, n. 1.) Mr Tillich suggests the affinities of German Existentialism with the old German theologies of Eckhart and Boehme. (Op. cit.)

"absolue" or "to absolu" and, in general, to the whole personalist theory of reality elaborated by Marcel.

In strict fact, Marcel's philosophy finally transcends, in a manner unknown to Jaspers, the limits of mere phenomenology. It ceases to be mere description and yields to revelation. The affirmation of the Transcendent comes more and more to signify for him the affirmation of an order of grace. The manner in which the Transcendent reveals itself in moments of Existence, and the peculiar relation of liberty within necessity which this revelation involves for the experiencing subject, seem to denote the presence of something other than a mere "datum" of psychological, phenomenological and even, in the narrow sense of the term, ontological import; something which is rather of the nature of a "donum" and which can have its source only in the Absolute transcendent personality, God Himself.

Thus, by natural and even stages, Marcel passes from a philosophy of Existence and a philosophy of Personality, in a manner reminiscent of Maine de Biran, to a philosophy of religion. The pluralistic Personalism, which seemed the final word of his metaphysics, is absorbed and integrated, albeit without loss to itself, into what we might term a theocentric mysticism.

Marcel has yet to evolve a complete theodicy; neverthe-
less its broad lines are already apparent. It involves a transformation, in terms of the Existential philosophy, of the old theological doctrine of "continued creation (1)." Man, with due allowance for the collaboration of human will, is wholly dependent on God. His "being" or "existence" is the result of what is ultimately an arbitrary gift of grace, moreover a gift of grace which is repeated and continued, and but for which he could not continue to "be" or "exist" as a personality. If fidelity is the principle of edification allowing the self to "link up" its momentary and fragmentary realisations of Being and its participations in other beings, God included, this fidelity, itself subject to discontinuity, operates only by virtue of a grace continually repeated. This conception of the human and universal condition has found no more feeling interpreter than Pascal, as when he writes, in a passage which Marcel's metaphysics may be said to echo:

"Ainsi la continuation de la justice des fidèles n'est autre chose que la continuation de l'infusion de la grâce, et non pas une seule grâce qui subsiste toujours; et c'est ce qui nous apprend parfaitement la dépendance perpétuelle où nous

(1) This theory of "continued creation" has its apogee in 17th century theology. It is related to a metaphysical and physical system in Descartes who, thereby, gives it a considerable regain de vie. In relation with the doctrines of "physical premotion" and "efficacious grace" it is prominent in Jansenism and in the theologies touched by its influence, notably in Bossuet. Together with "physical premotion", it finds perhaps its most complete expression at the end of the century in the writings of Father Boursier, (cf. De l'Action de Dieu sur les créatures, 6 Vols., Lille, J.B. Brovellio, 1713). It is, however, in Pascal, as indicated above, that we find it expressed in what are already existential terms.
sommes de la miséricorde de Dieu, puisque si l'on interrompt tant soit peu le cours, la sécheresse survient nécessairement (1)." Thus not only the person as such, but the whole universe of selves and realities, with their realisations of selfhood, of communication and participation, is irrevocably suspended upon the continued action of God.

By the integration of this profundest of Christian intuitions in his Existentialism the latter acquires a deeper value and significance. The world of Marcel, like that of other Existentialists, is a world of discontinuity and rupture. But by the addition of this further dimension it takes on an even greater poignancy. It becomes the basis for a more fully "tragic" sense of life. Grace is at no moment secure nor final; the vision of Being is not secured as by-right. The world is one of constant ruptures of contact and of recurrent despair. Hope is balanced by "unhope". The condition of man is one of tension and anxiety, of utter dependence on God. Like that of Pascal, his universe is riddled with "contradictions"; the "Dasein" with its complement of evil and temptation is a positive obstacle to faith and selfhood, which no barrier can break except God's infinite love. His is therefore a tragic world in the full Christian sense of the term, the world of Pascal,

Kierkegaard, Chestov and Unamuno - a world in which faith itself remains a mystery and a "paradox", having its source in what is ultimately an incomprehensible act of God.

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From the point of view of literary and philosophical criticism, it is interesting and important to point out that Marcel's religious philosophy represents a revival of the Augustinian current of 17th century thought.

First and foremost is the recognition, over and above the natural order, of a transcendent realm of grace, implied in man's incapacity to act fully for himself for the purposes of his existence and realisation. The human will cannot be other than a secondary cause whose activity is called forth and brought into effect by the divine activity. As when Pascal writes: "Car, quand on dit que l'action vient de notre volonté, on considère la volonté humaine comme cause seconde, mais non pas comme première cause; mais, quand on cherche la première cause, on l'attribue à la seule volonté de Dieu, et on exclut la volonté de l'homme. C'est ainsi que saint Paul ayant dit: 'J'ai travaillé plus qu'eux tous,' il ajoute: 'Non pas moi, c'est-à-dire je n'ai point travaillé, mais la grâce qui est avec moi a travaillé.' Par où l'on voit qu'il attribue son travail à sa volonté, et qu'il le refuse à sa volonté, suivant qu'il en cherche, ou la cause seconde, ou la
It is precisely by this refusal of the primacy to the secondary cause in favour of the first cause that 17th century religious thought in France, in its most characteristic and authentic aspects, repudiates the Semi-Pelagianism of the Molinists. And this position, at first sight paradoxically, is not inimical to or destructive of human freedom, for it replaces the irresponsibility of free-will (liberum arbitrium) by a higher concept which relates freedom to the intrinsic purposes of a being whose existence is the means of realising an essence or nature divinely allotted to him. For what is central in Marcel's doctrine is the notion of willed activity as an "attestation créatrice" which is both the "sommatio de l'Être à l'âme qu'il investit mais aussi l'acte, identique en ses spécifications infinies, par lequel l'âme rend témoignage à cette même présence". (R.I. p. 16.) An act of freedom called forth by the primary "call", without which our freedom could not become effectual, that is to say without which the essential self, for our liberty is our self, could not be realised nor exist. The action of Divine grace is not that

of something external to ourselves but of a presence hidden within ourselves, bringing, by its influence, our freedom, which is the mainspring of our being, into activity and directing it towards the realisation of those purposes which constitute its essence. This precisely is the inner sense of Marcel's oft-repeated assertion that freedom lies within the field of the "meta-problematical" and the "mystery", for our freedom does not and cannot subsist by itself, but as a power which participates in the Divine power, as our being participates in the Divine being; so that what constitutes man as an existing and spiritual being is the mysterious junction and cooperation of the human will and Divine grace. And this assertion repeats, in modern terms the traditional Pauline and Augustinian viewpoint (1). From this follows inevitably the notion of a continuous creation of man. Fidelity and hope, the process of self-realisation and existence are only possible by a willed activity called into effect by repeated gift of grace. It is, in Marcel's own words, a "création continue" (R.I. p. 76) on the part of a will responsive to the "call" of grace. So that in so far as the self can be said to exist, it is by constantly renewed grace. Man depends from moment to moment for his being on God, and without Him his being perishes.

We have already noted the rôle played by this doctrine (1) Cf. St. Augustine: "Non ego autem, sed gratia Dei mecum (1 Cor. XV, 9, 10): id est, non solus, sed gratia Dei mecum; ac per hoc nec gratia Dei sola, nec ipse solus, sed gratia Dei cum illo." (De gratia et libero arbitrio, V, 9, 12.)
in the 17th century. To the quotation from Pascal many others might be added: "En la moindre rencontre, nous dépendons toujours du gouvernement et de la conduite secrète de Dieu... C'est pourquoi...nous avons besoin d'une prière continue (1)."

"S'il ne nous retienait et conservait dans l'être qu'il nous a donné, nous nous écoulerions au même moment, comme des eaux qui n'ont point de consistence (2)." (15th October, 1642.)

"...(L'oraison)... est la voie par laquelle nous disons à Dieu et à Jésus-Christ, qui est notre unique libérateur qu'il nous sauve, ressentant dans nous de si grands mouvements d'infirmité, que s'il ne nous secourait à tous moments par des grâces nouvelles, nous péririons tous (3)." (1st January, 1641.)

In this light, fidelity takes on a new meaning and significance, as in the Augustinian writers. By his return to a philosophy of fidelity, Marcel is reviving a very essential theme of Christian philosophy and of the Augustinian theology in particular (4). Fidelity, as thus conceived, signifies a mutual creation of selves and things under the

(1) Saint-Cyran, Théologie familière, Rouen, 1652, pp. 209, 210. Cf: "A quelque degré de justice que nous soyons parvenus, nous avons besoin d'une continue assistance de Dieu, pour nous y maintenir." (Ibid., p. 76.)
(2) Saint-Cyran, Lettres chrétiennes et spirituelles, Rouen 1645, p. 416.
(3) Ibid., p. 434.
guidance of Divine grace - a continuous creation inspired by the repetitions of grace - an order of love where all beings attain and maintain their existence and being in so far as they realise the being and existence of others, and where the being and existence of all are upheld by the Divine grace and love:

Un ordre de la liberté et de l'amour où les rapports d'être à être...demeureraient les expressions d'individualités solidaire et distinctes qui participent à Dieu dans la mesure même où elles croient en lui (1).

The activities of fidelity create a community of persons and personal realities transcending the natural order and suspended upon the supernatural order of grace:

Il faudrait montrer avec précision comment dans la nature humaine elle-même, elle constitue la zone dans laquelle une vie authentiquement religieuse, une vie de grâce peut s'insérer, à la faveur bien entendu d'initiatives dont le principe réside hors de nos possibilités à nous, de nos volontés à nous. (R.I. p. 15.)

Such a type of fidelity surpasses the purely ethical plane. It is every bit an action de grâces, a gratitude in no sense passive, but made manifest in the joyful creation of the universe, whereby, by each and every act, man cooperates in God's creation and recreation of his riches. We may recall here the wonderful passage of Traherne: "As among divines, it is said, that every moment's preservation is a new creation: and therefore blessings continued must not be despised, but more and more extended: because every moment's

(1) Loc. cit., p. 246.
preservation is another obligation: even so in the continual
series of thoughts whereby we continue to uphold the frame of
Heaven and Earth in the Soul towards God, every thought is
another World to the Deity as acceptable as the first. Yea,
the continuance puts an infinite worth and lustre on them.
For to be desultory and inconstant is the part of a fickle
and careless soul, and makes the imagination of it worthless
and despised. But to continue serious in upholding these
thoughts for God's sake, is the part of a faithful and loving
Soul: which as it thereby continues great and honourable
with God, so is it thereby Divine and Holy: and every act of
it of infinite importance: and the continuance of its life
transcendently esteemed. So that though you can build or
demolish such worlds as often as you please; yet it
infinitely concerneth you faithfully to continue them, and
wisely to repair them (1)." By his fidelity, as Traherne
rightly remarks, man becomes, as it were, divine, by partici-
pation in the divine activity.

In this context, Marcel has given much thought to the
notion of "paternity". Paternity has become more and more
for him the exemplar of fidelity, the supreme type of the
"voeu créateur (2)." The essence of paternity is the bringing
into existence of possibilities transcending the individual:

Le voeu créateur n'est autre chose que le 
fiat en vertu duquel je me décide à mettre

(1) Centuries of Meditation, pp. 139-40, § 91.
(2) Cf. Le Voeu créateur comme essence de la paternité, in
Homo Viator.
toutes mes énergies au service de ce possible,
qui déjà s'impose à moi, mais à moi seul,
comme une réalité, afin de le transformer en
une réalité pour tous, c'est-à-dire en une
œuvre constituée. (H.V. p. 162.)

Thus is constituted the family. But human paternity is
simply the image of the Divine paternity, itself the
exemplar of all Divine creations. And the latter constitutes
the universal family of persons. Human paternity is then
nothing else but a participation in the Divine paternity,
for God is the sole first cause: "Je ne peux pas plus faire
exister un autre que moi - que je ne peux me faire exister
moi-même." (Ibid., p. 165.) All fidelity on the part of man
is thus a cooperation in a divine fidelity, in the creation
and maintenance of the universe of persons.

The ultimate aim of fidelity is the realisation of
"l'unité supraconsciente... et suprahistorique de tous en tous...
autour de la Personne absolue qui, seule, peut lui apposer le
sceau infrangible de l'unité". (Ibid., p. 170.)

The final version of Marcel's pluralistic and personal
universe is thoroughly Augustinian in its vision of a
community linked by bonds of love suspended upon the love and
grace of God: a community existing only by the participation
of its members in the Being of God, their origin and sustainer.

For, at the root of this vision is always the dependence
of man and the world of selves on the Divine grace which alone
can vouchsafe them moments of being and continuity of being:
"Le meilleur de moi ne m'appartient pas." (Ibid., p. 23.)
For the self cannot plunge into the mystery of its being
without finding as the sole source, origin and inspiration of that being, the Absolute Being of God. Marcel makes his own this quotation of Gustave Thibon, as a fitting conclusion to his own religious philosophy: "Tu te sens à l'étroit. Tu rêves d'évasion. Mais prends garde aux mirages. Pour t'évader, ne cours pas, ne te fuis pas: creuse plutôt cette place étroite qui t'est donnée; tu y trouveras Dieu et tout. Dieu ne flotte pas sur ton horizon, il dort dans ton épaisseur. La vanité court, l'amour creuse. Si tu fuis hors de toi-même, ta prison courra avec toi et se rétrécira au vent de ta course; si tu t'enfonces en toi-même, elle s'évasera en paradis." (Ibid., p. 35.)

In contemporary French religious thought, Marcel comes close to, and may indeed have been influenced by, Maurice Blondel. Certainly the latter is much more systematic and more of a theologian. But their point of connection is their common adherence to an Augustinian viewpoint and to the traditional current in French Catholic thought (as opposed to the Neo-Thomist Maritain) (1).

The movement of Blondel's thought is similar. The affirmation of a transcendent Pur Agir as implicit in the incapacity of human agir. "L'impuissance de fait et de

droit, qui s'est révélée à notre effort volontaire et par les exigences mêmes de notre action, traduit impérieusement la nécessité où nous sommes d'affirmer un transcendant (1)."

"Au nom même du déterminisme, il n'y a qu'une conclusion inévitable; et la voici dans sa rudesse, sans plus ni moins: par son action volontaire l'homme dépasse les phénomènes; il ne peut égaler ses propres exigences; il a, en lui, plus qu'il ne peut employer seul; il ne réussit point, par ses seules forces, à mettre dans son action voulue tout ce qui est au principe de son activité volontaire. Ainsi, qu'il prétende se passer de toute religion ou s'en faire une à son gré, il n'en excède pas moins son droit et n'en satisfait pas plus son besoin nécessaire ni ses volontaires exigences (2)."

Thus is necessary the passage from an agir naturel to an agir transnaturel. The assertion that man's true freedom lies in submission to grace, by a participation in the divine agir, becoming the cause seconde of God's activity: "Mais aussi nous avons de nouveau à revenir vers nous et à discerner comment nous aussi nous pouvons être vraiment des êtres agissants. S'il est vrai que nous sommes naturellement des causes efficientes quoique secondes, ce n'est pas d'emblée que nous réalisons, que nous égalons en nous le dessein de notre Cause première. Car, pour participer à son agir, nous avons à dépasser les états passifs ou spontanés et à nous conformer à l'idée de la véritable action, libérée des

(2) L'Action, 1893, p. 321.
passions et soumise à l'initiative même dont procèdent notre existence et notre efficience, en vue de la fin suprême qu'impètent la motion et l'aspiration initiales et constantes. En ce qui concerne l'action des causes secondes, la définition qui est possible et normale est donc une définition per generationem et exercitium plutôt qu'une définition intrinsèque per essentiam. Et c'est par son itinéraire, de son origine à son terme, que l'action des créatures comporte la précise détermination de ses étapes et de son orientation. Nous avons maintenant à examiner ce problème théorique: comment, en principe, l'action des créatures peut-elle se libérer de sa passivité première et se rattacher à l'agir divin, non point pour une servitude (comme ce serait le cas sous le joug des passions) mais pour le règne d'une liberté qui, même sous les épreuves purifiantes, est déjà pleinement active: servire Deo regnare est (1). A participation which is in no sense a constraint, for it is only by it that human activity can come into play: "S'il est vrai qu'en effet nos actions, dans la mesure où elles procèdent d'une intention intéressant notre vie spirituelle, mettent en cause et même en œuvre la présence stimulante et coopératrice de l'Être transcendant, nos initiatives personnelles entraînent des conséquences proportionnées.

(1) L'Action, Vol. I, (1936), pp. 208-9. Cf: "Il ne s'agit donc pas de propouser du dehors un devoir à la liberté; il s'agit de découvrir le devoir dans la liberté même et de trouver dans ce qu'elle n'est pas encore le voeu secret de ce qu'elle est déjà... En posant le déterminisme, on en tire la liberté. En voulant la liberté, on exige le devoir." (L'Action, 1893, p. 143.)
à l'énergie mise à notre disposition. Déjà nous avions montré précédemment que notre agir humain n'est pas un simple phénomène et qu'il a intrinsèquement une consistance métaphysique, une fonction ontogénique. Mieux encore, on voit ici la portée du drame plus qu'humain qui se noue et se développe en l'homme — mais non sans l'homme, ni sans l'usage de sa volonté (1).

Further, Blondel defines this cooperation of will and grace, as does Marcel, in terms of a "call" and "response": "Essayons d'entrer un peu plus avant en cette action intellectuelle, au sein même du pur, intelligent et intelligible Agir. Dans l'ordre humain le père doit à travers la nuit des origines reconnaître son fils et faire acte de paternité, comme le fils reconnaît sa secrète filiation, en sorte qu'il y a comme un double témoignage qu'exprime le mot latin agnoscere. Dans l'ordre intellectuel, une semblable reconnaissance, une agnition confesse et scelle pour ainsi dire ce double rapport de la génération qui assure l'unité authentique de la race et de l'esprit. Combien ces vérités naturelles trouvent leur type parfait dans la pure génération divine où tout est lumière, unité, reconnaissance. Et ce dernier terme prend ici en toute plénitude son double sens; car reconnaître c'est, en un premier sens, voir, admettra, ratifier la connaissance de la vérité reçue et authentiquée par l'adhésion réfléchie et en quelque sorte (1) L'Action, Vol. II, pp. 345-6.
verifié des deux termes, des deux agents à l'unisson; mais c'est aussi, en un autre sens si l'on peut dire moral, faire acte de gratitude pour ce qui est reçu et pour ce qui est rendu là où l'unité parfaitement consommée implique un échange et comme une circulation infiniment riche de l'un à l'autre de ceux pour qui tout est commun (1).

Finally, he envisages a universe of persons constituting a community or unity upheld by grace and participating, by its own activities, in the action of this grace: "Tout l'ordre des choses n'est que l'ensemble des moyens que nous devons vouloir et employer pour réaliser notre propre personne, en communion avec le dessein du tout et la volonté du Créateur. D'un tel point de vue, les objections tirées des susceptibilités de chaque moi, pris comme fin en soi, perdent toute spécieuse signification; elles servent seulement à souligner la méprise fondamentale, l'illusion meurtrière qui attribuerait une fausse et dangereuse suffisance à chacun de ceux qui ne sont vraiment des êtres bons et heureux que par la réalisation de la belle maxime: chacun pour tous, tous pour chacun et en chacun (2)."

That there is here similarity of themes and content no one can deny. But Marcel, by the very fact of his failure to systematise, remains more closely in touch with concrete experience than Blondel, whose philosophy at times verges on a transcendentalism which Marcel would be the first to

(2) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 366.
repudiate. For to affirm the Transcendent and its ontological priority and primacy is not to misunderstand that in concrete experience what is primary is human action. A valid philosophy of transcendence defeats its purposes as a religious philosophy if, by too great emphasis upon the primary cause, it fails to establish the necessary rôle of the secondary cause in the complex activity of salvation and spiritual progress. The authentic Christian theology, avoiding both the extremes of naturalism and supernaturalism, must necessarily constitute a humanism if only by reason of the fact that it is man's salvation and not God's which is at stake.

To bring out the humanistic strain in Marcel's doctrine of transcendence, let us first summarise the preceding views.

The religious philosophy of Marcel centres round a concept of freedom which is largely Augustinian in character and inspiration. This freedom has two distinct moments, the first a moment of free choice, dependent on a certain suspension of time procured by the experience of dread, and which may result in the "moral wager", source of existence and faith. Such an initial moment of freedom is recognised by the Augustinians, and notably by Pascal. It will be recalled that the preliminaries to the wager argument are aimed at disrupting the indifference of the freethinkers by arousing in them the "inquiétude" which results from the realisation of man's contradictory nature, his dissatisfaction as a being aspiring to infinity and confined within finite
limits. Indeed, the wager in itself, as Pascal recognises, has its psychological basis and foundation. In this despairing realisation, the mathematical argument itself being suspended upon it.

However, the initial moment of freedom is but a starting-point for the recovery of a higher freedom within existence and within salvation and faith. It determines an attitude to the self rather than it procures its recovery. It is the faculty of suspension: "de poursuivre ou non une suite de pensées" a faculty which is ultimately "un mode de l'attention". (R.I. p. 35.) It anticipates rather than it achieves existence. It asserts the possibility of freedom rather than it is itself freedom.

This second, higher freedom is a freedom not of choice, but in choice, secured within the framework of temporal duration, wherein Transcendence is conjoined with Immanence, Eternity with Time. It is made manifest only in the junction of a transcendent grace with human will. Here, though grace is paramount, it is not destructive of human power, for it calls the latter into effect and realises the possibility of freedom.

By this recognition of the order of grace and the necessity of its integration in a valid philosophy of liberty, in so far as liberty has no meaning apart from self-realisation and therefore transcendence, Marcel's metaphysics develops along the lines of the traditional Christian humanism, as opposed to the pagan humanism of an Averroes or
The term humanism is all-important. Marcel is one of the most "humanist" of contemporary religious thinkers and in the traditional Christian sense. For him, as for Saint Thomas and Saint Augustine, and unlike a Luther, the primacy of grace does not imply the destruction of nature but rather its completion and crowning. Marcel, Blondel and Maritain are together the three defenders in France of an "integral humanism", to employ the term of the last (1). This element of humanism in Marcel's religious thought is of the utmost importance and serves particularly to distinguish it from that of a Kierkegaard or a Karl Barth.

The radical pessimism as to man's moral nature which we find in the latter thinkers is equivalent in his view to a complete anti-humanism, a modern Jansenism (if we take Jansenism in its most extreme form) which exaggerates and distorts the fact of man's depravity. This moral pessimism is accompanied necessarily by a "metaphysics of faith" pure and simple which sees no remedy to man's corruption except in an arbitrary gift of grace which replaces and is substituted for corrupt nature. They are thus led, and, in Marcel's view, wrongly, to "sacrifice the ethical" and to establish a divorce between the moral and religious life, an

(1) On the concept of a Christian humanism, cf. E. Gilson: Héloïse et Abélard, Études sur le moyen-âge et l'humanisme, Paris, Vrin, 1958, Appendices. "Ce que le thomiste maintient en effet sous l'action de la grâce, c'est une nature que le péché n'a pas détruite et que la grâce n'a pas pour effet de supprimer, mais d'accomplir en la restaurant." (p. 198.)
"irreparable rent in the very stuff of which our humanity is made". (H.V. p. 222.) Marcel, indeed, admits a form of natural religion and natural morality or sort of incipient grace which is antecedent to the grace of salvation. He speaks of it as a "grâce naissante qui palpite au coeur de la nature". (Ibid.; p. 226.) It is manifest in the sense of communion and participation, or "lien ontologique" with the spiritual universe:

Mais précisément l'éclipse de l'idée de morale naturelle est le phénomène qui commande toutes ces réflexions; et ce phénomène est lui-même lié à un autre fait très général qui domine, me semble-t-il, l'évolution de l'humanité occidentale depuis un siècle et demi: la disparition d'une certaine confiance à la fois spontanée et métaphysique dans l'ordre où s'insère notre existence; ou encore ce que j'ai appelé ailleurs la rupture du lien nuptial entre l'homme et la vie. (H.V. p. 225.)

It shows itself as a certain "piété envers la vie" which has been lost to-day:

J'incline fortement à penser que cette piété est le seul vinculum authentique qui puisse relier les hommes entre eux en deçà de la Révélation, et que tout universalisme abstrait qui prétend s'en passer, si droite que soit l'intention qui l'anime, ne peut en fait que préparer la voie à un nihilisme dont nous discernons partout l'action devastatrice. (Ibid., p. 226.)

He also calls it a "sorte de piété pré-chrétienne ou péri-chrétienne". (Ibid.; p. 228.)

This excellence in nature and this confidence in life he believes to have been obscured by certain Christian exaggerations and notably Jansenism:
All such versions of Christianity fail to recognise this primitive grace, a "reverential love of the created" which seals the pact between man and life. There is, then, he declares with Rilke, a "permanent value of Orphism" exhibited in the pagan religio which Jansenism will not recognise:

There is therefore a sense, and Kierkegaard and Karl Barth are a case in point, where supernaturalism becomes an excess and can indeed "empty the notion of salvation itself of its substantial content". (Ibid., p. 222.) We see its disastrous effects in its power to sterilise in its victims that love of life which is God's gift to man and all created beings:
Now, there is nothing in these views of Marcel which is not orthodox and capable of being reconciled with the Augustinian tradition. "All Christian philosophers, at least from the time of Saint Paul onwards," says Professor Abercrombie, "recognized the possibility of a natural religion, and some rudimentary theodicy independent of revealed truth; the possibility of a natural cultus correlative to such a theodicy was familiar to the Scholastics (1)."

The "_orphic element" to which Marcel refers may be traced notably in Fénelon and other semi-Quietist and 17th century authors, who interpret the universe in a Platonic-Augustinian manner and who find in nature, seen in its spiritual aspects, the emblem and image of divine simplicity and propose the contemplation of nature as one principal means of commerce with the Divine, once the soul has by exercise and meditation achieved the inner simplicity which renders that harmony and participation possible. For nature, created by God, bears the traces of the Divine grace, and even original sin has not completely disrupted the soul's link with the Divine manifestations.

Similarly, human nature, corrupted though it be by original sin, yet retains a certain excellence which sin

(1) N. Abercrombie, Saint Augustine and French Classical Thought, p. 52.
cannot destroy. And even the pagan religions, deprived as they are of the Divine Revelation and the grace of Christ which saves, may reflect a natural bond with the spiritual wherein the lingering power of the creator's grace may be discerned: that grace which all created things possess as from the source and ground of their being.

This "grâce naissante", "sense of the sacred" or "ontological sense", is no more man's by his own right than the grace which saves. Yet it is man's possession and he brings it to the work of his salvation; wherein, by faith and the outpouring of actual grace, what is a mere religio becomes conversion in the Christian sense; the pact between man and the spiritual is consecrated and rendered effective by the revealed presence of God. It is the human "possibility", the providential intention of the human will or what Pascal calls the "idea of truth" which, however lacking in sufficiency and inevitably diverted into the channels of "divertissement", yet awaits only the Divine call to become an actuality and a power.

The task of grace is thus double: it is first to rectify nature, in so far as nature is distorted by the original sin and man has come to centre his life upon himself and his desires rather than upon God, his true end. It is, secondly, to confirm and crown nature by providing the power to realise his inherent spirituality and sense of spiritual destiny and communion, not only to restore but to give new
meaning to his humanity and to his being created in the image of God.

Grace does not then destroy a nature wholly corrupt and replace it, but restores the integrity of this nature, and it can do so because there remains a certain excellence therein which is man's as the creature of God.

Moreover, it is in terms of a certain natural consciousness that Marcel comes to define dread and the preliminary role of dread in preparation for the impact of actual grace. Dread is, as he says in a recent fragment, what characterises the state of preparation for grace; without it grace, as Pascal himself saw when he sought to convince the Libertins of the horror of their plight, would not find the way prepared for its full effect. Dread may be described as the recognition of a principle of death, what Marcel calls here "le téléologique à rebours, c'est-à-dire... l'existence d'un principe qui serait orienté comme vers sa fin propre vers la destruction de toute finalité positive (1)."

As such, it renders the individual conscious of his imperfection. But, says Marcel, this latter is not yet the sense of sin essential to salvation. Dread can only become the sense and recognition of sin when the sense of imperfection (1) Journal Métaphysique III (Fragments), Fontaine, April, 1946.
is experienced in the light of grace:

Il me semble que la réalité de mon péché n'affleure à ma conscience que dans la mesure où je m'éveille à l'amour infini dont je suis l'objet; et inversement, si cet amour n'est pas reconnu par moi, je ne peux pas non plus me reconnaître pécheur. (p. 594.)

Thus it follows that without grace no conviction of sin as sin, necessary for salvation, can arise, and that a purely philosophical consciousness of imperfection is not sufficient:

L'erreur, ou la faute, dans la mesure où elle n'est qu'une variété de l'erreur, peut être constatée et reconnue; il me semble qu'il soit de l'essence du péché de ne pouvoir être que révélé c'est-à-dire au fond de n'apparaître qu'à la lumière de la grâce. On pourrait dire que ce dont nous prenons immédiatement conscience n'est pas, n'est pas encore le péché. Il suivrait de là, semble-t-il, que le philosophe livré à lui-même ne peut affirmer l'existence du péché. (p. 600.)

So that upon the action of grace depends whether or not dread can become effective for salvation and the recovery of existence. For only then is imperfection, the "téléologique à rebours", localised within man's will. Dread may be the medium, it is not the motive-power. The ultimate motive-power working on the occasion of man's will is the Divine Grace.

It is in quite traditional terms that Marcel expounds a Christian humanism, similar to what Dr Abercrombie calls the "enlightened (or inspired) humanism of Augustine (l)." And it is in the light of it that he rejects the anti-humanism (1) Op. cit., p. 52.
and excessive supernaturalism of a Kierkegaard, a Karl Barth and much contemporary theology of an eminently Existentialist type.
CHAPTER XII
TRANSCENDENCE AND HOPE

Gabriel Marcel is the greatest living representative of Christian Existentialism. As such, he stands in clear opposition to certain current forms of the Existential philosophy. Although Kierkegaard himself, by reason of his Christian premises, preserves intact the vision of the Transcendent and the perspective of hope, there are certain elements in his doctrine — its cult of the "absurd", its primat de l'action, its at times apocalyptic sense of dread — which are more consonant with a philosophy of irrationalism. It is those which have provided the germ of the German form of Existentialism and, indeed, of the present Sartrian current in France deriving therefrom. Irrationalism, cult of absolute liberty, cult of despair, these are the three features that characterise the current non-Christian Existentialism, sprung from an interpretation or even misinterpretation of Kierkegaard in terms of certain themes of Nietzsche.

A comparison with the doctrines of Jaspers and Heidegger is illuminating. And here a brief historical account is necessary, our purpose in this chapter being to place Marcel in the Existential movement in general and in particular with respect to Sartre.
The fundamental distinction in Jaspers' philosophy is that made between the Dasein, the plane of daily and anonymous living, and Existenz, wherein the individual becomes momentarily conscious of his true being. Those moments of existence are given in the "limitary-situations" (Grenzsituationen) of life: love, suffering and, above all, the apprehension of death. In the life of the Dasein, reduced to an anonymous "one", the individual is the prey of necessity and despair. Once, however, made conscious of his true being (Selbstsein) in the limitary situation and, notably, under the sense of the proximity of death, he may emerge as an existent being by personal decision, by free, willed action, assuming personal responsibility for the creation of his destiny. Yet, reasons Jaspers, it must be recognised that this effort itself is doomed to failure; man's search for being is irrevocably vain, and heroic action bears irretrievably the mark of "absurdity".

The essential characteristics of this Existentialism are interdependent. These characteristics are: first of all its negative character. According to Jaspers, we pursue Being without ever being able to grasp it. And this Being — whether the self, others or God — is in his philosophy characterised purely negatively; it is the Ursprung, a sort
of vague and indeterminate beyond to which we aspire (1). Secondly, its cult of despair. It is indeed what Jaspers calls "the failure" which constitutes the being of man; it is by and in "the failure" that he affirms himself as an existing individual. "The failure" is in Jaspers' philosophy the true "essential"; and if it constitutes an Ontology it is an Ontology of despair. Finally, the cult of unconditioned liberty or autonomy. The free act of personal decision is the "absurd"; it aims consciously at the possession of a Being that it knows it cannot grasp; it is a self-assertion in failure, essentially motiveless, a despairing and prideful assumption of destiny in a world which offers no reasons and where man is called upon to strive without reason and make for himself a reason of his unreason.

We see how the notion of transcendence has been transformed; transcendence has become the movement towards transcendence, the meaningless pursuit itself; whereas for Kierkegaard transcendence implies not only the aspiration to

(1) Jaspers calls Being the "nameless power" which, beyond all designation and determination, is at one and the same time being and not-being. "The nameless is not only the true being of man, which tends to vanish in dispersion, but also the true not-being, which seems, however, to claim the whole realm of life... To describe namelessness would make an end of it, if description were to become knowledge." (Man in the Modern Age, p. 191. Cf. P. Tillich, op. cit., p. 57.) It is obvious that the negative philosophy of Jaspers, accompanied as it is by a negative theology, has an important source in the mysticism of Neoplatonic inspiration of the old Germanic philosophers, notably Eckhart and Boehme.
possession, but the realised and completed possession itself, - a true, positive transcendence. In actual fact, Jaspers remains close to German Idealism which, developing the Kantian notion of autonomy, puts the accent on pure liberty.

With Heidegger, the tendencies of the German School become more explicit. His Existentialism is in the first place frankly atheistic. Transcendence is not the movement towards God - for He does not exist - but the movement within man himself towards the creation of a personal destiny, his "projection". What we have is an uncompromising humanism putting man at the centre as unique value and unique source of value. Man's primitive situation is that of a being in the world (In-der-Welt-sein): this is the order of the Dasein or daily living; there, existing as a mere "thing", degraded into an anonymous interchangeable cipher (das Man), the self falls a prey to ennui or "preoccupation" (Sorge), being the form in which he experiences his state of "dereliction" (Geworfenheit). But, experienced at the limit, preoccupation becomes dread (Angst) and thereby acquires an ontological function, for it is by the experience of dread that the individual is enabled to pass from daily existence to the "authentic" existence and recover his being. Dread is at its root the sense of death and nothingness, and it is as such that it opens the way to Being.

In a masterly analysis of the phenomenological content and ontological implications of dread Heidegger brings out the close relation between dread and consciousness of time.
In daily existence, the self is the victim of time, experienced as a flight of instants that renders impossible the realisation of ends. At its very limit, this consciousness of time becomes the certainty of death and nothingness; we then experience "the impossibility of possibilities"; everything we construct is seen to be doomed to decay. But at this point the self recovers its "possibility"; the way lies open for a recovery of his freedom and the affirmation of his being. He may, by what Heidegger calls the "resolute decision", assume for himself his finite destiny, once that finite condition has been revealed as an absolute and as being constitutive of the very being of man. For death and nothingness are absolute ends; they are our "fundamental possibility"; in the universal becoming and passage of all other aims and ends, they alone remain stable; they are the "infinite" of man's finiteness, the very essence of his finite condition. Therefore they alone can provide the true ends of his action and, freely accepted as his destiny, constitute man in his essential being as a meaningful existent. For that it suffices to act and live in the dread of death, to infuse into each moment the sense of nothingness. There lie the true freedom and the true self-realisation - in the exaltation and the cult at its extreme limit of the finite human condition. So much so that according to Heidegger, at least theoretically, the essential act of freedom and of being
would be suicide.

It would seem that this Existentialism, grandiose in its structure and dialectic, conceals a barely disguised nihilism. It bears all the marks of a doctrine of absolute freedom, a freedom born of despair and pride. Being, for Heidegger, is one with liberty, but the liberty he envisages aims not so much at the possession of Being, in the positive sense, as at the destruction of Being. It is indeed in so far as man infuses into his life death and nothingness that he comes to "ex-sist" and transcend the anonymity of "brute" existence, and the free act is simply this infusion of the death principle. "En courant au devant de lui-même, l'être-là prend conscience de son abandon à l'on-même et de sa possibilité d'être soi-même, mais soi-même en tant qu'être délivré de l'illusion de l'on, en tant que participation à la liberté passionnée de la mort (1)."

Being-liberty-dread-Nothing: such is the Heideggerian equation. Such too is the notion of transcendence in Heidegger - that of a mere negative transcendence which consists in espousing and extracting all that is most finite in finite time, all that it conceals of quintessential dread and despair; whereas we might well ask whether a true, positive transcendence does not aim rather at transcending dread and death and, with them, finite time, opening up a

perspective of hope and of positive possession of Being.
The late Benjamin Pondane points out that Heidegger, however
successful in laying the foundations of an Ontology, never
emerges on to the plane of Ontology proper. "Le philosophe
allemand," he writes, "cherche et trouve de nouveaux
fondements en vue de l'établissement d'une ontologie. Des
nouveaux fondements, mais non de nouvelles conclusions: car
les structures deja trouvees il les accepte et aussi les
conclusions (1)." And he goes on to enquire whether a
metaphysics centred on the "existential of death" can give
any positive meaning to transcendence. "La mission de
l'authenticité n'est pas d'édifier une science sur le néant;
sa mission est de surmonter le néant." Heidegger, he
concludes, stops where Kierkegaard begins; it is only
superficially that he appears as a disciple of the latter.
The fact is that Heidegger's philosophy embodies nihilistic
elements borrowed from German Idealism, from Novalis, for
example (2). And it is not without significance that
Heidegger's cult of "liberty for death", however misrepresented
it may have been, found favour in Nazi circles.

(1) Review of Qu'est-ce que la Métaphysique? Cahiers du Sud,
July, 1939.
(2) Cf. this fragment of Novalis which Heidegger's remarks on
the metaphysical significance of suicide seem to echo: "Le
véritable acte philosophique est le suicide. C'est le réel
commencement de toute philosophie. C'est à lui qu'aboutissent
tous les désirs du disciple, et cet acte seul répond à toutes
les conditions et à tous les signes de l'action transcendantale."
(Les Disciples à Sais et Fragments, transl. by
M. Maeterlinck, Brussels, 1909, p. 62.)
To state the opposition most clearly, we may say that Heidegger remains riveted to what Marcel has called an "actualisme éthique", in short to what is ethically an Immanentism. His position involves an implicit identification of Being and Time (M. Marck hints at this while stressing the close connection between Heidegger and Bergson). The acceptance of death is little more than an amor fati, by virtue of which each instant of time is savoured as itself an end, as itself a death. To "ex-sist" is, for Heidegger, at each and every moment to "die". The ethical significance of his philosophy lies in the recognition that life (as existence) is but the obverse side of death. So that his position consists of a sort of reinterpretation of the "philosophy of life" in terms of death, the "realism of time" common to both being preserved. In such a philosophy, transcendence has little ethical import; little more than it has for Bergson.

Curiously enough, as we have already seen when discussing the temporal theories of Bergson and Heidegger, this same Immanentism exhibits itself, ontologically, as an extreme Transcendentalism; for if the "authentic life" dissipates eternity in time, it no less dissolves time in eternity, once the "being" of time has been revealed as the "nothing" of Time.

It would indeed seem that every philosophy of Immanence is, on its obverse side, an extreme Transcendentalism, and that this identity is but an expression of man's dual status.
The equivocal mixture of Transcendentalism and Immanentism in Heidegger is further explained if we remember how he himself defines transcendence. What he takes for transcendence is the élan whereby the individual, instead of suffering passively the fatum of his condition, accepts and becomes one with it. But the sole transcendent is this unalterable, finite situation which constitutes his fate. So that, strictly speaking, Heidegger's transcendent is simply the finite subjected to a decision of unconditioned liberty (1). All the positivity of the transcendent is thus transferred from the transcendent to the movement of transcendence, and so ultimately becomes lost in the hidden and undefinable subjectivity and pure ipseity of the self - the realm of what M. Wahl calls "transdescendance" and which is the false "otherness" that lurks in the self's depths. As M. de Waehlens has put it in his masterly analysis of Heidegger's philosophy: "On montrerait sans peine que l'appel au transcendant est trahi dans son essence même lorsqu'il s'adresse à cette forme d'altérité que sont certains besoins et nécessités de ma nature; car si ces élans ne mènent de

(1) "Son 'né-ant' (Un-wesen), le fondement le doit au fait qu'il tient sa naissance d'une liberté finie. Cette dernière elle-même ne peut pas se dérober à ce qui prend d'elle ainsi naissance. Le fondement qui prend naissance en transcendant repose à son tour sur la liberté elle-même, et celle-ci devient, en tant qu'elle est elle-même origine, le 'fondement'. La liberté est le fondement du fondement, la raison de la raison." (Qu'est-ce que la Métaphysique? etc., transl. by H. Corbin, p. 109. Vom Wesen des Grundes III.) Marcel has himself underlined the inadequacy of Heidegger's transcendence in much the same terms. (Autour de Heidegger, Dieu Vivant, No. 2.)
quelque façon au-delà de moi-même, ils me conduisent
néanmoins à une réalité dont le statut métaphysique est, au
mieux, semblable au mien, définissant ainsi une fausse
transcendance. Tout appel à la transcendance comporte un
risque de s'embourber dans la transdescendance qui n'est
qu'une illusion de transcendance (1)."

We may remark in passing that the same strictures may be
made of Jaspers' transcendent, all the more so by its more
obvious negative character, and proceed to stress that Marcel
rejects any but the most positive transcendence; the latter
involving for him the attestation of a Presence endowed with
all the attributes of a person and the object of a positive
participation.

The corollary of all these negatively conceived philo-
sophies is a philosophy of despair, for both in Jaspers and
Heidegger transcendence is none other than the act of self-
realisation in "failure", born of it and grounded in it.
Marcel, on the contrary, positing a Transcendent fully
positive in nature, itself the positive term of the movement
of transcendence, substitutes for a philosophy of despair a
philosophy of hope:

Une philosophie de désespoir se condamne peut-
être elle-même, si elle se laisse affecter par
la situation qu'elle décrit; ce n'est pas
assez dire: cette situation même, elle risque
de nous en donner une image altérée pour peu
qu'elle s'y complaise, et qu'elle dégénère en
une apologétique de l'intenable; car
l'intenable n'est vécu que par une conscience

For a recognition of the true nature of the Transcendent is the condition and the justification of a religious philosophy. We see thus that in Marcel's Metaphysics despair is not an end in itself but a means, the portal to hope and the promise of salvation. It cannot have the positive, or at least irreducible character it possesses in German Existentialism.

It is in the light of this positive transcendence that we may understand Marcel's repudiation of the current interpretation of Kierkegaard. In the important article from which quotation has just been made and which deals with M. Jean Wahl's *Etudes Kierkegaardiennes*, he criticises the author's thesis that Kierkegaard defends an "untenable" position, the corollary of which is a total despair (2).

(2) "La position kierkegaardienne est-elle une position où on puisse tenir?... Peut-être, comme l'a dit Vetter, Kierkegaard est-il l'homme qui défend une position désespérée. Et ce qui nous attire à lui, plus peut-être encore que sa position, c'est ce qu'elle a de désespéré." (*Etudes Kierkegaardiennes*, Paris, Aubier, 1938, p. 445.)
Marcel rejects this interpretation of Kierkegaard and, no less, the philosophical implications underlying it. M. Wahl indicates a preference for what he calls "trans-descendance" as opposed to "trans-ascondance", namely for a type of negative or subjective transcendence, the object of what he himself has called elsewhere a "croyance ambiguë".

Wahl's position, says Marcel, is "hyper-Kierkegaardian", but at bottom it is, in his view, a distortion of Kierkegaard's thought: "pour autant qu'elle revient non seulement à couper l'auteur de Crainte et Tremblement des racines par lesquelles il plonge dans une certaine tradition évangélique moins reconnue qu'héritée, mais encore à abonder dans le sens de cet extrémisme, de cette philosophie de la croyance non-croyante, c'est-à-dire d'un existentialisme comme éperdu (1)."

On the contrary, he declares, Kierkegaard's doctrine is, seen in its true perspective, one of communion and of positive transcendence:

Kierkegaard (non plus que Pascal), malgré le son agressivement paradoxal de beaucoup de ses formules, ne prétend pas instaurer une nouvelle table des valeurs. Il se réfère non certes à un archétype platonicien, mais à une Présence au centre de l'histoire qui ne peut être qu'attestée; et si, en autorisant de je ne sais quel texte, on venait me dénier le droit de parler de références, je dirais que, dans cette mesure on refuserait à Kierkegaard la qualité de chrétien, car le chrétien ne se définira jamais que par le pouvoir d'attestation. Mais dès le moment où cette référence existe à la base, la foi est donnée, elle ne peut plus être mise en question, et

While admitting that Marcel overlooks somewhat the strength and importance of the "untenable" element in Kierkegaard's philosophy, we may agree with his judgment. Not only has the "untenable" interpretation led to an unfortunate divorce between religion and ethics and one which it is Marcel's wish to avoid at all costs, but it has had for effect to rob both the religious and the moral of their proper positive content, the one by substituting for positive faith what Marcel so well terms a "non-believing belief", the other by substituting for positive communion an "infra-human" subjectivity. The failure to recognise a positive transcendence and a positive Transcendent has laid the way open to a confusion of terms of which examples are to be found not only in the Existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre, but also in certain current apocalyptic versions of Christian doctrine.

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The philosophy of Marcel assumes however its full significance when contrasted with the most recent and most notorious form of Existentialism, namely the doctrine of

(1) Ibid., p. 1030.
M. Jean-Paul Sartre.

The central principle of Sartre's thought, as exposed in *L'Être et le Néant*, is the distinction between being "in-itself" and being "for-itself" (the *en-soi* and the *pour-soi*). The former is revealed by consciousness itself which "naît portée sur un être qui n'est pas elle", in conformity with Husserl's principle taken over by Sartre and according to which consciousness is always consciousness of something. The object so present in consciousness exists "in-itself", that is, it is all that it is: it is and possesses its essence. We can say no more about it than that it is simply "that" or simply "there". Such is the type of being attributable to existing "things". There is however another, unique type of existence - human consciousness, man himself, whose being is "for-itself". Man is never, like the mere thing, one with himself, a self-possessed entity whose data are fully absorbed. He is never entirely what he would be; there exists always a "distance" between his aspiration and his realisation or between the object given to consciousness and the consciousness he takes of it. He is obliged, by the fact that he is a conscious being, to make what is - what is given immediately "in-itself" - other than it is. So that we may affirm - and that is its very definition - that "la conscience est ce qu'elle n'est pas et n'est pas ce qu'elle est (1)."

(1) In spite of the novel terminology, Sartre is simply expressing the idea, elementary in itself, that all consciousness is relation. What is original is the metaphysical conclusions which he draws therefrom.
From this definition of consciousness Sartre draws the conclusion that there is in human consciousness an element that is not Being, an element which he calls "le Néant". Where does this element come from? It must be produced, because, being Nothing, it is not able to produce itself. "Le Néant n'est pas, le Néant 'est été." On the other hand, it cannot come from the en-soi, which by definition excludes nothingness and negation. It must therefore, argues Sartre, come from man himself. It is consciousness itself which "se désenglue de l'Etre", which introduces into the initial immediacy of one-ness a "néant", relation, separation and distance. And it is precisely in this refusal of being in-itself - the plenitude of absolute being - that resides the liberty and possibility of liberty which is the unique characteristic of human consciousness.

From this metaphysical basis springs the despairing picture of life to be found in his works. Consciousness is, by definition, "mensonge". Sincerity is impossible from the fact that coincidence with one's self is an impossibility; for the being of man, in so far as it differs from mere "thinghood", is characterised by a "lack" or a "flaw". For Sartre as for Valéry, man is the "défaut" in the "diamant" which is the Absolute. For similar reasons, as we shall see more fully later, communion with others is ruled out; conflict is the very essence of personal relations.

There is however another side to the philosophy of Sartre - the side that presents itself as a humanism. Man is
— and that is what makes him a man — he who refuses that total possession of self and being which would make him a thing. It is in this refusal that he makes room for freedom. It is in as much as he is "nothing" that he is free; he is, as Sartre puts it, "condemned to be free". For consciousness, by creating a separation between himself and his being, engenders time. Since the self cannot coincide with its essence, there remains constantly a margin of being not realised in the present; it constitutes then a "project" levelled at the future. Time is thus the instrument of man's free activity; consciousness, creating an interval between himself and his being, obliges him irrevocably to an incessant pursuit of this being in time by action. "La réalité humaine est dépassement perpétuel vers une coincidence avec soi qui n'est jamais donnée."

Since the concept of self-coincidence, within the framework of consciousness (an en-soi-pour-soi) is self-contradictory, this pursuit is vain and absurd. Yet it is for man the only transcendence he can know. His salvation lies in this activity of renewal and constant dépassement, the recognition that, as a consciousness, he can never rest on any momentary realisation or any assured position, that to do so and attempt to use them as sufficient motives for subsequent action would be to convert himself into a "thing". He must act and accept responsibility for his acts in the sure knowledge that he is alone in the world and that whatever he is, is what he chooses to be; careful not to succumb
to the temptations of "l'esprit sérieux" which would impose values or duties drawn from outside himself or even from his own past. He must realise that all values are what he chooses for himself at each moment and that, having chosen them, he must never look back, like Oreste in Les Mouches free from remorse; then alone is he master and creator of his destiny. "Man is what he makes himself."

Such is the groundwork of Sartre's philosophy. Let us consider it in greater detail in the light of Marcel's doctrine and, in particular, the criticisms he has made of Sartre (notably in his analysis of L'Être et le Néant in Homo Viator).

In the philosophies of both Sartre and Marcel, the "cogito préréflexif" constitutes the point of departure. But the conception of its nature and function differs completely in the two thinkers. Self-consciousness is defined by Sartre in terms of a negation and refusal of Being. "De toutes les négations internes, celle qui pénètre le plus profondément dans l'être, celle qui constitue dans son être l'être dont elle nie avec l'être qu'elle nie, c'est le manque. Ce manque n'appartient pas à la nature de l'en-soi, qui est tout positivité. Il ne paraît dans le monde qu'avec le surgissement de la réalité humaine (1)."

Certainly, the existence of a transcendent is supposed in his doctrine of the "transphenomenality of being". Sartre (1) L'Être et le Néant, 15th ed., Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p. 129.
starts from the assertion that all existence is existence for a consciousness or "phenomenal". The existent is but "the series of apparitions which manifest it (1)." Yet the "being" of the phenomenon, although "co-extensive" with the latter, transcends its apparition in consciousness. In short, consciousness bears upon a reality which is itself non-conscious. This fully positive being on which thought bears is the en-soi, the world of things wherein the self is immersed. It is simply "what it is"; wholly its essence, it "coincides with itself", a "plenum" devoid of relation and therefore of any possibility of free activity. From it emerges the being of man which is "for-itself" (pour-soi), characterised by consciousness, that is the power to introduce qualities of relation and difference, what "is not" into what is given "in-itself"; in short, to transcend and constitute "for-himself" the brute world and organise his situation in it.

Now, the Realism here propounded in phenomenological terms and aiming at cutting under the classic dualism, conceals none the less an essentially Idealistic and solipsistic premiss. For the transcendent implicit in consciousness is, according to Sartre's own argument, "in-itself" beyond knowledge. "Nous sommes ici sur le plan de l'être, non de la connaissance; il ne s'agit pas de montrer que les phénomènes du sens interne impliquent l'existence de (1) Ibid., p. 11.
phénomènes objectifs et spatiaux, mais que la conscience implique dans son être un être non conscient et trans-phénoméナル (1).". By that meaning not that it constitutes, in the Kantian sense, a reality subsisting apart from appearances (on the contrary, it is "co-extensive" with them), but that it appears in consciousness not as it is "in-itself", but as it is known "for" that consciousness.

The being proper to man is constituted precisely by the refusal of all that is given "in-itself", by the power it assumes to make the latter other than it is, in short to construct it "for-itself"; and this human being is consciousness, the being of the knowing subject. So that the fundamental datum of self-consciousness is a self whose presence is made known in its distinction from a transcendent or "given" which is simply "there", as a mere matter to be organised; and by virtue of this construction the self is posited and affirmed in its autonomous and freely created being as a "nothing" within the full being that it has bracketed.

It is in this way that Sartre's philosophy develops in terms of a series of negations of what is given. Consciousness exhibits itself with respect to the brute existence of things as a "pro-ject", as separation from, refusal and negation of, being in-itself. It is an activity of "néantisation"; its whole essence resides in its power to (1) Ibid., p. 29.
adopt negative attitudes to Being. Perception itself, where the object in-itself becomes an object "for" the subject, which constructs it in terms of its perceptual activity, involves a negation of the object as such. Consciousness is thus definable, in contrast with the positive being of the en-soi, as that which "is what it is not and is not what it is". It is, moreover, an imaginative process, imagination consisting in positing an ideal object "en marge de la totalité du réel," thus negating or "keeping the real at a distance". And it is consciousness itself, bringing relation into what is undifferentiated, that introduces this novel element of "distance", "absence" or "nothingness (1)."

It is in this way that the world is constituted for consciousness in space and time which, in Sartre's view, are engendered wholly by the pour-soi. It is consciousness which "spatialises" space. The space in which I find myself as a being-in-the-world is an undifferentiated medium experienced as a global weight threatening my freedom; it is a pure "dehors". From out this ground I construct a stable system of spatial relations centred upon myself and my

(1) Sartre explains the emotions similarly in terms of negation. Suppose, he says, one is attacked by a wild beast; one is seized by fear and faints. This fainting is an evasive action but one commanded by an act or project of negating the danger. "Ainsi l'origine de l'émoction c'est une dégradation spontanée et vécue de la conscience en face du monde. Ce qu'elle ne peut supporter d'une certaine manière, elle essaye de le saisir d'une autre manière, en s'endormant, en se rapprochant des consciences du sommeil, du rêve et de l'hystérie." (Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions, 2nd ed., Paris, Hermann, 1948, p. 42.)
projects. I reject the world in space and substitute a space "for myself". Such is the properly human space, or what Sartre calls "distance". It is, moreover, identical with the "imaginary space" of the artist or the sculptor such as Giacometti, the first, according to Sartre, to "sculpter l'homme tel qu'on le voit, c'est-à-dire à distance" and take for his aim to "dégraisser l'espace...lui faire égoutter toute son extériorité".

The dimension of time is similarly constituted by negation. The en-soi, itself outside temporal relation, appears in consciousness as what is past. What I am in-myself is experienced as the "perpétuel dépassé"; the past is the en-soi of consciousness. It is true, then, that the self is its past, yet, because it is not a thing, it is also a negation of its past: its being consists in declaring itself transcendent with respect to it. The pour-soi, as such, is a "dépassement néantisant". Similarly, the self affirms its transcendence with respect to the future with which it seeks to identify itself. From which it follows that the pour-soi exists wholly in a present definable as a point of pure indetermination, a "pro-ject" or "possibilisation" or, as Daniel puts it in L'Age de Raison, "un invisible arrachement à soi vers l'avenir".

It is therefore clear that the transcendent in Sartre's

doctrines is little more than a matter or negative limit (1). Marcel has perhaps gone rather far in speaking of an "agnosticism strangely reminiscent of that of Spencer". (H.V. p. 252.) But he is very near the truth in speaking of a "réalisme négateur" coupled with a "matérialisme infra-dialectique (2). What is of prime importance, in any case, is the consequence of this Idealistic turn. However we look at it, the transcendent in Sartre is itself devoid of value; moreover, it can be never more than a ground, never constitute a sufficient motive or positive end of self-conscious activity, such activity originating precisely, for Sartre, in the negating of the ground as a sufficient motive for action. The transcendent remains little more than an indeterminate background upon which the self uprises in its unique nature.

It is also in the light of this conception that Sartre describes the drama of human consciousness in La Nausée and elsewhere. The individual oscillates between a state of absorption in the objective world where he experiences, in the form of "nausea", the loss of his freedom as he is sucked up and as consciousness collapses into thinghood, and on the

(1) It resembles somewhat the "non-subject" of Fichtean Idealism, providing the condition whereby the self delimits and affirms itself in its own ipseity.
other hand, the consciousness of his selfhood, emerging whenever he detaches himself from being in-itself and introduces "distance", "relation" or "nothingness" into the global indeterminate unity of irreflective experience, into the world of contingent and superfluous brute existence or of "nature without man".

So that what constitutes the "being" of consciousness and the experience of selfhood is precisely the "néant" which the subject forms for himself within the plenitude of immediate experience. He affirms and becomes conscious of himself as a self only in so far as he refuses and negates all that is given - his own self, other selves and the world of things as they exist "in-themselves". The being of man is a "suspension" of the immediate; it exists in its own proper mode as a vacuum or as what Marcel has called an "air-pocket". It is by definition the voluntary rupture of the primitive plenitude of compresence; it is through and through riddled with negation.

Now, in Marcel's version of the cogito, the latter is defined in terms of a "plenitude", in other words as the experience of participation in the world of positive, transcendent Being. In the simple relation of self-consciousness itself, the self of immanent experience is in the presence of an essential self transcending it and constituting the end and purpose of its activity, conferring upon that activity meaning and significance. The realm of self-conscious activity is the field of a positive duality in unity
where the immanent and the transcendent selves sustain the intimate relations of mutual creativity without which both self-knowledge and self-realisation are impossible.

Moreover, this transcendent realm of "essences" provides and can alone provide the basis of value. Divorced from the active subject, Sartre's transcendent or en-soi, with its status of negative limit, is without operative power on the self, and the latter is bereft of those "guiding stars" that are the eternal purposes directing the self's activity and without which choice cannot be transmuted into value, in so far as value presupposes purposiveness and therefore transcendence with respect to time's fluctuations. For Sartre there is no transcendent domain of value, value being equated with unconditioned choice. For Marcel, there must exist values transcending and directing choice; these being in some sort "given" as ends in terms of which choice is made and which by means of this choice are realised in personality.

Between the starting-points of Sartre and Marcel there is all the difference between an Idealism and a Realism, between a negative and a positive view of existence. Both are Existentialists in that for both existence involves a question; but whereas for Sartre existence is the very act of questioning one's being and therefore of suspending and negating it, for Marcel it is the act of affirming one's being, the question bearing not upon this being but upon the
manner of realising it (1).

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The predominantly Idealistic basis of this Existentialism is exhibited most clearly in Sartre's doctrine of the "others". If we look at it closely, the concept of "intersubjectivity" he introduces is, understood in the positive sense of the term, incompatible with his philosophy, as Marcel has pointed out (2). Certainly, Sartre affirms that others are given with the self in the fact of self-consciousness. "Par le je pense, contrairement à la philosophie de Descartes, contrairement à la philosophie de Kant, nous nous atteignons nous-mêmes en face de l'autre, et l'autre est aussi certain pour nous que nous-mêmes. Ainsi, l'homme qui s'atteint directement par le cogito découvre aussi tous les autres, et il les découvre comme la condition de son existence (3)."

But, they are so given, not as persons existing in their own right, but as reflected in the emotions of the subject; any communion of consciousnesses, such as Marcel envisages, is ruled out.

The "other", in Sartre's dialectic, appears first to me as an object situated in the system of spatial "distances" which form part of my world picture and by virtue of which

(2) Existentialisme et Humanisme, J'ai lu, No. 2.
(3) L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, Paris, Nagel, 1946, p. 66.
I put the world at the service of my freedom. But the "other" is likewise a consciousness situating me in his system. He and I are enemy freedoms intent on incorporating each other's project. And it is in this complex relationship that the "other" is experienced as "subject", in the feelings of shame or pride accompanying this struggle of two absolute wills. Personal relations oscillate between those two poles, according to whether I impose my will on the other or vice-versa. The Sartrian world is a world of persons eternally at cross-purposes, typified by the "absurd" relations of Mathieu and Ivich in L'Age de Raison.

This struggle of two freedoms is expressed otherwise by Sartre as a conflict of two "regards" or scrutinies. The scrutiny of the other transforms me into a thing, knows me as I am "in-myself", and so petrifies me and robs me of my freedom. Personal relations revolve around this struggle to "capter la liberté d'autrui" by "le regard" (central theme of Huis clos). "Ma chute originelle c'est l'existence de l'autre; et la honte est - comme la fierté - l'appréhension de moi-même comme nature, encore que cette nature même m'échappe et soit inconnaissable comme telle... Et l'autre, comme regard, n'est que cela: ma transcendance transcendée (1)." Love itself is reducible to such a conflict of two autonomous freedoms or activities of transcendence, each striving to assert itself at the expense of the other.

(1) L'Être et le Néant, p. 321.
Thus, in Sartre's doctrine, I know the other not as a person, by direct communion, but in the subjective feelings of shame or pride that I experience on the occasion of his presence, and in accord with which I affirm and have knowledge of my self-hood. The other is known, as it were, by "reflection" and never in his own right, always as "the other" and never as this or that other.

In Marcel's view, this is a misrepresentation of the positive intersubjectivity of self-consciousness. The other implicated therein (in this he and Sartre are in agreement) is known directly as a person by immediate participation. This is the very sense of love, which is nothing if not communion.

En réalité, je ne puis distinguer, semble-t-il, que par abstraction et de façon intenable, entre autrui et tel autre, qui est par excellence toi pour moi, et à travers qui j'accède à la reconnaissance d'une réalité transsubjective. (H.V. p. 246.)

The ultimate distinction between the two doctrines of "autrui" lies in the attribution or non-attribution to "others" of the status of value. For Marcel, the realm of persons implicated in the primary intersubjectivity of the cogito is a realm of value, inasmuch as these personal entities direct personal choice. In Sartre's doctrine they cannot be so, if only by the implications of his theory of the transphenomenality of being. For, in accordance with the latter, they, like any other transcendent, constitute a mere ground or condition for the assertion of the self as an absolute freedom and sole originator of value. More
precisely, they are that with respect to which the subject posits and has knowledge of his being, according to the degree in which they are robbed of their intrinsic "otherness". Value emerges on a ground of "autrui" which provides the condition but never the germ.

Sartre may proclaim that "l'acte individuel engage toute l'humanité (1)," or propose as an ethical precept: "décider seul, sans point d'appui, sans guide, et cependant pour tous (2)." How can that be possible if in his system, to quote his disciple Simone de Beauvoir, "il n'existe entre le monde et moi aucune attache toute faite (3)." Sartre's fundamental position, with all its consequences, has been expressed by himself in the most explicit terms in the following passage: "Vainement souhaiterait-t-on un nous humain dans lequel la totalité intersubjective prendrait conscience d'elle-même comme subjectivité unifiée. Un semblable idéal ne saurait être qu'une rêverie produite par un passage à la limite et à l'absolu à partir d'expériences fragmentaires et strictement psychologiques (4)." In this passage, whose Idealistic assumptions are manifest, the whole Realistic philosophy of a Marcel, with its doctrine of participation, is condemned - and, with it, what has perhaps been the most fruitful development of Phenomenology itself in the field of religion and ethics.

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(1) L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, p. 27.
(2) Quoted by P. Emmanuel, Réflexions sur une Mise au point, Fontaine, April, 1945.
(3) Quoted ibid.
(4) L'Être et le Néant, p. 501.
Refusing, as it does, to posit any operative transcendent, Sartre's thought reveals itself primarily as a philosophy of unconditioned freedom. "Lorsque je déclare que la liberté à travers chaque circonstance concrète ne peut avoir d'autre but que de se vouloir elle-même, si une fois l'homme a reconnu qu'il pose des valeurs, dans le délaissement, il ne peut plus vouloir qu'une chose, c'est la liberté, comme fondement de toutes les valeurs (1)." Values, indeed, according to Sartre, are created by the individual by his free choice and are whatever he chooses them to be; "l'homme doit se créer sa propre essence": "faire et en faisant se faire et n'être rien que ce qu'il s'est fait." "La valeur tire son être de son exigence et non son exigence de son être. Elle ne se livre donc pas à une intuition contemplative qui la saisirait comme étant valeur et, par là même, lui ôterait ses droits sur ma liberté. Mais elle ne peut se dévoiler, au contraire, qu'à une liberté active qui la fait exister comme valeur du seul fait de le reconnaître pour telle. Il s'ensuit que ma liberté est l'unique fondement des valeurs et que rien, absolument rien, ne me justifie d'adopter telle ou telle valeur; telle ou telle échelle de valeurs. En tant qu'être par qui les valeurs existent je suis injustifiable (2)."

It is this negation of transcendent values which seems to Marcel the grave error of the Sartrian philosophy. "Je

(1) L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, p. 82. Italics mine.
(2) L'Étre et le Néant, p. 76.
ne crois pas du tout," he says, "qu'une philosophie, existentielle si vous voulez, puisse prendre n'importe quelle liberté avec les valeurs fondamentales, ou, plus exactement, elle le peut assurément, elle le peut dans la mesure où, en tant que philosophie, elle est, si vous voulez, la liberté en acte; seulement resta à savoir si cette liberté exercée de cette façon, je dirai de cette façon autodestructive, ne va pas à son propre anéantissement (1). For in his system, far from being the arbitrary creation of the individual, values are "given", not, of course, as ready made but as ends and purposes to be realised. Such are the "essences" presented to the self in self-consciousness. They are ontologically prior to the "épreuve ontologique", that is to the choice or option that brings them effectively into existence; giving them direction and meaning:

Dans une philosophie comme celle de Sartre la valeur presuppose le choix, la valeur est choisie, elle est commandée par une option. Mais en réalité il semble bien que ce soit la valeur qui commande l'option et non l'inversement. Une option qui n'impliquerait aucune conscience préalable de la valeur s'effectuerait au hasard, au petit bonheur, ce ne serait pas une option authentique. (2).

Freedom is, therefore, other than mere autonomy; it is "implied in the recognition of our participation in the

(2) Être, Valeur, Liberte, unpublished text, quoted in Existentialisme chrétien, p. 170.
universe", (R.I. p. 35); it is a bringing into existence of a "reality apprehended", both "independent with respect to my own volition and...yet tributary of the act whereby I bring it into being". (H.V. p. 162.) It is as much a "recognition" as a creation, in every sense of the term a "response" to a "call". So much so that "values can be effectively safeguarded only where being is effectively safeguarded" and that "being, value, liberty can only be saved together (1)."

Freedom, in short, is directed by and towards the transcendent: it is choice, but choice in terms of certain germs of value and towards whose realisation the act of will-power is intended. It is therefore, in Marcel's view, a serious error to confuse the "sursum", or act of transcendence, - the effort of will - with transcendence itself which is the term of the movement and itself supposes a transcendent governing that movement as final and efficient cause:

Le propre de l'acte de transcendance pris dans son ampleur est d'être orienté; en langage phénoménologique, disons qu'il comporte une intentionnalité. (R.I. p. 188.) (2)

(1) Ibid., p. 169.
(2) The coincidence, and yet distinction, of the two aspects of transcendence have been well underlined by M. Wahl: "Si la transcendance-mouvement s'explique par la transcendance comme terme, il n'y a plus de transcendance à proprement parler. Si la transcendance-terme s'expliquait par la transcendance-mouvement, il en serait de même. De sorte qu'il y a une tension entre le mouvement et son terme et que ni le terme ni le mouvement ne doivent être considérés comme données, ni l'un par l'autre, ni l'un sans l'autre." (Op. cit., pp. 35-6.)
Now, in Sartre's philosophy liberty is conceived not in terms of a fulfilment, nor even in terms of an "engagement" or "participation", but rather in terms of negation. Indeed, Sartre identifies human freedom with the "néant" of consciousness. It is precisely the "néant" established between the motives and the act, whereby the former are revealed as inefficient, which allows for liberty. Liberty is conceived by Sartre in terms of a "manque", by Marcel in terms of a "plénitude":

Pour lui, nous sommes condamnés à être libres, la liberté est notre lot, notre lot.

(Note (2) contd. from previous page.)

One must therefore disagree with Mlle. Delhomme when she says: "La participation est donc beaucoup plus appel à une volonté de participation que participation accomplie; l'être est enjeu, il est toujours à être, et la condition humaine... est une condition itinerante." (Existentialisme chrétien, p. 185.) Although the notion of life as a "voyage" is central in Marcel's thought, and time is therefore the mode of the self's existing, life itself being a sequence of "épreuves" where man is called upon to exercise his freedom for a self-realisation which can never be fully adequate to his aspiration, yet it is wrong to see in time more than what Mlle. Delhomme herself calls the "forme même de son épreuve", nor in the "épreuve" itself more than the condition of existence; inasmuch as the condition of all value is the "obstacle" which brings the subject face to face with the necessity of choice. But this choice is a choice in terms of ends and values whose realisation does accomplish the existence of the subject and bring him from time into eternity.

Transcendence, for Marcel, is not only the exercise of will-power in life's various tests, but the final consummation; its repetition may prove to be fragmentary, but it is in itself a completion, for it realises a "presence". This is most clearly seen in the existentialist of death, the "épreuve absolu". There at least the "test", and the purposive act of faith which springs from it find their object in a momentary repossession of being.
servitude, bien plutôt qu'elle n'est notre conquête. C'est qu'en réalité elle est ici conçue à partir d'un manque, non d'une plenitude, et on est par moments tenté de se demander si elle n'est pas une tare, si elle n'est pas notre imperfection rendue manifeste. (H.V. p. 244.) (1)

The operative words are "lack" and "plenitude".

Marcel's clearest discussion of the problem of liberty is to be found in an article entitled Aperçus sur la liberté (2), one which is additionally useful for our purpose in that it constitutes a deliberate reply to Sartre.

The solution of the problem of liberty is, says Marcel, dependent on the understanding of a "certain paradoxical structure of the personal life". Sartre is correct, he goes on, in declaring that non-coincidence with itself is the characteristic of the conscious subject. But the conclusions he draws are erroneous. By virtue of his doctrine of trans-

phenomenality of being, Sartre assumes, beneath the conscious and therefore divided self, an undivided self "en-soi". This transcendent self would be wholly self-absorbed and coincident with its states. It would constitute a "plenitude", but the plenitude of a "thing", extraneous to freedom and conation. He is then obliged, on the other hand, to posit the self of consciousness as entirely non-coincident with itself, as constituting what Marcel calls a sort of "air-

(1) This identification of freedom with a "lack" is the corollary of Sartre's "ontologie du néant". For a further development, cf. Appendix to the Chapter.
(2) La Nef, June 1946, extract from a lecture entitled Etre, Valeur, Liberte, given at Brussels, 12th Feb., 1946.
pocket" within absolute Being. It comes into being precisely by refusing its being in-itself, by adopting towards it an attitude of indifference and detachment (1).

By defining the self of consciousness as a "lack" and total non-coincidence, Sartre is obliged to define freedom as being unconditioned, the lack and the non-coincidence being the very condition of its appearance and exercise. It is presented throughout his work as pure indetermination, it arises within a situation which the self negates and into which it introduces a vacuum of its own making. It is thus absolute and wholly transcendent to the given circumstances which form the ground upon which it uprises. The situation provides the occasion, but not the motive, for it owes its entire sense to the project the self adopts with regard to it. If I believe my body too weak to attempt some climbing feat, this fact of the weakness of my body only comes to light in relation to my project: it is I by my choice who make it a fact. The whole constitutes a situation whose brute elements take on meaning solely by virtue of an option on my part which owes nothing to them and whose sole motive is my freedom. In another passage he relates freedom to "facticité": "Ainsi la liberté ne saurait-elle être vraiment libre qu'en constituant la facticité comme sa propre restriction. Il ne servirait donc à rien de dire que (1) Marcel suggests with some justice that Sartre's theory is a version of the epiphenomenist doctrine. (H.V. pp. 249-50.)
C'est au contraire, par rapport à mon projet d'aller à New York que je vais me situer à Mont-de-Marsan (1)." Whether he actually goes to New York or not is immaterial; it is by the act of negating what constitutes the present immediacy that he is free. It is by the refusal of determining motives that I constitute myself as it were in vacuo and find room for a freedom wholly ex nihilo.

It is this conception of freedom as residing in an indetermination or vacuum which is the basic theme of Sartre's Existentialism. And when the characters of his novels "experience their freedom" it is as a state of "disponibilité", of "suspension" of all determining motives.

Mathieu "n'était plus nulle part, il se sentait libre (2)."

We find when we look closely that Sartre does not place freedom even in the decision of the will, but in the negations of consciousness. It is a state rather than an act, a suspension of the being that constrains. As a conscious being, man is "condemned to be free". He is free precisely by reason of the vacuum which constitutes his being and which makes him a centre of indetermination. Marcel rightly demands if there is not here a paralogism:

Effectivement la liberté pour Sartre est manquée, comme d'ailleurs la conscience elle-même, elle est véritablement un

(1) L'Etre et le Néant, p. 576.
(2) L'Age de Raison, p. 69.
défaut, ce n'est que par une sorte de paralogisme qu'il pourra s'évertuer ensuite à faire apparaître ce pur défaut comme une condition positive d'apparition d'un monde, c'est-à-dire en somme à lui assigner une valeur créatrice (1).

As Marcel sees it, Sartre's concept of freedom is the logical outcome of his erroneous concept of the cogito. The latter envisages a cogito préréflexif displaying a "plenitude" conceived as a complete coincidence of self with self and such as to render freedom impossible. He is then led to oppose to it the cogito of conscious experience exhibiting a "vacuity" or complete non-coincidence of self with self such as to entail a wholly unconditioned freedom.

Both, argues Marcel, are distortions of the ego sum. The first is the merest assumption, logically necessary for Sartre's subsequent definition of liberty. At no level can we envisage a wholly-absorbed subject of this type other than as an abstraction:

Bien loin que la coincidence avec soi doive être regardée comme un terminus a quo, comme une base d'équilibre, disons en langage musical comme une tonique, je pense au contraire qu'il faut n'y voir qu'une fiction (2).

But the other is equally a distortion. It establishes an arbitrary separation between the self and the transcendent self immanent and operative in the depths of the former. It certainly does not give a true account of the datum of

(1) L'Existence et la liberté chez Jean-Paul Sartre, loc. cit.
(2) Aperçus sur la liberté, loc. cit., p. 69.
immediate subjective experience. What the latter exhibits is a unity within duality, allowing for both participation and differentiation; even more, a unity within multiplicity, in so far as the essences of others are co-present with that of the self; "le propre de l'être spirituel étant d'être intérieurement à la fois un et plusieurs (1)."

Hence the ego sum properly understood, is a "plenitude" in that it is the focal-point of multiple relationships of self with self and of self with other selves. But it is not, on the other hand, the fictive plenitude of Sartre, as here we are confronted not with a total coincidence but with relations of "participation" allowing for both one-ness and distinction (2).

Il faut même proclamer que je ne suis moi que dans la mesure où je suis en même temps autre que moi, disons, si vous voulez, où je suis un excédent sur moi-même. La destinée propre du moi semble être de se trouver perpétuellement en deçà ou au delà de cette coincidence qui était tout à l'heure posée comme "tonique", et qui à la réflexion apparaît d'autant plus fictive qu'elle n'a même aucunement la valeur d'une limite idéale dont j'aurais à m'approcher, et qu'elle n'est pas non plus un point de départ: c'est un éidôlon forgé par l'entendement, et ce ne peut être autre

(1) Ibid. (2) Ibid. It will be recalled that Marcel defines participation as "relation", relation of a peculiar type, and yet relation. Cf. Martin Buber's description: "The Thou meets me. But I step into direct relation with it...I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou. All real living is meeting." (Op. cit., p. 11.) The same novel type of relation of unity within distinction and distinction within unity is described by Paul Claudel and by Professor John Macmurray. In all cases its prototype is the personal relationship.
chose (1).

This is what Marcel calls the "paradox" of multiplicity in unity constituting the "plenitude" of self-conscious experience. And it is it that permits a true concept of freedom as neither a pure determinism nor a pure indeterminism. Freedom can only be understood in the light of the intimate interrelations of the contingent and the transcendent selves, each informing the other, the one proposing ends, the other accomplishing them.

We may well enquire, says Marcel, à propos of a particular act whether it was accomplished freely or not:

Il se peut fort bien que je me reconnaisse fondé à dire à la fois: j'ai pris librement telle décision, et: tel que je suis et dans telles circonstances, je ne pouvais pas agir autrement; ce serait à recommencer, j'agirais encore de même (2).

This is sufficient to indicate that an act may be free and yet necessitated. Its freedom consists, indeed, not in its being independent of constraining motives, but in its adequacy to realise and express motives intimately felt; the act lacking in freedom being precisely that where the element of gratuity is uppermost and which, for that reason, is indifferent to the realisation of the self's essence:

(1) Ibid. It will be seen that this passage bears out the contention put forward in Chapter VII that Marcel at no stage envisages, even in the state of full realisation, a completely non-temporal and necessary entity, devoid of activity.

(2) Ibid., p. 69.
Je dirai que le fait de céder à une nécessite n'entame en rien la conscience...que je prends...de ma propre liberté... Il fait de ces observations...que la confusion entre liberté et choix doit être soigneusement évitée. Mon acte se présente à moi comme libre dans la mesure où il m'exprime authentiquement à mes propres yeux (1).

With Leibniz and Bergson, Marcel relates freedom to self-realisation and so raises the contradiction between freedom and necessity. Here there is no determinism, in so far as the latter means the power of factors extraneous to the life of the self to prevent its willed accomplishment. It is a self-determination; and that precisely is freedom:

Un acte est libre dans la mesure où je me reconnais en lui. Il ne pourrait être autre qu'il n'est sans que moi-même je me saisisse comme alteré. Le désavouer, c'est donc me désavouer moi-même (2).

Marcel then posits a conditioned, moral freedom. The motives and essences governing action and which it has for its purpose to realise are to be understood neither as physically determining nor as logically determining, but as subjectively determining. They are the very constitutive stuff of the self; the obscure "presences", both personal and supra-personal within it. Marcel in his works and conversation employs readily the example of the forgotten name which acts as a "veiled presence" upon the mind, although the latter cannot articulate it:

Mais rappelons-nous ce qui se passe lorsque

(1) Ibid.
(2) Ibid., p. 72.
nous cherchons un non oublié; nous procérons à une série de tâtonnements, d'essayages, jusqu'au moment où jaillit dans une lumière d'évidence le non cherché. Comment ces essayages sont-ils possibles... tout se passe comme si cependant ce nom que je cherche à me remémorer était non donné devant moi mais présent en moi bien que voilé. C'est une présence de cet ordre, c'est-à-dire une présence non objective, qui peut seule être celle de l'idée régulatrice dont je rappelais le rôle essentiel (1).

We may, then, speak of the act as being not determined, but "surdéterminé" or "surmotivé":

De toute évidence ce n'est pas sur le terrain de la causalité qu'on peut se placer pour distinguer entre l'acte libre et l'acte non-libre, moins encore sur celui de la détermination. Je serais tenté de dire que l'acte libre n'est pas indéterminé, mais au contraire surdéterminé; c'est-à-dire qu'il se laisse comprendre non comme maillon dans une chaîne de causes et d'effets, mais comme expérience de l'unité concrète et supra-intelligible qui constitue la personnalité (2).

Here, then, in contrast with a gratuitous, unmotivated freedom is a positive freedom which preserves all the reality of liberty and yet safeguards value, envisaging an act that is free, not simply because it is in itself free, but because it frees us. And such a freedom is only possible within the context of a positive inter-subjectivity, that is one where the contingent and the transcendent self are in effective mutual relation, the latter as the end informing and calling forth the former's activity; and not as in Sartre, where the

(1) Ibid., pp. 71-2.
(2) Ibid., p. 69.
To grasp the fundamental difference between the two Existentialisms, that of Sartre and that of Marcel, we must face the fact that they are expressions of two quite different things. The former is a philosophy of the tragic consciousness in the Hegelian sense, the latter is a moral philosophy.

We have suggested elsewhere that Sartre's Existentialism, in spite of its claims, is not even a philosophy of action (1). Sartre employs the terms "situation", "engagement" and "responsibility" in a special sense. To take them at their face value leads one to assume, as Sartre would have us believe, that we have to do with a philosophy of action. But if Les Mouches and later statements such as L'Existentialisme est un humanisme are put in the general context, this seeming philosophy of action appears in a new light. Liberty as defined by Sartre is one with the process of negation whereby each and every "representation" of the self, all that is "given" is denied. It is identical with the dread and feverish instability of a consciousness which cannot, without destroying itself, maintain any position it has received or acquired. It is what Daniel calls an "arrachement a soi".

It will be recalled that Sartre places freedom in the lack and in the refusal of constraining motives. Is not the true freedom, then, simply in inaction? He who "experiences his freedom" is he not simply the one who, recognising that no cause, either from outside himself or from his own past, has claims upon him, refuses to act at all? This is the case with Mathieu in L'Age de Raison, who has become a mere "attente (1)." But Sartre will not have this; what he is aiming at is a valid philosophy of action. And the solution he proposes is outlined in Les Mouches. It is, he assures us, possible to act and yet retain the essential of freedom by means of an "engagement" whereby we act with the full conviction that the end we pursue is of our own free choice and, in addition, with the full determination that whatever end or cause we choose will be instantly and incessantly negated as a sufficient motive for subsequent action. Each moment will be then a new and tragic moment of a never to be repeated decision. Responsible action will then be compatible with an absolute freedom. Thus it is that Oreste commits his act of killing Egiste and, having accepted it as his, refuses its claim upon his repentance. For to accept it as it is "in-itself", to admit it to be a crime would be to allow its power to determine his life and to enclose himself in a final formula.

Now if we look at this solution closely, we find that

(1) L'Age du Raison, p. 56.
our contention still holds good; it is still not really at bottom a philosophy of action. Take Oreste, for example, whom Sartre proposes as the type of "l'homme engagé". It is true he has expressed himself in an act and so "engaged" himself. But what is the precise value of this act and the nature of this "engagement"? All he can say of the act once accomplished is that it is his; he cannot pass any judgment as to what it is, for by so doing he would enclose himself in a final formula. He must continue eternally to negate his act as it is; whatever sense he gives it will at each moment be unique. It can then have no objective value. Once accomplished it enters into his general situation, that is as a mere ground for a subsequent project which owes nothing to it. In short, it cannot constitute a motive conditioning his freedom and giving purpose to his activity. It cannot, as the normal sense of moral responsibility requires, work within the present and introduce a principle of continuity and growth into his life. And if that is so, Oreste's act has no more significance than any preceding or future act. Each and all are gratuitous; each being "free from the others", all are equivalent. To be free is not to be oneself, it is rather the capacity to be neither this nor that, but all indifferently according to what one chooses.

Now, what would appear untenable viewed as a philosophy of action assumes another validity when seen for what it is, namely a philosophy of the tragic consciousness. In fact,
Sartre places liberty not in the decision of the will, but in the negation of consciousness. A state rather than an act, it consists in a "suspension" of the being that constrains. There is then little difference between the liberty of Mathieu and that of Oreste. The one is an "absence", the other a "suspension". The intervention of an act does not change their essential substance which is to be identical with the negating consciousness (1).

Here lies the inner sense of this Existentialism. It is the drama of what might be called the sceptical consciousness. It describes the gnawings of a consciousness which cannot rest on any position and whose freedom is not the power to act and realise a permanence of moral endeavour, but the instability of a thought that cannot rest but must always doubt, deny and refuse. That is why, as Sartre himself recognised in an interview, his novels are not novels of character, his people are not persons but centres of indetermination. And it is noteworthy, as his declaration shows, that he places liberty not in the act but in the indetermination. "Cela n'apporte justement la liberté. Cela me délivre de la nécessite de créer des caractères... C'est Jean Vaudal qui... a noté qu'au coeur de chacun de mes personnages, il y avait l'indétermination, le néant, et non

(1) Marcel has put his finger on the spot when he asks: "Par quelle prestidigitation peut-on passer du manque, de l'indétermination à la décision proprement dite?" (L'Existence et la liberté humaine chez Jean-Paul Sartre, loc. cit.)
The all-important point is that in Sartre's doctrine there is no place for the moral consciousness as such. The foundation of the latter is what we call feeling, the slow, imperceptible growth of bonds linking us with the world and other selves. This type of vivifying interaction of self and world, each giving meaning and purpose to the other's activity, is ruled out by Sartre's premises which, in spite of his doctrine of "inter-subjectivity", remain idealistic. As he sees it, the world, in itself devoid of meaning and intelligibility, only acquires those when organised by consciousness. He is therefore obliged to deny two things. First, the possibility of an unconscious activity. Secondly, the existence of any elements of value in what is objectively given. Consciousness is placed in the world as an absolute freedom in face of an inertia. The situation is a mere ground or matter to be organised: "La situation," we read in La Nausée, "c'est de la matière: cela demande à être traité" (2). Freedom, which is identical with consciousness, consists precisely in the negating of the situation as it "is", in order to constitute itself as an end in itself, independent of the world and its motivation. Even other selves give nothing, for they appear simply as elements of

(2) Paris, Gallimard, 1938, p. 192.
the situation to be transcended. Whatever values and meanings, then, are given to the world are conferred by consciousness alone; and, more important still, they are what it chooses them to be from moment to moment, it being the condition of conscious and self-conscious activity that each successive value or meaning, having entered into the general situation, should be negated, and its power to provide sufficient motivation for subsequent decisions be denied.

It may well be asked if this is an adequate account of the process whereby the self constructs his moral life. Does man exist wholly in the mode of criticism and self-criticism? Is he not, at a deeper level, immersed in a process in which he and the world are joint participants and where, if he gives meaning to the world, it too gives meaning to his existence by providing given ends for his activity. Moral freedom is surely in the relation of mutuality obtaining between him and others whereby he "recognises", as Marcel says, rather than constitutes values inherent in his situation and strives to realise them as ends by his personal activity. It is within the context of feelings, developing in the margin of consciousness from an initial compresence of self and things, that freedom finds effective means of operation. It is this essential basis of moral freedom that Sartre does away with by transforming feeling itself into "facticité": "Le sentiment se construit par les actes qu'on
There is entailed a corresponding misunderstanding of the function of time in the moral life. The past has no claim on the present; it is a mere "matter" whose value is determined by the present and which, as it is "in-itself", the latter negates. Temporally the self exists wholly in the present of consciousness which introduces a "néant" into the past-present immediacy. Anything, therefore, in the nature of a duration, the concept of "repetition" as defined by Kierkegaard and hitherto considered as fundamental to Existentialism, is excluded in Sartre's definition of existence. But it is precisely in duration that a tissue of feeling, those multiple strands binding the individual to the community and others, is slowly elaborated—by virtue of the immanence of the past in the present, working within it beneath the conscious level. Sartre's philosophy makes no place for history; and this is shown most clearly in his treatment of repentance. The picture he draws in Les Mouches, all the more easily as he confuses superstition and religion, is a caricature of repentance. In no religion is it construed as the subjection to a dead past; if it means anything, it means the past and present conjoined in a process where each vivifies and gives meaning to the other.

As Marcel rightly observes, the relation of the self to its past cannot be defined in terms of negation. The self's (1) L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, p. 45.
transcendence with respect to the latter is everywhere manifest in repentance which, although forward looking, does not exclude the presence of meanings, values and virtues inherent in the past as such. For if it is true to say that the subject must preserve a "liberté de regard" in relation to his past, that certainly does not mean that his freedom consists in his independence of his past to the point of its being indifferent to his present (indifferent in the sense implied by Sartre's conception, that is as an indeterminate matter devoid of value in itself and acquiring value solely from the choice of the self):

Oui certes, il est vrai de dire que je dois conserver en face de mon propre passé une certaine liberté de regard faute de laquelle je risque de me perdre dans l'automatisme. Mais que faut-il entendre au juste par cette liberté de regard? Avant tout, me semble-t-il, que je dois sans cesse confronter ce que j'ai fait et ce que je me dispose peut-être à faire avec une certaine idée informulable qui est en moi comme principe ultime de régulation personnelle (1).

We have to remember that Marcel has defined freedom as a power of self-liberation. This means in temporal terms that we become free not in freeing ourselves from our past as such, but from what in our past represents so much dead weight, all the sin, error and self-destroying stuff accumulated therein. But we do so to release the active virtue which our past contains, all that represents personal construction and which, operating as "veiled presences" or

(1) Aperçus sur la liberté, p. 71.
"evidences", are then enabled to work for present salvation. Such is the very sense of repetition or hope, the making operative of the value which the past contains in its own right.

The fundamental point is that Sartre is the victim of a self-consciousness whose ceaseless action corrodes the basis of the moral life. He has lost the sense of natural, temporal growth, the sense of "patience" which, as Marcel has said, is the very sense of time itself. Sartre's Existentialism fails to recognise that existence is as much a datum as a construction: there are elements in our situation which have to be accepted as such; once subjected to disrupting reflection, they evaporate and, with them, the complex tissue of our being within which our freedom and self-creation are effectively deployed.

In Marcel's view, Sartre distorts the fundamental datum of human existence, which is its insertion in a transcendent world, a world no mere anonymous matter or ground upon which freedom uprises as an end in itself, but a context informing the self's liberty and providing it with the ends to enable it to be deployed in meaningful and hopeful process of self-realisation. He fails to see, remarks Marcel, that man does not so much "choose" his values as "recognise" them. That the dimension of true transcendence and hope is lacking, he adds, is due to Sartre's failure to admit anything in the nature of a "don". Quoting a phrase of the latter -- "Donner,
c'est s'approprier par la destruction en utilisant cette destruction pour s'asservir l'autre (1)" - he observes: "Au fond, pour ça, un être libre répugne à recevoir (2)." And this precisely because, with Kant, he identifies wrongly "recevoir" with "subir", the spiritual with the material; the true meaning of "recevoir" including the notion of "response" and signifying other than a mere passivity. It is, in fact, for Marcel the relation of "call" and "response" which best describes the mutual interaction of self and transcendent. Given Sartre's unsuspected dualism, "l'insertion concrète ou organique de l'être individuel dans le monde devient impensable; on n'a plus que deux termes en présence: une facticité en quelque sorte inerte, et une liberté qui la nie pour l'assumer en suite (3)."

We have suggested (4) that Sartre's Existentialism is the expression of the dilemma of the modern intellectual, particularly felt in France; one, moreover, which simply states in a new form a dilemma experienced throughout modern French thought and literature and indigenous in a highly intellectual people. The opposition between Sartre and Marcel mirrors in a sort a permanent opposition in French thought expressive of the conflict between the two structural patterns of French civilisation - the intellectual and the

(1) L'Être et le Néant, p.685
(2) L'Existence et la liberté humaine chez Jean-Paul Sartre, p.32.
(3) Ibid., pp.32-3.
(4) Loc. cit.
moral.

At the same time, the opposition is already implicit in the equivocal viewpoint of the Phenomenology from which modern Existentialism derives. The Phenomenology of Husserl aims at cutting under the mind-object dualism. No doubt, Husserl posits that the world exists for a consciousness, that is "phenomenally"; but this seemingly Idealistic premiss is modified by the doctrine of intentionality which states that all consciousness is consciousness of something. Thought is an activity of transcendence aimed at constituting the world, and the self within this world, giving them and their relationship sense and significance. Consciousness is the positing of "myself-in-the-world".

The Existentialism developed by the Germans simply identified consciousness with existence. Here Kierkegaard's influence came into play. The self, he stated, finds itself in a characterless world where both are meaningless; but by purposive action the realm of anonymity is transcended and the self and the world emerge as significant existents. It is, however, Heidegger who represents most fully the existential position. He shows how the self by its decisions comes to "ex-sist" and transcend its "in-sistence" in the amorphous "brute existence" (das Seindes), attaining the plane of authentic human existence where the world and the self acquire significance.

Now, if we look at this Existentialism in the light of
its phenomenological sources, we discover it is open to both a Realistic and an Idealistic interpretation. We have a self immersed in a world to be constituted as meaningful existents by the conscious, purposive activity of the former. But we can view this construction as a mutual activity where self and world each constitute the other — the point of view of Gabriel Marcel. Or we can see the world as a mere inert matter which consciousness organises and against which the self is set in opposition. This will be Sartre's viewpoint.

In the case of Sartre, however, an influence as important as that of Phenomenology or that of Heidegger is that of the classic French philosophie de la conscience, derived from

(1) This seems to be Husserl's view. "We thus see that consciousness (inward experience) and real Being are in no sense co-ordinate forms of Being, living as friendly neighbours, and occasionally entering into 'relation' or some reciprocal 'connexion'... Between the meanings of consciousness and reality yawns a veritable abyss. Here a Being which manifests itself perspectively, never giving itself absolutely, merely contingent and relative; there a necessary and absolute Being, fundamentally incapable of being given through appearance and perspective-patterns... Consciousness, considered in its 'purity', must be reckoned as a self-contained system of Being, as a system of Absolute Being, into which nothing can penetrate, and from which nothing can escape; which has no spatio-temporal exterior, and can be inside no spatio-temporal system... On the other side, the whole spatio-temporal world, to which man and the human Ego claim to belong as subordinate singular realities, is according to its own meaning mere intentional Being, a Being, therefore, which has the merely secondary, relative sense of a Being for a consciousness. It is a Being which consciousness in its own experiences (Erfahrungen) posits, and is, in principle, intuitable and determinable only as the element common to the (harmoniously) motivated appearance-manifolds, but over and beyond this, is just nothing at all." (Ideas, pp. 152-3.)
Maine de Biran and represented in modern thought by Lagneau, Brunschvicg, Alain and Valéry. This Idealism anticipates Sartre's distinction between the en-soi and the pour-soi, as between the existence appertaining to "things" and that appertaining to man, and describes the latter in terms of a consciousness which "refuses", "negates" the world of things and by its activity constructs a transcendent order of being and value in its place.

Sartre has much in common with Valéry in particular. In Valéry too we find the opposition between being "in-itself" and the being of consciousness which negates the former and organises it "for-itself" in terms of its own project. The whole philosophy of Valéry revolves around the fact of liberty, with which the being of man is identified and which is defined by him, as by Sartre, as a pure, unmotivated freedom. For in Valéry too the self in-itself is "nul et informe", incapable of proposing ends or values. Its rôle is that of an undifferentiated ground from which the conscious self forms whatever values it chooses (1). Thus consciousness, says Valéry, constructs both the world and the self's personality, but its constructions have value only in so far as they are freely created. Within those momentary and

(1) It may be noted that Valéry's doctrine of time and space envisages, like Sartre's, an initial pre-temporal and pre-spatial undifferentiated medium. Space and time as such being ideal constructions. For Marcel, the primitive medium in which man finds himself inserted in the plural world is already through and through spatio-temporal; it is no mere undifferentiated ground, but the matrix of value.
gratuitous constructions the self of consciousness cannot itself be enclosed, it remaining free to be neither this nor that. Sartre too, in similar manner, underlines that although consciousness is "positional of the object", it is not "positional of itself"; for consciousness must remain free to negate each and every objective "appearance" it may have caused the self momentarily to assume (1).

The inner link attaching Sartre and Valéry is apparent in many formulas of the latter: "Rechercher le comble de la liberté" (2); "Qui es-tu? Je suis ce que je puis (3)." Both philosophies are versions of the philosophy of the Pure Act.

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A prominent feature of the Sartrian doctrine is the relation established between liberty and despair. Absolute and unconditioned, freedom is so because it is in its essence despair and anguish. It is inasmuch as man is a negating consciousness that he is free. "Le désespoir ne fait qu'un avec la volonté (4)." "L'angoisse est... la saisie réflexive de la liberté par elle-même (5)." His attempt to present his philosophy as a doctrine of optimism (1) "Toute conscience positionnelle d'objet est en même temps conscience non positionnelle d'elle-même." (L'Être et le Néant, p. 19.)

(2) Mélange., p. 137.
(3) Ibid., p. 157.
(4) Quoted by P. Emmanuel, op. cit.
(5) L'Être et le Néant, p. 77.
is a pure play on words (1).

However, the cult of "absurd" and despairing action finds its full development in the thought of Albert Camus and Georges Bataille. Marcel has subjected it to searching criticism, laying bare its implications in so far as it bears witness to the spiritual confusion of the contemporary world (2).

The central principle of Camus is the opposition between man and the world. Man finds himself in a world which is both inexplicable and alien to him. A creature of reason, he stands alone in an irrational universe with all the lucidity to see its irrationality and vanity. "Si j'étais arbre parmi les arbres, chat parmi les animaux, cette vie aurait un sens ou plutôt ce problème n'en aurait point car je ferais partie de ce monde. Je serais ce monde auquel je m'oppose maintenant par toute ma conscience et par toute mon exigence de familiarité. Cette raison si dérisoire, c'est elle qui m'oppose à toute la création (3)." Such is the "absurd" situation in which man finds himself. And the reply to it can only be the "absurd" life, revolt and defiance. Man must live in complete lucidity, without hope, accepting his finite and absurd situation, exalting his humanity in a world "where everything is given and nothing is explained." "L'homme y retrouvera enfin le vin de l'absurde (1) L'Existentialisme est un humanisme, p. 62.
(2) Le refus du salut et l'exaltation de l'homme absurde, in Homo Viator.
et le pain de l'indifférence dont il nourrit sa grandeur (1).

With Georges Bataille the cult of "absurd freedom" reaches a paroxysm. What he calls "expérience" is for him the sole value. He calls on man to launch upon "un voyage au bout du possible de l'homme (2)." For this he must renounce all ends that might circumscribe his action and live wholly in the instant of experience, the "project", as he terms it, being "une remise de l'existence à plus tard (3)."

Rejecting all ends and all knowledge, man must live in "la nuit du non-savoir", "noyé d'angoisse" - a life of "absurdity" and irony, "à la limite du rire (4)."

Here Existentialism turns its back upon all transcendence and ends up in a sort of super-Nietzschean philosophy where action becomes an end in itself and a sort of despairing, daemoniacal ecstasy. A sort of exaggerated humanism denying any transcendent values, any claim upon the self of others or God and leaving man alone, defiant in an indifferent world.

In these doctrines we see revealed, more clearly than in Sartre, the relation between a philosophy of despair and a philosophy that exalts action at the expense of the transcendent values which can alone give it meaning.

In his analysis of them Marcel brings out first of all their temporal implications. Bataille's doctrine of "l'expérience intérieure" centres round the condemnation of

(1) Ibid., p. 75.
(3) Ibid., p. 76.
(4) Ibid., pp. 49, 62.
the "project"; and by the latter he means the attempt at self-construction in terms of repetition. The "project" is a "postponing of existence". In opposition to it he places the "sacrifice", namely a constant self-destruction or destruction of all that might bind or restrict the gratuitous self-expression of the individual from instant to instant. "Le sacrifice est immoral, comme la poésie, puisque le plan moral est le plan du projet, comme celui du discours d'ailleurs (1)."

Marcel sees in this philosophy a form of the "instantaneism" that he has so often denounced, but one which is of specifically Nietzschean origin, - "nietzschéen ou pseudo-nietzschéen, dyonisien ou pseudo-dyonisien." (H.V. p. 265.) The personal order is reduced to a sequence of fragmented moments of ecstasy and frenzy sustained by the inner despair; veritable "culture de l'angoisse" considered as "la valeur centrale".

But the negation of transcendent binding values condemns the author to a distortion of the personal life; for without the recognition of such values, immanent in subjective experience and operating by way of a past and an anticipated future to enlarge the present and so provide permanence and growth, personality would be doomed to an anarchy which belies the very notion of personality:

Comment ne pas voir que, de ce point de vue, tous les rapports structuraux qui constituent l'armature, non seulement d'une communauté,

(1) Ibid., p. 269.
No doubt, he goes on, there is a sense in which the dominance of the "project" may be harmful—when moral ideals degenerate into abstractions and stultify the very growth it is their function to facilitate; but without the work of purposive "projection" the moral life is impossible. "Condamner le projet, c'est condamner l'homme tout simplement."

At the root of this cult of experience for experience's sake is a quite-mistaken notion of the nature of "experience". For—here Marcel reverts to the conclusions of Phenomenology—experience in its very inmost subjectivity is experience of something; it is intentional; a transcendent is always implied and operative as the end and motive:

"Mais cette consécration de l'expérience en tant que telle peut à bon droit apparaître comme la négation expresse de l'Amour, et par conséquent du martyre en tant que celui-ci est une attestation créatrice tendue vers une transcendance qui ne peut en aucune façon se résorber dans le dynamisme intérieur qu'elle émeut et qu'elle oriente. (H.V. pp. 269-70.)"

It is only in this context that the terms salvation and grace can have meaning, and Bataille's attempt to explain them in terms of mere immanent experience and solipsistic action is a distortion which to Marcel savours somewhat of "imposture". (H.V. p. 278.)

It is much the same type of criticism that Marcel makes of Camus, whose works on other counts he admires. Here too we have the cult of an absolute liberty rooted in "absurdity" and despair; for once the absurdity of the universe and of
moral values has been recognised, man can affirm himself in his specifically human status only through a revolt "from day to day", born of the sense of despair, death and ultimate decay: "Que signifie la vie dans un tel univers? Rien d'autre pour le moment que l'indifférence à l'avenir et la passion d'épuiser tout ce qui est donné... Savoir si l'on peut vivre sans appel, c'est tout ce qui m'intéresse (1)."

Here again we have a total negation of the transcendent. Camus's philosophy offers a sort of laicisation of Pascal's wager. But, asks Marcel: "Peut-il y avoir défi ou pari sans valeur?" (H.V. p. 285) -- a wager which engages a self wholly immersed in time and torn away from those ontological roots that alone give meaning to his wager. As a philosophy, it is the very epitome of hopelessness, a "monadisme radical" which places man alone and destitute in a world devoid of purpose.

Therein, in Marcel's view, lies revealed the source of this modern mal du siècle. It is, he believes, simply pride -- a pride which refuses to admit the manifest presence of the Transcendent. What dominates is not the will for salvation, but the will to self-deification. And this self-deification man has made possible by an arbitrary isolation of values such as courage and sincerity, which assume meaning and validity only when linked with the fundamental ontic values.

L'illusion paraît consister ici à accorder une valeur intrinsèque au courage, ou dans

(1) Le Mythe de Sisyphe, p. 84.
d'autres cas à la sincérité, alors que le courage ou la sincérité, conditions essentielles de la valeur, ne deviennent que des valeurs authentiques qu'en s'articulant avec d'autres valeurs constituées. Grave est la tentation de désorbiter le courage ou la sincérité, c'est-à-dire de les détacher artificiellement d'un certain organon spirituel, au sein duquel l'un et l'autre exercent leur fonction propre. (H.V. p. 290.)

This process of disarticulation is itself the outcome of the "solipsistic Idealism" which installed the thinking subject in the place the age-old philosophy reserved for Being:

L'ontologie séculaire n'a-t-elle pas été fondée à affirmer, trop souvent d'ailleurs en un langage inadéquat et peu convaincant, que le véritable centre c'est l'être même, et non point du tout le sujet qui affirme l'être, surtout si cette affirmation est représentée comme une projection ou comme l'acte d'une pensée constructive. (H.V. p. 291.)

It is the destruction of the ontological sense, imprisoning man in the narrow confines of his contingent and ephemeral selfhood, that has produced the ennui which is everywhere manifest to-day and of which the cult of unbridled action is but the reverse side. Man, losing the vision of the transcendent, has lost the joyful impact of Divine and human penetration, has lost too the sense of time's fructifying influence in the soul's spiritual growth and the sense of freedom directed towards ends transcending time. In short, he has lost the hope which is both the physical and spiritual symptom of a well-fashioned and God-directed freedom and the essential virtue of a true humanitas.
Marcel's "phenomenology of hope" has been analysed in passing, but it would be advisable here to take it up again in a stricter reference. Undoubtedly, it is as a philosophy of hope, in opposition to the current philosophy of despair that his thought assumes its highest significance.

Certainly, the concept of "angoisse" occupies a central position in Marcel's philosophy as in all forms of existential thinking. But the function that "angoisse" plays in the personal life as defined by him is almost wholly different from the function ascribed to it in those Existentialisms derived from Heidegger and Jaspers and, beyond them, from Nietzsche and Kierkegaard himself in his darker aspects.

Life as it presents itself to the "anonymous" man is a prison, depicted in colours no less black by Marcel than by Camus. An object adrift in a world of indifferent objects, he experiences his life as a species of "lottery" regulated by a fatum over which he has no control and which has assigned to him certain numbers, some already drawn, others to be drawn:

Dès l'instant où j'ai été admis à participer à cette loterie - et cette participation a commencé le jour de ma conception - un billet m'a été délivré sur lequel figure une sentence de mort; le lieu, la date, le comment de l'exécution sont en blanc. (R.I. p. 183.)

Expressed in temporal terms, as we have seen, this subjection to fate is linked with the isolation of the present from its past and from its future; life is experienced objectively, as a series of isolated events which, indifferent to the
subject and outwith his control, have a quality of monotonous sameness, of wearisome recurrence. The result is a "despair without issue"; we become "prisonniers d'unc expérience écartelante, opposant irréductiblement un donné et un remémoré qui, bien loin de pouvoir se fondre, sont voués à se démentir inlassablement l'un l'autre". (H.V. p. 42.)

All sense of futurity and of renewal is lost. At this point, life is transformed into an "épreuve" whose term is the "épreuve absolue", the extremity of despair when it becomes infused throughout with the sense of death:

For in a life seemingly doomed to flow away in a stream of perpetual sameness and purposelessness, one thing alone looms up as the sole end of life, namely death itself:

Despair has become "absolute" and death appears to provide the pivot of human destiny.

Up to this point there is little to distinguish Marcel from Heidegger and Sartre. Now, however, they part company. They differ completely in assessing the ontological value and import of the "existential of death". Whereas Heidegger and the Sartrists find in death and the sense of defeat the final
metaphysical truth from which springs, or rather which contains, the solution of the problem of man's destiny, Marcel sees therein only the "occasion" for the revelation of a deeper truth, of the real metaphysical truth of which it is but the sign. To see no deeper than the appearance is to succumb to the "fascination de l'échec", no less dangerous than the fascination of Objectivity, and to remain cloistered in a purely negative "meta-problematical".

Despair is, indeed, only the "tremplin de l'espoir"; it is a condition pure and simple, the condition requisite to the apparition of hope:

It is in itself, as Kierkegaard says, a "witch's letter" exorcised by the positing of the true selfhood. For death and despair are nothing except by the collusion of a will that allows them to exercise their fascination.

If that is so, a positive dialectic of the j'existe becomes possible in place of the negative dialectic of the n'être plus:
An "ontological counterweight" to death is revealed, and this is no other than the transcendent:

With the positing of the self in its full inner plenitude, communion is restored with the world of persons and with the Godhead in which the latter participates and from which it draws its strength. It recaptures the sense of "openness" that its prison-like existence had hitherto stifled.

We spoke above of the "positing" of the true selfhood. But in actual fact, it would seem, if we interpret Marcel's thought correctly, that a distinction has to be made between hope and liberty itself. Hope arises with the vision of the transcendent and of the possibility of communion, a vision which the act of liberty has to transform into reality. Hope itself is rather a certain spiritual state or state of grace recovered. This is apparent in Marcel's description of it as being unaccompanied by the sense of effort: "l'espérance est l'acte par lequel cette tentative est activement ou victorieusement surmontée, sans que peut-être cette victoire s'accompagne invariablement d'un sentiment d'effort," (H.V. p. 49); elsewhere he defines it as a "faculté de détente". (Ibid., p. 62.) It is not then itself
the act whereby I realise what I hope; on the other hand, it is certainly not a type of illusion. It is an affirmation, the affirmation that by hoping such and such a thing "I contribute in reality to prepare it". (Ibid., p. 65.)

Let us pause here to compare the starting-points of Marcel and the Sartrists respectively. For the latter, solitude is the fundamental fact of existence, by virtue of the nothingness which in the human being precludes communion of self with self or of self with selves. So that the accompanying despair is ultimate; if the individual is to act freely, it can only be that this despair itself contains his freedom. The latter is in some sort implicit therein; and the whole purport of despair, experienced at its extremity, is to reveal itself as being in fact freedom. Despair, in Sartre, becomes sole cause. This is not surprising when we consider that he, like Heidegger, substantialises "nothingness"; for this in turn means that the will which, to use Sartre's expression, is "one with despair", is made a self-sufficient cause. Pushed to its extreme, despair is found to be the very "being" of liberty, as liberty is found to be the very "being" of despair.

On the contrary, in the Marcelian dialectic, despair experienced at its most intimate, is seen to be "nothing" or, as Kierkegaard puts it, a "witch's letter (l)," a mere appearance; for with the annulment of fate, the mind (1) The Concept of Dread, p. 143.
recovers its natural and habitual state of grace, which we call hope and which is and becomes, not the cause but the "climate" for willed realisation. In Homo Viator Marcel quotes a note, not inserted in his original Journal Métaphysique, where he defines the positive reality concealed in "metaphysical anxiety":

Inquiétude métaphysique. — Il me semble bien qu'une métaphysique n'est rien si elle n'est pas l'acte par lequel une inquiétude se définit et partiellement mystérieusement aussi — parvient, sinon à se supprimer elle-même, tout au moins à se transposer, à se transmuer en une expression de soi qui, bien loin de paralyser la vie supérieure de l'esprit, l'affermisse et l'entretienne au contraire. (pp. 192-3.)

For "to be dreadful" is not an ultimate condition, "it is not to be sure of one's centre, it is to be in search of one's own equilibrium". (p. 193.) In short, dread encloses a positive force directed towards self-affirmation. This positive force may even be defined; it is the "spirit of truth". (p. 195.)

From this follows the dialectic of hope, passing from despair to hope and from hope to realisation, the latter by an act of liberty securing the transcendent whose vision hope has procured.

It may be observed that in the Sartrian dialectic, however subtle it may be, the distinctions tend to be verbal, and the progress largely illusory. As is normal in all philosophies rooted in an Idealistic premiss, it establishes a series of identities: despair = liberty = transcendence or self-realisation. With his usual penetration Marcel
speaks of it as involving a sort of "infernal circle." (H.V. p. 255.) The value of Marcel's positive dialectic lies in the real progress accomplished in each phase; in such manner that the ontological advance cannot fail to be recognised, nor one term be confused and arbitrarily identified with another.

What then is hope? It is, says Marcel, neither knowledge nor action, it is a call to both; it is vision and anticipation, communion restored but not yet effectuated:

L'espoirance est essentiellement... la disponibilité d'une âme assez intimement engagée dans une expérience de communion pour accomplir l'acte transcendant à l'opposition du vouloir et du connaître, par lequel elle affirme la pérennité vivante dont cette expérience offre à la fois le gage et les prémices. (Ibid., p. 9.)

It is a state of mind intentionally directed and capable of providing out of its vision and foresight the ends for freedom to achieve.

What grounds, however, can hope offer to justify action? On this point Marcel has many interesting things to say. Briefly, hope would, in his view, be assimilable to faith. All hope, indeed, is "absolute", even in its seemingly more limited forms referable to an absolute:

Par là se trouve déterminé ce qu'on peut appeler le repère ontologique de l'espoirance - espérance absolue, inseparable d'une foi elle-même absolue et qui transcende toute conditionalisation, et par là même, bien entendu, toute représentation quelle qu'elle soit. (Ibid., p. 63.)

We employed above the term "affirmation". But we must be
careful to define the sense of this affirmation. If we mean a judgment formulable in objective terms and consequent upon deliberation, no term could be more inapplicable. It is precisely such a conception of hope which does away with its validity and gives grounds for scepticism. To make explicit both the object of and the reasons for our hope, to ask if the motives for hoping are sufficient or insufficient is to detach ourselves from our hope; that is a question which alone an outsider can put:

Mais en réalité, la question que le sujet est censé se poser à lui-même et, dans le cas particulier, résoudre négativement, ne surgit pour lui que s'il se détache en quelque façon de son espérance; elle surgit dans un registre différent, en fonction d'une raison calculatrice qui procède, avec les moyens bien approximatifs dont elle dispose, à une véritable comptabilité des chances. (Ibid., p. 87.)

For the man who hopes, in the act of hoping, the reasons are always sufficient, for they are in some sense independent of the so-called facts. So much so that, to quote Marcel's example, a mother asked to account for a hope that her son will return may, while hoping, at the same time admit objectively that his return is impossible: "à la racine de ce jugement objectif de la mère qui, en tant que tel, ne peut être valide, il y a chez elle l'acte d'une pensée aimante qui refuse ou qui transcende le fait." (Ibid., p. 88.)

There is then in hope an affirmation, not objectively determinable, yet absolutely valid for the subject:

Ce qui est donné dans l'espérance c'est cette
simple affirmation: Tu reviendras. Et sur ce "tu reviendras", la critique objective est dépourvue de prise, elle ne s'exerce légitimement que là où il est traduit dans un langage qui est celui de la prévision ou du jugement de probabilité. (Ibid.)

This is so true that any attempt even to delimit the object of our hope destroys it, whereas the more it "transcends the imagination" the more solidly nourished it is. (Ibid., p. 60.)

What then is this affirmation if it is not to be a mere taking our desires for realities? It is a certain state of mind (in the phenomenological sense, that is involving an intentionality), what we might call a spiritual "climate"; at bottom it is a call to action and realisation of a transcendent anticipated: "Ce qui dépend de nous, c'est en somme de nous disposer favorablement pour rapport à une grâce possible." (Ibid., p. 197.) Its relation to grace and its religious connotation are everywhere stressed by Marcel:

...la vérité est bien plutôt que j'ai conscience en espérant de renforcer, en désespérant ou simplement en doutant, de distendre, de relâcher, un certain lien qui m'unit à ce qui est en cause. Ce lien, de toute évidence, est d'essence religieuse. (Ibid., p. 65.)

Such is the function of hope in the moral and religious life. We might, however, distinguish two moments in its operation, as we did for Marcel's "liberty". An initial moment, when it paves the way for the choice of existence, a second moment, when it prepares the ground for further repetitions. In the first moment, the "spirit of truth" has
to deal with the temptation of death. It disposes the soul to a state of grace, the very contrary of an exaltation - "une absolue possession de soi, un calme en quelque sorte surnaturel". (Ibid., p. 199.) And in this spiritual climate it allows space for the will to destroy the fascination of death: "L'esprit de vérité... c'est un refus explicite, une négation expresse de la mort." (Ibid., p. 205.) With this destruction communion is restored. In its second phase, its function is to maintain the state or "habit" of grace so as to allow the continued infusions of the actual grace which seconds the will in its effort at realizing communion and the prospects of hope. Here it operates as a sense of participation and implication, of communion and openness to spiritual exchanges: "recours à la communion, recours à l'espérance". (Ibid., p. 81.) Above all, as a sense of implication in the temporal process, whereby the perennity of the self and of other personal entities, such as the family, is secured:

...celui qui espère, pour peu que cette espérance soit réelle et ne se réduise pas à un vœu platonique, s'apparait à lui-même comme impliqué dans un certain procès. (Ibid., p. 47.)

For "hope implies an original relation of consciousness to time". (Ibid., p. 70.) It is essentially the recovery of the prospective sense working through the union of past, present and future:

Par là s'éclaire et se complète ce que nous disions plus haut sur le rapport qui s'établit entre l'âme et le temps dans l'espérance. Ne pourrait-on pas dire que celle-ci implique toujours la liaison
supra-logique d'un retour (nastos) et d'une nouveauté pure (Kainon ti)? On pourrait dès lors se demander si conser-
vation ou restauration d'une part, et révolutiation ou renouvellement d'autre part, ne sont pas les deux moments, les deux aspects abstrairement dissociés d'une même unité qui est posée dans l'espérance par delà tout raisonnement, toute mise en forme conceptuelle. (Ibid., p. 90.)

In short, hope is the prophetic and fructifying
consciousness of "possibility" operating as the call to
self-realisation in time. It is essentially a "virtue",
the "specification of a certain inner force". (Ibid., p. 84.)
It is synonymous with love and faith and like these it is one
with the very spirituality of the self, inasmuch as it
partakes of the Divine vitality which sustains all Being and
from which it emanates. It is the habitus divinely
implanted that calls each and every member of the personal
universe to collaborate in the process of mutual creativity:

Espérant, je ne crée pas au sens précis de ce mot, mais je fais appel à l'existence d'une certaine créativité dans le monde, ou encore de ressources réelles placées à la disposition de cette créativité. (Ibid., p. 69.)

Il s'agit au fond d'une confiance spontanée dans la vie, qui peut être regardée presque indifféremment comme un appel ou comme une réponse; c'est par elle et par elle seule que l'homme peut s'enraciner dans l'univers et y développer toute sa stature. (Ibid., p. 164.)
Such is the Christian humanism centred on the action of grace and hope which Marcel proposes and with which he confronts the atheistic humanism of Sartre and others, centred on the play of a despairing and deified will-power. The opposition is profound and grave in its consequences, philosophical, literary and political. Philosophically, it is concerned with the status and function to be allotted in modern society to values, whether they have to be given a basis in a Transcendent or to be denied other than empirical value. One of the important features in Marcel's philosophy, in view of the moral and political crisis the world is now traversing, is the clear perception, no less clearly stated, that Being, Value and Freedom will be either saved together or lost together. Destroy or misinterpret one, the two others are likewise destroyed and distorted:

Quoi qu'on puisse prétendre, on ne sauvera pas la liberté sans les valeurs, et a fortiori contre les valeurs. C'est là une tentative désespérée qui à la limite équivaut à un véritable suicide spirituel. Mais d'autre part, les valeurs elles-mêmes ne peuvent être effectivement sauvegardées que là où l'être est effectivement sauvé gardé, non comme il pouvait l'être dans les anciennes philosophies de l'objet, mais comme un mystère auquel je participe du moment où j'existe (1).

If, in particular, freedom is divorced from value and deprived of the basis on which it is nourished, being simply dissolves in nothingness, liberty becoming, as for Sartre, "l'attribut, d'ailleurs négatif, d'une créature qui se nie

(1) Aperçus sur la liberté, loc. cit., p. 73.
We face an either/or where choice is a matter of life and death, for it involves the acceptance or rejection of life and concerns the possibility or not of endowing it with significance. The alternatives of hope and despair are no mere philosophical concepts; they are ways meeting at a cross-roads where the choice of the Christian is fraught with peril.

In his most recent writings Marcel puts before all other problems the present-day crisis in values (2). He believes this crisis has come about under two main influences. Within religious thought itself, the revival of semi-Jansenist heresies, associated with the contemporary disciples of Kierkegaard, has played a conspicuous part. Their misrepresentation, as Marcel sees it, of the doctrine of original sin has contributed to dehumanise man and to poison the springs of life. Sin, says Marcel, is a principle of death set within the authentic life; redemption is the act whereby God, by His Grace, restores the balance. But it is false to conceive man, life and nature as in themselves wholly evil. Exaggerated insistence on the principle of sin and death leads to an arbitrary separation between man and God and between

(1) Ibid., p. 74.
man and life as between what is bereft of value and what is
wholly value. From there it is but a step—and here is
the second influence—to the Nietzschean "transvaluation".
Man sets himself up as the being who denies God and the
created order of life and who refuses all intimations of
value in order to centre himself upon and to glory in his
upstart freedom. He substitutes an "ethics of choice" for
an "ethics of vocation".

According to Marcel, the meaning of values, the relation
of value to freedom, and the process whereby values emerge,
these are properly comprehended in the light of the
traditional Christian doctrine of Grace, and there alone.
He believes that "les notions de liberté et de grâce ne sont
pas réellement dissociables, mais qu'elles s'articulent l'une
d'après l'autre, et qu'une liberté pensée sans une référence à la
grâce risque de perdre toute valeur et toute signification,
si même elle ne se mue pas en son contraire (1)." Man's
condition is that of a being "en situation qui ne peut se
saisir que dans son insertion". As such, his being is
nourished on the "gifts" which the spiritual and personal
world, in whose context he resides, dispenses and bestows
upon him. His freedom is throughout given meaning by the
intimations of value which life proposes, for life itself is
"le don fondamental...ou encore le fait d'être au monde...à

(1) Don et Liberte', Giornale di Metafisica, Fasc. VI, Dec.,
1947, p. 485. This article was previously given as a lecture
at the Collège philosophique de Bâle in May, 1947.
une certaine place dans l'immense aventure humaine (1)."

The act of freedom is the act of self-creation, but one
where the act is suspended upon the "receipt" of the spiritual
intimations and where selfhood is as much a "gift" as a
creation:

S'il en est ainsi, la liberté, entendue
comme création de soi par soi, ne sera
concevable que pour un être qui, s'il va
au fond de lui-même, est appelé à
s'apparaître comme étant fondamentalement
don,
bien loin de pouvoir en quelque sens que
ce soit s'attribuer cette caricature d'absurdité
qu'évoquent la plupart des athéismes
contemporains (2).

The creation of values is inseparable from this mutual
activity of interrelated spiritual forces where each unit
receives and gives. Values emerge within this process.
They are not, of course, fully constituted independently of
the self's activity; but none the less they are presented
to his activity as intimations that he cannot and must not
refuse. Freedom is the power to bring to fruition the
spiritual values inherent in the world; for the world in
which man is inserted is no mere amorphous, indeterminate
ground, but throughout instinct with value, a value which
for its emergence in the fully constituted world of personal
destinies awaits and demands the collaboration of each and
every freedom.

This process of creating values, however, cannot be
adequately explained in terms of causality. The very

(1) Ibid., p. 490.
(2) Ibid., p. 494.
inseparability of what is received as a gift and what is
attributable to the self's action precludes or renders
dangerous the use of the term cause as applied to the active
subject. In fact, the self appears and is definable as
cause only to the "moi réfléchissant"; the term is inadequate
in the perspective of what Marcel calls the "moi orant". In
this perspective, the perspective of mutual creativity, only
religion can provide an approximate notion. The type of
relation obtaining here is what religion means by grace,
manifest as a power of "generosity" and illumination. For
what characterises precisely the higher type of causality
subsumed under the term grace is the power of "irradiation"
transcending the giver and the receiver and uniting them in
a common centre of spiritual activity, in a profound "inter-
subjectivity". It is - here Marcel reverts to the tradi-
tional Augustinian doctrine - a form of "illumination", where
the light shed is seen and recognised simultaneously with the
object which it strikes: "De même que la générosité n’est
discernable pour nous qu’à travers les dons qu’elle prodigue,
de même la lumière ne se laisse reconnaître qu’à la faveur
de ce qu’elle éclaire (1)."

It is in this world of gifts and graces that values
derive, that being is constituted and that liberty becomes
positive (2). This is the living nourishment apart from

(1) Ibid., p. 490.
(2) Marcel has expounded similar views in a lecture Etre et
Valeur given at the Collège des Sciences Philosophiques in
May, 1947, and repeated at Vienna and elsewhere.
which all three wither and die. The modern world, in Marcel's view, has brought about this divorce of man's being from its spiritual content, and the philosophic nihilism apparent in so many contemporary thinkers is the measure of the disease. The crisis in values is, and many would agree, just as much a crisis of freedom; and both have their source in a failure to recognise man's implication in a transcendent which informs and gives meaning to his action and divorced from which feeling with its perspective of hope dries up.
Sartre's conception of freedom, like Heidegger's, is the corollary of a veritable *ontologie du néant*. He defines the being peculiar to man in terms of the process whereby the self disrupts the initial subjective immediacy and puts Being in-itself "in question", so introducing "nothingness" into Being and into the world. "Une cause réelle en effet produit un effet réel et l'être causé est tout entier engagé par la cause dans la positivité; dans la mesure où il dépend dans son être de la cause, il ne saurait y avoir en lui le moindre germe de néant, en tant que le questionneur doit pouvoir opérer par rapport au questionné une sorte de recul néantisant, il échappe à l'ordre causal du monde, il se désenglue de l'Être. Cela signifie que, par un double mouvement de néantisation, il néantise le questionné par rapport à lui, en le plaçant dans un état neutre, entre l'être et le non-être - et qu'il se néantise lui-même par rapport au questionné en s'arrachant à l'être pour pouvoir sortir de soi la possibilité d'un non-être... L'homme se présente donc, au moins dans ce cas, comme un être qui fait éclore le Néant dans le monde, en tant qu'il s'affecte lui-même de non-être à cette fin (l)." It is precisely this process where the self "nothings itself" (se néantise) that secures

(1) *L'Être et le Néant*, pp. 59-60.
for it its peculiar and proper type of being. "Si l'homme se comporte en face de l'être-en-soi - et notre interrogation philosophique est un type de ce comportement - c'est qu'il n'est pas ces êtres. Nous retrouvons donc le non-être comme condition de la transcendance vers l'être (1)." It is this act of néantisation that signifies freedom and transcendence in Sartre's philosophy. Further, it is linked with dread, the latter being "la saisie réflexive de la liberté par elle-même (2)."

It is then obvious that "nothingness" has an ontic significance; indeed, Sartre's doctrine develops an Ontology of not-Being parallel with his Ontology of Being. He affirms that the néant is the origin of negation and not the inverse. It has, therefore, a being. It cannot be the product of Being in-itself which is wholly positive. It must have its source in a particular being which "makes nothing of the Nothing in its being", a being, in other words, which is its néant. And that is the being of man. "Il faut évidemment trouver le fondement de toute négation dans une néantisation qui serait exercée au sein même de l'immanence; c'est dans l'immanence absolue, dans la subjectivité pure du cogito instantané que nous devons découvrir l'acte original par quoi l'homme est à lui-même son propre néant. Que doit être la conscience dans son être pour que l'homme en elle et à partir d'elle surgisse dans le

(1) Ibid., p. 83.
(2) Ibid., p. 77.
monde comme l'être qui est son propre néant et par qui le néant vient au monde (1)"

In short, Sartre attributes undoubtedly a veritable "being" to "not-Being (2)." The relation between those two he has never satisfactorily explained. His philosophy gravitates between the two Ontologies. He does try to unite them by suggesting that the reality is composed of a tension between Being and not-Being: "Il est vrai qu'on peut concevoir d'autre manière la complémentarité de l'être et du néant. On peut voir dans l'un et l'autre deux composantes également nécessaires du réel, mais sans 'faire passer' l'être dans le néant, comme Hegel, ni insister, comme nous le tentions, sur la postériorité du néant: on mettrait l'accent au contraire sur les forces réciproques d'expulsion qu'être et non-être exerceraient l'un sur l'autre, le réel étant, en quelque sorte, la tension résultant de ces forces antagonistes. C'est vers cette conception nouvelle que s'oriente Heidegger (3)." Nevertheless, his Existentialism, as an ethical system; is rooted in a Negative Philosophy that attributes an ontological reality to the "nothing" of dread.

The source of this Negative Philosophy is undoubtedly Heidegger. The latter too derives negation from the néant.

(1) Ibid., p. 83.
(2) No doubt the "philosophy of consciousness" evolved along the same lines, but it stops short of giving reality to this not-being or negativity. In that lies the essential difference between it and Sartre, Sartre's philosophy being a metaphysics founded on a theory of consciousness, the former remaining, on the whole, within the limits of psychology.
(3) Ibid., p. 52.
"Le 'Ne pas', ce n'est pas la négation qui l'engendre, mais la négation est fondée sur le 'ne pas', lequel a son origine dans le néantir du Néant. La négation n'est en outre que l'un des modes du comportement qui néantit, c'est-à-dire un mode qui est fondé préalablement sur le néantir du Néant (1).

Moreover, he declares the problem of "Nothingness" to be the metaphysical problem. "S'il est vrai que l'interrogation sur l'être en tant qu'être soit la question compréhensive de la Métaphysique, la question du Néant s'avère d'une nature telle qu'elle circonscrit l'ensemble de la Métaphysique (2)."

Indeed, that "tension" between Being and not-Being on which Sartre might insist is replaced in Heidegger by what is ultimately a wholly Negative Philosophy. For, as we have seen (3), the reality made present in dread as the inner substance of Being is precisely not-Being experienced as death, as the end, completion and absolute "having-been" that transcends process and is concealed in the depths of time and dread. This "Ground" is in fact an absolute "having-been", eternal and wholly transcendent; as such, Heidegger terms it a "not-being" or Un-wesen (4).

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(1) Qu'est-ce que la Métaphysique? pp. 36-7.
(2) Ibid., p. 41.
(3) Cf. Chapter VII.
(4) Vom Wesen des Grundes III.
CHAPTER XIII

TRAGEDY

The religious view of Existence has its counterpart in a tragic view of life. Marcel's elucidation of the tragic is undertaken with reference to his own dramatic theories, from which it cannot be justifiably dissociated. We propose, therefore, to discuss his general theory of the tragic in its relation to tragedy, as we find it expressed in various articles and prefaces, and notably in the important article entitled Note sur l'évaluation tragique (1).

He begins with a clear distinction between the tragic and the pathetic: "Le pathétique n'est pas une valeur, au lieu que le tragique en est une au premier chef." (E.T. p. 68.) The pathetic is a mere "state" of mind induced in the spectator by a process of "suggestion":

Le pathétique c'est...la qualité en vertu de laquelle une situation d'abord représentée, puis idéalement vécue, détermine chez le sujet des réactions émotives telles que l'effroi, l'indignation, la pitié, etc...le sujet est tiré hors de soi, arraché à lui-même par des procédés de suggestion auxquels il se soumet à la fois de son plein gré - par jeu - et pourtant dans des conditions telles qu'il puisse se persuader à lui-même qu'il cède à une contrainte irrésistible.

(Ibid., p. 68.)

The pathetic is thus simply the outcome of a "technique"

(1) Journal de Psychologie, Jan. - March, 1926.
of suggestion exploiting the emotions of the subject. It is the contrary of a value, whose function is essentially "attractive", resulting in a recreation, or a new synthesis of the total personality:

"Quelle que soit la nature de l'action fugitive qu'un dramaturge habile parvient à me communiquer, quels que soient les moyens par lesquels il réussit à modifier l'état actuel de ma conscience, il me maintient au niveau de mon expérience journalière, il ne procède point à ce renouvellement de la vision, à cette reconstruction indivise, à cette refonte en un mot, hors desquels il ne saurait y avoir place pour des valeurs authentiques."

(Ibid., p. 70.)

From this it is apparent that there can be no tragic other than in a world of selves endowed with unity and real objective substantiality:

"Il n'y a de tragique possible que là où est préalablement posée une certaine unité à la fois actuelle et idéale et qui peut toujours être pensée sur le modèle d'une conscience; disons, si l'on veut, d'une unité spirituelle."

(Ibid., p. 70.)

This spiritual unit may be that of a person, a nation, group or church "pourvu qu'elle ne soit pas réductible à un enchaînement abstrait ou à une sorte d'agrégrat qui ne deviendrait un tout que pour le sujet qui le conçoit". (Ibid.) Realities objectively real, "transcendantes à la conscience qu'en prend ou qu'en prennent celui ou ceux qui la forment". (Ibid., p. 71.) Such spiritual units, as we have already seen, have their prototype in the self conceived as cause or will: "Cette unité spirituelle pourra dans tous les cas être
regardée comme une volonté qui tend vers certaines fins plus ou moins clairement représentées, qui pour le moins se veut elle-même." (Ibid.)

A tragic evaluation of existence is possible only in a world of real substantial selves striving to achieve realisation as spiritual forces. Which presupposes a further condition, namely the implication of such substances in the concrete of temporal duration. The drama of Existence is the drama of active, willing selves, involved in the historical process which is the instrument either of their success or failure. A world, therefore, of selves striving to express their true nature in their acts and yet subject, by the very fact of Space and Time, to loss of selfhood and to see their acts degraded into the "meaningless gestures" of idiots. For in a world wherein Time is wholly transcended, where the self is wholly its essence and where its acts are, as it were, "soudés à l'être", there is no place for tragedy:

Le saint n'est un personnage de tragédie que dans la mesure où il participe à un monde qui en quelque façon l'exclut - plus profondément encore où sa sainteté se retournant contre elle-même et contre ceux qu'elle devrait sauver, se révèle contradictoire et destructrice de soi. (Ibid.)

The essence of tragedy, in short, is conflict (only possible in a world of Time, providing an obstacle to the full realisation of self). But does this mean that the will is menaced by external forces? By no means. The conflict of the self with external forces, even other selves, belongs to the pathetic, not the tragic order. The spectacle of
such conflict is merely productive of emotions, such as pity and indignation, whereby the spectator identifies himself with the hero or heroine over and against their persecutors. It belongs to what Marcel calls the "ordre du pour et du contre". But let us, says Marcel in a passage of cardinal importance which deserves quotation in full, picture another type of conflict:

In other words, the essence of tragedy is internal conflict; it is inspired by the vision of a self beset, in its strivings, by the temptations life sets in its path, a prey to the "indigence ontologique" which is its heritage and which condemns it irrevocably to inner division and to the anguished consciousness of this division. The tragic is the drama of what Hegel so expressively has called the
"unhappy" or "contrite consciousness".

Confronted by this spectacle, the spectator transcends the pathetic sphere, "the order of for and against". Psychologically, there takes place a rupture of the rhythm of attention, by virtue of which the mind transcends the vicissitudes of Time and the "ordre des partis pris", and is enabled to contemplate the drama sub specie aeternitatis:

C'en est fini, en effet, de l'anxieuse impatience avec laquelle je guettais les surprises que l'instant à venir pouvait apporter avec lui; ma conscience actuelle cesse de se modeler sur le cours instable des circonstances. Un point est atteint d'où je domine l'incertain déroulement auquel jusqu'à présent l'émotion m'attachait. (Ibid., p. 73.)

Such a state may be rightly termed a state of "transcendence" or a "détachement pur". It is a mode of "contemplation" in the sense that it is a mode of "being" rather than of "knowing". It is essentially participation: the participants in the drama cease to be "objects" for the spectator for and against which he can take sides, and take their place as elements in an integrated and significant whole.

From which it follows that the tragic is the contrary of an "enseignement". The tragic order transcends the purely moral plane with its categories of "good" and "evil", all practical partis pris. And with this transcending of the "moral" plane is bound up the "scepticism" which the tragic, in its pure essence, presupposes. This state of contemplation attained, the conflict of the divided self
or consciousness is exhibited in all its irrevocability and fatality; it is the vision of the self striving to maintain its being and to edify itself, yet doomed by the element of contradiction it carries within itself to see its construction shattered and brought to nought. This is the supreme tragic vision, inscribed in the dramas of a Shakespeare, a Racine or an Ibsen:

Les Revenants et plus encore Hedda Gabler, et avant tout le Canard sauvage et Rosmersholm viennent s'inscrire en faux, non point du tout contre tel ou tel système d'affirmations éthiques, mais contre l'idée même d'un pareil système...; il n'y pas de tragédie, en effet, où ne s'accomplice la destruction d'un édifice bâti par la main de l'homme, édifice où s'incorpore une activité qui porte en soi le principe même de son anéantissement. (Ibid., p. 74.)

Tragedy involves the spectacle of a self torn by its inner contradictions and forced to renounce all hope of "assuring the foundations of its personal life". Nietzsche is, for this reason, the very incarnation of the tragic consciousness, for in him "cet acte de renoncement parvient à l'expression la plus lucide et la plus désespérée de lui-même". (Ibid., p. 75.) The vision of the tragic culminates and must culminate in a "sentiment de l'universelle plénitude – de l'universelle inanité". (Ibid., p. 76.)

In describing the final phase of the tragic experience as a mode of "contemplation" wherein temporal vicissitudes and the "order of for and against" are transcended, Marcel recalls Schopenhauer's conception of art as "délivrance".
But in fact, his theory of the tragic is more in keeping with Nietzsche's than with Schopenhauer's aesthetic of contemplation and detachment. Schopenhauer's tragic pessimism, indeed his whole aesthetics has a Plotinian basis (1). The "detachment" which is the culmination of tragic experience, is a state of resignation, passivity and quiescence, resulting from a liberation of the "will to live", that is from Time and "becoming (2)." The artist attains this state, as does the tragic consciousness, by a vision of things, not as related to our needs and therefore subject to change and deperition, but as they are in their eternal essence. It is this "one-sided view" which Nietzsche criticises, a view "which values art, not from the artist's standpoint but from the spectator's, because it brings salvation and deliverance by means of the joy produced by the unreal as opposed to the existing or the real...

Deliverance in the form and its eternity (just as Plato may have pictured it) (3)." To this "Apollonian" attitude he opposes the "Dionysian", which finds the source of tragedy

(2) "Was allem Tragischen, in welcher Gestalt es auch auftritte, den eigen tümlichen Schwung zur Erhebung giebt, ist das Aufgehen der Erkenntniss, dass die Welt, das Leben, kein wahres Genügen gewähren könne, mithin unserer Anhänglichkeit nicht werth sei; darin besteht der tragische Geist; er leitet demnach zur Resignation hin." (Schopenhauer, Sämtliche Werke, Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1877. Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, Vol. II, p. 495.)
in the consciousness of Time and change, creation, destruction and deperition: "The first-named would have the vision it conjures up eternal; in its light man must be quiescent, apathetic, peaceful, healed, and on friendly terms with himself and all existence; the second strives after creation, after the voluptuousness of wilful creation, i.e. constructing and destroying (1)." In like manner, Marcel sees in the fact of Time, as the agent of destruction, the prime condition of a tragic sense of life. If then he speaks of tragedy as a mode of "contemplation", as procuring a release from temporal vicissitudes and a vision of things sub specie aeternitatis, he does not imply, like Schopenhauer, a complete deliverance from all that is temporal. The catharsis which tragic experience affords is accomplished only by virtue of participation at a deep level in the temporal vicissitudes which confront the experiencing subject and which he lives for himself. The "detachment" he attains derives not from turning his back on existence, but from so intense a "living" of existence that he transcends the temporal vicissitudes it involves and views them sub specie aeternitatis. The conception of eternity here presented is that positive one already described: eternity as "time-fulness", in contrast with the Platonic concept of eternity, taken over by Schopenhauer, as an absolute timelessness, as pure immutability and passivity.

(1) Ibid.
Schopenhauer's conception of the tragic experience is out and out transcendentalist. It involves a wholesale depreciation of Time and Existence. It does not account for one of the elements essential to tragedy - the deperition and destruction which Time involves for the ideal self. A world of ideal, eternal essences is not a tragic world. And a contemplation which is a pure vision of such a world of eternal essences cannot give rise to the tragic sense.

Yet Marcel is almost equally at variance with Nietzsche. For if Schopenhauer fails to account for the tragic sense by an error of Transcendentalism, Nietzsche fails by what is at bottom an error of Immanentism. His theory of the tragic omits the other element essential to tragedy - the factor of Transcendence. The sense of deperition has no tragic significance except in relation to an order of eternal transcendent selves seeking self-realisation. In fact, his view of tragedy is bound up with a "réalisme du temps". The tragic spirit seems, in Nietzsche's philosophy, little else but the sense of Time. And thus his description of the tragic experience gives little, if any, place to "contemplation" or "transcendence"; it omits to account for the culminating catharsis.

Marcel's conception of the tragic and description of the tragic experience avoids both pitfalls. It affirms rightly that there is no tragedy without conflict between a transcendent, eternal essence of the self and the obstacles which
Time sets in its path as it seeks vainly to realise itself. The tragic sense or experience has its source in this situation of conflict. It involves, as its culminating point, for the subject who experiences tragedy, either actively, as himself the tragic subject, or as a spectator of tragedy by participation, what Marcel calls a state of "contemplation", "pure detachment" or "scepticism" — but a state which is neither the absolute supra-temporal "deliverance" of Schopenhauer, nor the essentially temporal "attachment" of Nietzsche. It comprises both the sense of Time and deperition and no less the transcending of Time by such an intense living of its despairs that the drama of life is revealed sub specie aeternitatis. The tragic subject, by the espousal of his situation and its temporal vicissitudes, at one and the same time senses the inanity and vanity of his efforts in so far as he is doomed never wholly to realise his essence, yet comprehends, in the fulness of his suffering, the relation of his situation to the transcendent ends and purposes which he seeks to realise, and no less to the ends and purposes to which man and the universe are ordained. "Sentiment de l'universelle plénitude — de l'universelle inanité."
There is presupposed as the essential condition of
tragedy a world of real, substantial selves as so many wills
or centres of spiritual energy striving to realise their ends:

For where nothing has been edified, nothing can be imperilled
and nothing destroyed. The condition of the tragic is that
the self exhibit a unity, a purpose and a will, that it should
seek to express its essence in its acts and construct for
itself a moral personality. Where there is no such unity of
the self posited there is no basis for tragedy. Thus it is
that the tragic, in Marcel's view, is utterly absent from the
work of Proust who, by his theory of the "interritens du
coeur", transforms the self into a sequence of discontinuous
states:

The denial of the unity and substantiality of the self
is the cause of the "dépréciation du tragique" in our day. Contemporary man has too acute a consciousness of his multiplicity:

The theatre of Pirandello demonstrates all too clearly this "depreciation of the tragic" in the contemporary world. By their infinite multiplicity his characters are refractory to any tragic evaluation:

Moreover, they exclude any participation of the spectator in the reality of the drama which confronts him. His characters are mere "objects", "curiosities" or "cases", interesting only as are the phenomena of nature to the scientist or the clinical patient to the doctor; for deprive the individual of his concrete unity as a person or a "toi", you render impossible all personal relationship:
...déracinier notre croyance à l'existence individuelle de ces êtres, c'est, en rompant le lien vital qui nous unit à eux, nous mettre hors d'état non seulement de participer à leur drame, mais d'y croire. Impossible de diviser un être d'avec soi, sans me diviser d'avec lui, sans affaiblir à son endroit ma puissance d'adhérer, sans le convertir à mes yeux en un cas que je devrai désormais considérer du dehors avec moins de sympathie que de curiosité. (Ibid., p. 42.)

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In his own dramas Marcel has sought to illustrate his view of the "pure tragic (1)." He aims at a drama of "consciousness" or a "tragique de pensée", relying not on the pathetic and its effects but on the presentation of the inner conflicts of the person, victim of his inherent contradictions. He explains this clearly in the preface to Le Seuil invisible:

J'estime donc que le drame doit être explicite; le lyrisme tragique que je souhaite est un lyrisme de la conscience claire. Ce lyrisme ne devrait rien à ces émotions qu'on a trop exploitées; la surprise inquiète en face du mystère, l'angoisse au seuil de l'inexprimé. Ce sont là, à mon sens, des sources taries (2).

At bottom, what he is attempting to create is a "tragédie pure", in conformity with the "schème abstrait du tragique pur" established in L'Evaluation tragique, and on a parallel with the attempt of poets such as Valéry and other

(1) For the relation between his theatre and his philosophy, cf. G. Fessard, Études, March - April, 1938.
inheritors of Symbolism at a "poésie pure";

S'il fallait préciser davantage, je dirais simplement, et non sans de fortes hésitations, qu'il y a chez beaucoup d'auteurs un effort plus ou moins explicite pour dégager un théâtre pur, effort en quelque manière comparable à celui de Paul Valéry pour créer une poésie pure. (T.F. p. 45.)

In other words, he aims at a tragedy which will reduce to a minimum, if not altogether eliminate, those elements which are not properly tragic - all pathetic elements and even, in the narrow sense of the term, ethical ones, just as "pure poetry" would dispense with all elements not properly "poetic". And he believes that such a tragedy, no less than such a poetry, would provoke "an emotion analogous to that procured by music". Like the ideal of pure poetry, pure tragedy would of course be an ideal limit, if only by the fact that the tragic emotion proper is of short duration.

For the culminating moment of "contemplation", which is the pure essence of the tragic experience, is necessarily transitory, to be replaced by a relapse into the "order of for and against" and of temporal partis pris:

Notons d'ailleurs que ce n'est là inévitablement qu'un moment fugace de la dialectique spirituelle: ce moment tend presque irrésistiblement à se supprimer au profit d'un volontarisme doctrinal qui, en rétablissant le primat de l'activité constructrice, substitue à l'évaluation tragique un parti pris nouveau, c'est-à-dire une position particulière dans les limites de ce que j'ai appelé l'ordre du pour et du contre.

(E.T. p. 75.)

On the other hand, responsive to the conditions of his art, Marcel recognises that all tragedy must have a realistic
basis, presenting real selves and set in real conditions.
From this standpoint he criticises the Symbolists, Claudel
included, for the ideal character of their settings. His
objection to the Symbolist theatre goes even deeper, for what
is at stake is not merely a technical question, but a
profoundly philosophical one. Symbolists like Maeterlinck
aim at suggesting (by means which appertain to the pathetic
order) the world of the unknown, hidden from the intellect
and only obscurely representable by symbol (and hence the
abstract nature of the characters even of Claudel's theatre).
But the conception of an indeterminate Unknown impenetrable
to mind is, in Marcel's view, correlative of Absolute
Idealism; such a real is a version of the Indeterminate,
favoured by the Neoplatonists. It is certainly not the
positive, transcendent realm of Being, which is the Being of
Marcel's Realism:

Nous ne pouvons plus situer le principe de
toute réalité dans une région inaccessible
à l'entendement; cet inconnaisable devant
lequel on nous invitait à nous prosterner
ne nous apparaît plus comme le foyer,
mystérieux d'où émanerait toute pensée, mais
comme la zone indécise où la connaissance
s'obnubile pour s'éteindre enfin dans
l'indéterminé (1).

As a final point, it might be noted that Marcel's attempt
to create a "pure tragedy", conceived as a "tragédie de
pensée" marks a return to what is most living in French
Classical Drama of the Seventeenth Century. It too, in its
(1) Preface to Le Seuil invisible, p. 7.
essence, is a tragedy of internal conflict and consciousness, the unities serving precisely as a means to eliminate all that is brute external event and which by its nature belongs to the pathetic, and to centre the tragic on the inner revelations and the self-awareness accompanying personal relationships. The movement back towards Classicism in contemporary French literature is no mere ephemeral mode; it marks a return to the inner and vital inspiration of the French consciousness, an inspiration which finds its expression not merely in her art but in her philosophy. If we allow for the fact that Classical Drama has a Cartesian outlook and identifies the subjective with states of mind, whereas Marcel, as a Realist, portrays revelations of Being to consciousness in immediate participation, Marcel's art is a continuation, in spite of that important divergence, of the Classical Art, putting its accent on the experiencing subject and, while admitting the primacy of Being, on the subjective and the inward, on the "tragique de pensée". While, in a more general manner, this return to Classicism forms part of a more international movement which has its representative in the English-speaking world in the neo-Classicist, Mr T.S. Eliot.

Marcel's philosophy itself offers a supremely tragic view of life. In him, the vision of selves seeking self-realisation but condemned to see their efforts at personal edification brought so often to nought, reaches its utmost lucidity:
At the same time, Marcel offers to the existing subject a new tragic ethics in place of the practical ethics with its abstract categories of good and evil which serves in the empirical world. He shows how, by intensity of experience, the individual may transcend, in what is the very essence of tragic experience, the temporal vicissitudes and despairs of his situation, attaining a mode of contemplation wherein he may apprehend something of the significance and the purpose of his living. And lest it might be thought that the "detachment" advocated savours of dilettantisme, it must be underlined anew that such detachment can be the product solely of an initial acceptance of life. The subject, if he is to attain the tragic sense and make it of spiritual value to himself, must first choose life and experience it fully. He cannot transcend "the order of for and against" itself until he has chosen "for" or "against". He must choose and struggle for cause or country. But, by the vigour of his choice and by the espousal of his cause, he can transcend the brute empirical fact and realise the significance of his actions in relation to the transcendent ends of the universe, ends which embrace not only the cause for which he fights but that of his adversary, not only himself but his enemy. Only
then can he experience to the full the truly tragic sense of life with its sentiment of "inanity" and yet of "plenitude".

In discussing the nature of Marcel's dramatic works (we limit ourselves to the "pièces tragiques"), we must be fully alive to the originality of the conception which underlies them; for it is in the light of it that we can demonstrate the metaphysical import of his plays at the same time as assess their intrinsic dramatic value.

First and foremost is the intimate relationship established between drama and metaphysical reflection. In the Preface to the Monde Cassé Marcel speaks of these together as being "deux versants d'une même hauteur". In actual fact, the dialectic which forms the substance of his thought has always been anticipated in terms of dramatic conflicts: far from being illustrations of his philosophy, his plays have provided the concrete situations, dramatically and imaginatively envisaged, which his philosophy was later to elucidate. "Ces conflits sont avant de s'exprimer, avant même de se justifier logiquement (1)."

In actual fact, this statement is not quite exact. What we have is rather a curious parallelism: the dramas themselves constituting a dialectic incarnate in live scenes (1) Preface to Le Seuil Invisible, p. 7.
and characters, being already an elucidation in terms of the concrete and the imaginative. There is indeed not one of the situations — time, hope, despair, death — which form the object of phenomenological study in *Étre et Avoir* or the later books, that is not to be found simultaneously posed and resolved in dramatic terms.

In short, Marcel's drama is itself a dialectic or metaphysical reflection in concreto; and like the more abstract dialectic, its substance is formed of the oppositions and conflicts inherent in human experience which set the person at war with himself or with others amid the complex possibilities of affirmation or negation and which, simultaneously lived and reflected upon, bring him to the threshold of being. Thus, as Father Fessard puts it: "Sa valeur tragique se doublant d'une valeur dialectique," Marcel's drama "devient à la lettre expérience métaphysique (1)." Indeed, Marcel has himself recognised this: "Je crois profondément que le tragique repose toujours sur une dialectique latente (2)."

Dialectical in its dramatic structure and movement, Marcel's drama employs means whose import becomes clear only when related to their metaphysical and religious context. For Marcel, the faculty of dramatic creation is essentially one of "incarnation": "La spiritualité au théâtre, c'est

avant tout la puissance d'incarnation (1)." It is the power whereby the dramatist embodies in objective forms spiritual schemes, by which we mean not abstract plots and pre-conceived characters or characterisations, but the essential "mysteries" of a life or lives taken not as data for study or dramatic exploitation but in their inner durée, whose unfolding proceeds, as it were, independently of the hand of the dramatist; if only because the latter so participates in their life that he is subjectively one with it. For this type of creation depends essentially on a self-renunciation on the part of the creator, an "acte d'immolation de soi qui seul rend possibles ces réalités, ces présences devant moi conjurées (2)."

Now, if the primary relation in dramatic art is that between the dramatist and his subject-matter, the second one is that between the actor and this same subject-matter, all the more so as he is the link between the author and the public. The rôle and function of the actor, in Marcel's view, belongs rather to the order of the "mystery" than to the order of mere technique. "Diderot a parlé du paradoxe

(1) Pour un renouveau de la spiritualité dans l'art dramatique, Combat, exp., 1937. Cf. "La spiritualité d'un théâtre axe sur la présence réside d'abord dans le fait que le dramaturge est tenu de procéder à une sorte d'ascèse préalable, et que l'acte par lequel il se renonce lui-même, par lequel il aliène partiellement son initiative en faveur de sa création, n'est pas sans correspondre, dans le registre de l'art, à l'acte de charité proprement dit." (Ibid.)

du comédien, et il a eu raison. Mais il y a autre chose; il y a un mystère du comédien, et sur lequel il ne me semble pas que l'attention du philosophe se soit encore suffisamment concentré (1)." This is so precisely because the actor's role is that of a "response" to the "call" emitted by the dramatist: his is primarily a rôle of self-abdication. "Redoutable est pour le comédien la tentation de se prendre lui-même comme fin et comme centre, au lieu de se donner à ce rôle qu'il a pour mission d'incarner (2)." Yet, on the other hand, he is, as between author and public, the agent by and through whom the "call" goes out to the spectator. He is primarily a mediator. Hence the art of the actor, poised as he is between the "response" and the "call", his rôle essentially spiritual in that he is the transmitter of a message, is not so much the exhibition of a technique as the exhibition of a virtue. "Je pense que nous devons y discernen quelque chose comme cet initialité dont on parle en théologie (3)."

The use of properly theological terminology, particularly of the vocabulary employed by Marcel in his philosophico-religious works, is significant. What is primarily intended is to refute any attempt at reducing the status of the actor to that of a function, as previously the status of the dramatist to that of a mere manipulator of plots and

(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid., p. 461.
characters. Moreover, the relations binding them are themselves not functional but spiritual; they exhibit that type of relationship termed by Marcel participation, where unity cohabits with duality and multiplicity.

It is of course obvious that these relationships are resolved in the fundamental relationship with the spectators of the drama. And here crops up the insidious problem of the "function" of drama. Marcel rejects entirely, and his own plays have nothing in common with, the pièce à thèse, so dear to the modern dramatist (the only type of modern drama which can hold its own against the drama of sensationalism, basing its effects on that pathetic which Marcel has already dismissed as a debasement of the tragic emotion). In his preface to the Monde Cassé, Marcel states that it is not "une pièce à problème", and adds: "ce serait bien plutôt un mystère".

This conception of drama as a "mystery" is fundamental to Marcel's theory and practice. The purpose of the drama, as he sees it, is to create what he calls a "présence dramatique". The play constitutes a "call" to the spectator and demands from him a "response". The type of action it exercises, therefore, upon him is not that of an instrument or a "mechanism", as Valéry would have it, but that of a spiritual influence or "presence":

Rien de tout cela en effet n'est possible sans une activité de réponse que le génie du dramaturge a consisté à amorcer d'abord, puis à encourager, à entretenir et par
laquelle j'ecommunie non pas seulement avec ce qui se passe sur la scène, mais au delà de cette action limitée, particulière, avec une infinie de tragédies soupçonnées chez nos frères. Dès lors ce n'est pas seulement mon sens de la réalité qui s'est aiguisé ou approfondi, c'est une brèche qui se crouse dans l'espèce d'armure opaque qui nous protège et alourdit, une brèche par où peut-être un souffle nouveau va pouvoir passer - le souffle de l'Esprit (1).

Nor is it on the other hand a mere message or transmission of ideas, for the "dramatic presence" which constitutes the active substance of the drama is a call to those possibilities of existence and being latent in the participants: its purpose and effect is to "lancer au spectateur une exhortation non pas à connaître, mais à être (2)."

Seen thus, the various factors at work in the drama - author, actor and theme - are but the vehicle of a spiritual force whose source transcends each and which, in so far as each is responsive to its intimations, manifests its workings in the lives of the spectators. If, at any moment, the virtue of charity and self-effacement is lost on the part of author or actor, the "dramatic presence" fails to be conjured up or is robbed of its potency. But as it animates them, the final result is attained, which is none other than the communion and unity of the participants, author, actor and spectator in the act of mutual self-creation. This final result is obtained in the catharsis, consisting in a purging

(1) Influence du théâtre, p. 361.
(2) Pour un renouveau de la spiritualité dans l'art dramatique, loc. cit.
of the emotions or that state of contemplation already described. And this last is dependent on the power of author and actor—the latter in his interpretation—to envisage the conflicts presented in terms of an ultimate reconciliation beyond the order of "le pour et le contre". 

Dans la vie pratique, je serais vraisemblablement contraint de prendre parti pour l'un de ces personnages contre l'autre, ou de me désintéresser d'eux. Dans l'ordre privilégié de la création dramatique, cette alternative m'est épargnée... Ainsi, en quelque manière, je parviens à m'affranchir de ma condition mortelle; pendant quelques instants, il me sera possible, non pas seulement de respirer plus largement l'existence, mais d'atteindre à une justice supérieure qui ressemble à la charité, qui l'annonce, et qui me permet d'être à la fois les antagonistes, et de les comprendre, et de les surmonter (1).

The final term of the spectators' experience is identical with the primary intuition of the dramatist: the accession to an order of Charity where all contradictions, without losing their intrinsic existential and dramatic substance, become the object of an evaluation purified by sympathy and comprehension.

(1) Les Valeurs spirituelles dans le théâtre français contemporain, Orientations religieuses, intellectuelles et littéraires, 25th June, 1937, p. 788. In a useful parallel Father Fessard quotes a passage from Blondel: "La vraie jouissance esthétique...c'est la satisfaction de dominer, d'un point de vue supérieur à l'espace et au temps, les attitudes, les inquiétudes, les incertitudes des acteurs. D'où naît le sentiment de la beauté dramatique, sinon de cette vision prophétique qui embrasse le développement d'une vie et d'une destinée, de cette intuition divinatoire qui met en quelque mesure le spectateur dans le secret de l'éternité et de Dieu, de cette "prospection" qui fait de notre raison une sorte de Providence intérieure au progrès logique des faits et des passions?" (La Psychologie dramatique du Mystère de la Passion à Oberammergau, Paris, Bloud, 1910, pp. 56-7, quoted loc. cit., p. 49, n. 1.)
In setting out these views, Marcel was positioning the conditions which seemed to him essential for the creation of a Christian Drama. It is in the light of them that his own plays must be judged.

Marcel's drama does not fail to exhibit a certain evolution. This may be described as a progressive awareness of its aims and metaphysical import. What was first defined as a "tragique de pensée" was revealed as having deeper implications subsumed under the term "mystery". The actual themes remain fundamentally the same, with this proviso that, parallel with Marcel's spiritual progress, culminating in his conversion in 1929, his drama becomes ever more firmly centred round the mystery of death and the revelation of its power as an "indice de l'être".

The first two plays - La Grâce and Le Palais de Sable - appeared together under the title Le Seuil Invisible in 1914 (1). The theme of both these plays is essentially that of solitude, of non-communication, the fundamental and main theme of his drama as a whole. In La Grâce, Gérard's faith in divine grace, which enables him to meet death with the fervent conviction of immortality, remains uncomprehended by his wife Françoise who, unable by reason of her materialism, to share this conviction, is left desolate and hopeless, while her love for him is fully understood by him too late, on his death-bed. In Le Palais de Sable, more effective (l) Paris, Grasset.
dramatically and more substantial in its psychological matter, the deputy Moirans has built the edifice of his life on his rationalistic beliefs, but when his daughter Clarisse is converted and decides to enter the Cloister, doubts assail him and gradually undermine the edifice. But this destruction of his life's beliefs acts too upon his daughter and, led to question her vocation, she sees her faith crumble to pieces: she will remain "entre ciel et terre... trop bas pour vivre en Dieu, trop haut pour vivre parmi les hommes". Father and daughter are here typical of two souls whose incapacity for communication is accompanied by a mutual corruption of beliefs. For what is most subtly displayed in this drama is the paradox that solitude, whereby the self is cut off from the creative communion with others, becomes the medium of a malignant influence, corroding and eating into the life-force of the partners. No less subtly displayed is the nature of this corrosion, namely the questioning of beliefs and the treating of them as "problems". Here the intellect achieves the divorce between the aims of action and action itself, a self-consciousness arises which in the long run must ruin them as effective forces of willed activity.

Marcel's aim is to show how this double process, the corrosion of personal beliefs and the malignant influence it extends on the lives of believers and others, is the result of one single evil, namely solitude and separation, which dries up the source of spiritual life that sustains all Being.
and can only sustain beings when it is shared.

The three plays, *Le Coeur des Autres*, *Le Quatuor en fa dièze* and *Un Homme de Dieu* (published between 1920 and 1925, but all composed between 1919 and 1923 (1)) show other aspects of this solitude, its disruptive power. In the first two, both heroes are musicians. In *Le Coeur des Autres*, Daniel is wholly devoted to his art but this noble idealism defeats itself; enclosed within his self, he finds ultimately that "il n'y a plus rien de sacré" and that the "heart of others" is closed to him, his wife herself reduced to "nothing but a rôle" in his life.

It is much the same situation which confronts Claire, the wife of Stéphane, in *Le Quatuor*. Incensed by his infidelities which he excuses on the grounds that they are redeemed in and by his art, she divorces him and marries his brother. But she reckons without the power of the music of the *Quatuor* in which their common life had become incarnated. "Mon histoire - notre histoire - mais hors du temps, purifiée, et telle qu'elle serait pour Dieu." (Daniel had said much the same: "Tout ce qui dans notre vie à tous les deux aura valu la peine d'être retenu, je le consacrerai en l'exprimant." ) Under the influence of the *Quatuor*, she sees this common past relive and the presence of Stéphane made manifest, bringing her to understand the error of her divorce

and the love she has for her former husband confirmed in her love for Roger.

This play is of the utmost interest. In the first place, we have a first mention of the power of absence (later to be envisaged in its extreme form as death) to re-establish the broken link of communication and restore the presence of others over and beyond separation and the grave. Secondly, Marcel wishes to stress the impossibility of delimiting the frontiers of the self. Within the couple composed by herself and Roger, Stéphane interposes and is finally merged with the latter. Roger, Stéphane and Claire have no reality as objective units; their true reality is in their subjective unity. Thirdly, the rôle given to music as the medium of this revelation (an extremely common theme of Marcel's): "Le vrai moi, le moi avec une majuscule, le moi profond... est-ce que ce n'est pas la musique même?" says Stéphane. Music, indeed, by its capacity to incarnate, as no other art does, the essential being of selves, "notre histoire... hors du temps, purifiée et telle qu'elle serait pour Dieu," can become the living embodiment of the spiritual presence, all the more powerful to act as an influence by its being purified of the dross and released from the material and absent envelope (1).

In Un Homme de Dieu, the problem of solitude takes a

somewhat different form. Here the main theme is failure to communicate with one's own self, or insincerity. Marcel has taken the extreme case of a protestant pastor whose whole life and conduct have been built on an absolute sincerity and fidelity to the dictates of conscience. Thus he has forgiven his wife's early infidelity and brought up her daughter, the fruit of this infidelity, as his own; fanatical in his conscientiousness, he allows both to meet again the man who has injured him. But only to find that he has a greater burden than he can bear and, under the promptings of doubt, to question his motives and, beyond them, the beliefs and ideals he has taken for his true nature: "On a vécu des années sur une certaine idée de soi-même, on a cru puiser de la force dans cette idée, et on s'aperçoit qu'on s'est peut-être indignement trompé... On n'en est même pas sûr... Alors on ne sait plus, on est perdu..." These doubts extend to the very principles of his faith: "Et lorsque je pense à Dieu, c'est pareil. J'ai cru quelquefois qu'il me parlait et ce n'était peut-être qu'une exaltation menteuse. Qui suis-je? Quand je cherche à me saisir, je m'échappe à moi-même."

This last "Qui suis-je" might be taken as the theme of Marcel's drama: in this cry solitude shows itself, in its irreducible power to destroy, as evil in se.

To the same period belong three plays, although published later in 1931 under the title Trois Pièces (l). These are (l) Paris, Plon.
Le Regard Neuf, Le Mort de Demain and La Chapelle Ardente.
We shall limit ourselves to the second, the most important of the three and one of the most illuminating and dramatically satisfying of all Marcel's plays.

The action takes place in 1916 during the great war. Noël Vramont, a soldier, returns on leave, only to find that his wife, Jeanne, refuses to have relations with him. Her motive, of which he is ignorant, is psychologically complex. So obsessed is she by the possibility of her husband's death that this gnawing fear has destroyed all sense of future and contaminated her capacity for life in the present. She is led to treat her husband as already dead and to centre her happiness in memory of the past: "Non, ce n'est pas à lui que vous l'avez juré, c'est à sa mémoire, à je ne sais quelle noble fiction que vous fabriquez avec les débris de ce qui fut l'homme. Ce mort révéré, cette idée à laquelle vous l'immolerez, lui... ce n'est tout de même qu'une idole et il n'y a rien en elle de sacré." (p. 160.) She has deliberately excluded all perspective of hope and, under the influence of gnawing fear, finds morbid satisfaction in the image of a past, finished, absolute and dead: "Antoine. - Mais alors, Jeanne, pourquoi fouiller dans ce passé trouble? Jeanne. - Parce que je voudrais comprendre... Je voudrais lire dans cette vie comme dans la mienne, m'en souvenir comme de la mienne. Antoine, avec ironie. - C'est ce que vous appelez ranger vos pensées? Jeanne. - Oui, peut-être... Qu'au moins
lorsque la nuit sera faite, lorsqu'il n'y aura plus entre nous que le silence éternel, la douceur me reste de penser que cette vie tout entière est connue de moi, qu'elle est sans ombre et sans mystère..." (pp. 123-4.) The contrary of true memory, which maintains the connection of past with present and feels it as a "presence", active in present and purposive action. As Antoine, her brother-in-law, replies: "La vérité, Jeanne, je vais vous la dire: c'est que, pour vous, Noël n'est déjà plus qu'un mort; et ce n'est pas même un mort présent avec lequel on communique, c'est un tiers absent sur lequel on enquête." (p. 124.)

As Marcel is careful to indicate, the root of this contaminating is fear; a disease of her whole being, "une sorte de vertige". Moreover, a fear or obsession which has enslaved her will so that her will to live has become negative and destructive. Just as hope is shown to be an active, positive force which calls forth being ("Aimer un être, c'est lui dire: 'Toi, tu ne mourras pas"'), so the former is this same motive-force directed to the refusal and destruction of being. It is as affirmative as is hope, but the affirmation of Evil. "Noël ne reviendra pas." It is an act of "treason", as Antoine rightly declares. Its result is disruption and separation. For not only does her evil will to negation destroy her own happiness and life, it no less destroys that of her husband. Unable to comprehend her motives, he is led to suspect her love and even to imagine
that his brother has replaced him in her affections. His love is destroyed and his life broken. "Il est entré ici vivant; il en sortira...mort," says Antoine. But the influence extends even further to contaminate by its contagion the feelings of Antoine, who hesitates to marry the girl he loves. So that solitude and separation expand in ever widening circles to wreak destruction on everything with which they come in contact.

Mention should be made of the play L'Horizon published in 1945 (1) but written, as Marcel tells us in his illuminating Post-face, in 1928, a year before his conversion. Its theme is exceedingly similar to that of Le Mort de Demain, the rôle of Germain Lestrade in the former being reminiscent of that of Jeanne Framont in the latter. He is, in a similar manner, guilty, as Marcel says, of an "infraction à la loi de notre condition", namely the "devoir de non-anticipation". By that, of course Marcel does not mean that anticipation has no place in human activity; his whole temporal doctrine speaks to the contrary. But a certain "image" of the future, becoming, under the influence of fear, a fixed fascination, may destroy the very sense of process and operate as a dead-weight no less than an image of the past to arrest the natural "fluidification" of spiritual growth. Thus, Lestrade, his death foretold at a spiritualistic seance at the Institut Métapsychique, allows (1) Paris, ed. Aux Etudiants de France.
the thought to haunt him. He sets about "contriving" the life of his wife after his expected death, laying plans for her to marry their friend Bernard in order to safeguard her against the temptations of moral laxity by which he sees her beset. In short, he seeks to use Bernard as an "instrument". But, as it turns out, not he but Bernard dies. And it is left for Valentine, the woman who loves Bernard, to reveal to Germain his error and to bring him and his wife Thérèse back into normal healthy relationship. Or rather, it is the dead Bernard, death itself, working through the spectacle of Valentine's grief, which secures communion.

Here, in this theme of death as a power capable of restoring lost communion through the experience of love and grief in their "absolute" form, we approach a new phase of Marcel's dramatic thinking.

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Up to this point, Marcel's drama is concerned mainly with the modes of solitude, but now it is the perspective of communion which is to come more explicitly to the fore: this perspective being envisaged in the light of the "mystery" of death and its power to re-establish the lost presence.

L'Iconoclaste (published in 1923 (1)) marks the transition stage in this development. Jacques Delorme has (1) Paris, Stock.
remarried, but his dead wife, Viviane, continues to haunt his thoughts and even poison his relations with his second wife. Abel Renaudier, his friend, has also loved Viviane and swears fidelity to her memory. To avenge what he considers Jacques' "treason" in remarrying, and also to break the spell, in his eyes an idolatry of the flesh, which Viviane exercises on him, he sets out to destroy his faith. This he does by raising doubts as to her fidelity. Abel, the Iconoclast, is the intellectual egoist who takes upon himself to judge; and in actual fact his judgment is wrong as regards Jacques' re-marriage, for it was at Viviane's request that he had done so.

Yet the main theme is elsewhere. Both Jacques and Abel swear fidelity to the dead Viviane. But she lives in their memory in different ways. For Jacques she has become an "idol"; it is her physical presence he desires and the past exercises on him an unhealthy obsession in the shape of this physical image of the dead woman whom he wishes to "see, hear and touch". Abel sees the danger of this, but the "spiritual" fidelity he swears to Viviane is no less vain. She is but an idea in his memory, a subjective image of his mind.

For neither is the true rôle of memory nor the true rôle of the dead in their lives understood. It is when Abel learns that Viviane had known his love for her that he, invaded at last by the spirit of charity, can see clearly;
and finally both he and Jacques learn that the dead Viviane, linked as she is by ties with each of them, can act as a spiritual presence, no longer an idol nor an idea lying heavy on the memory, but an active influence in the present to call forth their latent possibilities of mutual comprehension. And it is by realisation of this true "presence" and in answer to its call that the three protagonists may enter into communion again. "Nous avons cheminé dans les ténèbres, mais voici que pour quelques secondes ce passé d'erreurs et de souffrances m'apparaît dans une lumière qui ne peut pas tromper. De toute cette confusion, on dirait qu'un ordre se dégage... oh! pas une leçon: une harmonie." (p. 46.)

The theme of the play is the essential rôle of mystery and spiritual presence in life. To Jacques, who expresses his desire for a more physical certainty of Viviane's presence, Abel replies: "Tentation dont le plus pur de toi n'est pas dupe. Va, tu ne te satisferais pas longtemps d'un monde que le mystère aurait déserté. L'homme est ainsi fait. Jacques. - Que sais-tu de l'homme? Abel. - Crois-moi: la connaissance exile à l'infini tout ce qu'elle croit étreindre. Peut-être est-ce le mystère seul qui réunit. Sans le mystère, la vie serait irrespirable." (pp. 46-7.)

It is for the most part around this theme that the plays which follow Marcel's conversion in 1929 are built. It is not necessary to suppose that these plays are any more
religious. They mark rather a greater awareness of the
spiritual potentialities of drama and of the principles
which underlie a drama conceived as "mystery" and purposing
to be the vehicle of a spiritual "call".

The first of these is Le Monde Cassé (written in 1932
and published in 1933 (1)). In this play Christiane has
married Laurent without love, after an early love for a young
man who had become a Benedictine before she could let him
know her feelings for him and who had since died. The
result is that, drifting apart from her husband, she enters
upon the path of pleasure and unfaithfulness; and,
progressively a prey to despair, she is on the point of
ending all by suicide. It is then that she learns that the
young Benedictine, before dying, had divined her love for
him, and, convinced that his act must have destroyed her
happiness, had offered his life for her as a sacrifice to
her salvation. The presence of her dead lover is rendered
to her in all the fulness of its spiritual potency to soothe
her wounds, to convince her of her errors and to lead to
reconciliation and communion with her husband: the "monde
cassé" is healed and restored to its unity.

The play is an illustration of Marcel's dictum in
Position et Approches: "La mort est une épreuve de la
présence."

Le Chemin de Crête (published in 1936 (2)) is probably
(1) Paris, Desclée de Brouwer.
(2) Paris, Grasset.
Marcel's best play: it is certainly the most subtle and the most difficult of interpretation. The central character is Ariane Leprieur, wife of Jérôme; a victim of consumption, she lives normally apart from her husband, from whom indeed she has long been separated in mind and body. The latter is in love with Violette Mazargues, a young woman who lives precariously on the proceeds of her music lessons. Learning of this love-affair, Ariane finds a pretext for visiting Violette, but not to charge her with reproaches. On the contrary, she places her husband's happiness in her hands and displays utmost disinterestedness. She carries her confidence so far as to reveal to Violette the inmost secrets of her married life. Overwhelmed by these confidences and the friendship she conceives for Ariane, Violette's moral scruples are aroused. Jérôme, as yet ignorant of their friendship, senses that Violette is no longer the same towards him. His reaction is to offer to divorce Ariane, a step he had been loath to take out of respect for her; even although, as both are without money in their own right, it would mean poverty for them. But Violette feels this would be "treason" towards this woman to whose spiritual influence both have become sensitive. "Nous autres, nous avançons péniblement dans les ravins, mais Ariane est toujours sur le chemin de crête..." However, she accepts, only to refuse in horror when Ariane offers to maintain them both, unknown to Jérôme, and even hints that she will commit suicide or at least allow
herself deliberately to die in order to leave them happy. The final scene comes when all three meet to make a final reckoning. As Ariane once more pleads her fine intentions, the truth comes to Violette in a flash: she sees at last that this disinterestedness of Ariane, her saintliness, her other-wordliness and seeming self-abdication are riddled with insincerity, working, no doubt unconsciously, for evil, to destroy the communion between Jérôme and herself. "Dites: avez-vous sur nous autres cette avance incompréhensible et que je n'arrive pas à envier? Je ne le crois pas, je ne peux pas le croire; est-ce qu'il n'y a pas dans cette acceptation, dans ce faux sublime, dans cette fausse sérénité, je ne sais quel mélange sans nom, quelle duperie, quelle imposture involontaire? Le savez-vous seulement? Même si l'on pouvait vous contraindre à dire votre plus secrète pensée, serait-ce la vérité? Saurais-je enfin la vérité?" (p. 198.) "Ce que vous interprétez comme un acte de renoncement ou tout au moins de générosité absolue, je pense moi que c'était une intrusion dans un domaine où rien ne vous donnait le droit de pénétrer... Le droit de condamner, d'interdire, d'exclure, vous l'aviez; mais ce qui ne vous était pas permis, c'était de vous introduire par fraude, à la faveur de l'admiration fascinée que vous aviez su m'inspirer, au cœur même de notre amour - comme si vous aviez voulu... je ne sais pas... savourer du regard un fruit auquel il ne vous avait pas été donné de goûter." (p. 240.) "Et alors j'ai
pense que tout avait été calculé; que vous aviez imaginé le moyen le plus sûr, le seul moyen efficace de me séparer de Jérôme tout en gardant à mes yeux et aux vôtres, ce qui était l'essentiel, un rôle d'héroïne ou de sainte." (p. 242.)

"Vous ne voyez pas qu'en vous chargeant; en vous accusant comme vous vous y évertuez depuis un instant, vous ne tendez qu'à vous grandir à ses yeux et à me rendre par contre-coup plus méprisable et plus vile... Je suis sûre que vous parlez du fond de vous-même; mais est-ce que vous ne voyez pas que si vous jouiez la comédie, si vous étiez la femme la plus calculatrice et la plus perfide, vous ne pourriez pas vous y prendre plus habilement pour creuser entre Jérôme et moi un abîme infranchissable?" (p. 245.) The evil is done: Violette leaves to join a former lover who can assure the existence of herself and child. Ariane, as if to complete her rôle of impostor, accepts the offer to publish the journal of her experiences as a consumptive: "Il faudra télégraphier... que j'accepte, avec quelle reconnaissance!... Le posthume avant la lettre; rappelons-nous bien; le posthume avant la lettre..." (p. 248.)

One essential theme of this play is that of sincerity. There is nothing to indicate that Ariane does not believe herself sincere in her aspiration to sainthood and self-abnegation. Her error, as Father Fessard points out in his fine analysis of the play, is to have assumed the rôle of the saint instead of receiving it. She is the false saint, the
victim of an illusion of her vanity and frustration.

Yet this interpretation does not go far enough and cannot explain the place of this drama in the series of plays of this date, revolving as they do around the mystery of death. We suggest that the play is a study of the false "presence". It is evident that Ariane aspires to fill the rôle of a dead presence - her cry "le posthume avant la lettre", which closes the play, gives the key. She wishes to assume its prerogatives and exercise its beneficent influence. But this can only become possible if and when the self has attained a true spirituality and been purged of desire and egoism. Only then can it operate as a compelling force for good. Her real error is to assume a rôle which it is not hers to assume and to use her death as a threat, as the instrument of a spiritual blackmail, whereas death can only be a force for good and for communion when it ceases to be an instrument and becomes a call. Her aspiration to fill the rôle of a presence is vitiated at the root by her attitude. Ariane is the judge: "Eh bien! puisque vous ne parvenez pas à vous délivrer d'un sentiment de culpabilité, mettons que ce mensonge qui vous pèse soit le châtiment que je vous inflige pour cette faute que d'ailleurs je me refuse à reconnaître." (p. 139.) She takes it upon herself to judge others and her very self-humiliation is a judgment on others, an affirmation of her justness and their sin. But the "presence" does not act as judge, it acts as a force of love, to influence and not to condemn.
In short, *Le Chemin de Grôte* shows the temptation which besets the self, even the most sincere and the most idealistic, to presume upon his own strength and to aspire to a rôle which it is not given to many to fill in life. The image of death can, for such, be the most evil and dangerous of all snares. If there is one lesson which Marcel undoubtedly wishes to give, it is that the life of the spirit requires a sincerity which is only made possible by grace.

In the next two plays, the true action of the dead to procure communion is exhibited. In *Le Fanal* (1), the presence of the dead wife brings together her husband, Antonin Chavière and their son Raymond, and illuminates their lives. Chavière had abandoned his wife to marry Isabelle; his son meanwhile projects marriage with a divorced woman, Sabine. When Raymond returns to the house of his father, laden with the memories of his mother, the latter's presence makes itself felt, opening the eyes of the father to his betrayal of their love, and of the son to the falsity of his engagement; it even brings awareness of their egoism to the two women. Thus it brings about, from beyond the grave, the communion of father, mother and son, found impossible before the death of the mother. "Chavière, avec émotion. - Nous serions tous les deux... Raymond, gravement. - Non, papa, tous les trois, comme autrefois... comme jamais."

*Le Dard* (2) is a more satisfying version of this theme.

(2) Paris, Plon, 1936.
Eustache Soreau has made for himself a successful career and a happy marriage. But, of extreme left wing views, he suffers from this very fact of his own success, so much at odds with his political ideas. An old student friend, Werner Schnee, a musician who has fled from Germany, is invited to stay with him. The latter's idealism renders greater the envy and self-torment of Eustache: his devotion to his mission, his art and his fidelity to his dead friend, the communist Rudolf Schöntal. Under the influence of this envy, Eustache is led to destroy the happiness of his friend and of his own wife. He is the cause of separating Werner from his own wife, Gisela; and is led into infidelity which would have brought about a divorce but for the good influence of Werner.

Eustache's wife, Béatrice, and Werner have found in each other kindred spirits, and their affection ripens to a silent love, but Werner decides to return and sacrifice his love. His motive in this is to preserve his influence as a force for good. By his absence he will be able to operate all the more powerfully as a presence to strengthen her to live and redeem her husband, as Rudolf had been such an influence in his life. "Vous penserez à moi comme je pense à Rudolf. Plus tard, je vous habiterai comme Rudolf m'habite... Et vous vous rappellerez alors ce que je vous ai dit il y a quelques semaines: s'il n'y avait que les vivants, Béatrice..." (p. 118.)
The contrast here is between Eustache and Werner: the first a creature of diseased envy, whose noble ambition has turned against itself and become a force for evil: the second purified by the spiritual influence of his friend, becoming himself an influence for good (1).

It is much the same type of opposition we find in La Soif (published in 1938 (2)) between Arnaud and Eveline. This play, with Le Chemin de Crête, is certainly the most substantial and dramatically satisfying of Marcel's plays.

Amédée Chartrain is a man of fifty who has married, on his wife's death, a much younger woman. He has by his former wife a son, Arnaud, and a daughter, Stella.

The theme of this play is once again separation and ultimate reconciliation. It is Eveline who acts all unwittingly as the agent of separation, while Arnaud, strong in religious faith, is the instrument of final appeasement: it is his rôle to reveal to each character his or her proper rôle, to call up their true natures, and above all to bring them to a mutual comprehension.

It is Eveline's misfortune to become the instrument of mutual mistrust. Confident in her own reason, she is too ready to judge others and to wish others to conform to this summary judgment of hers. In this spirit, she takes upon herself to manage the lives of others and succeeds only in

(2) Paris, Desclée de Brouwer.
destroying their happiness.

Thus it is she comes near to destroying the very life of Stella, whose interests she has at heart. The life of Stella is poisoned by the knowledge that her mother died in a mental home; and when she learns that the cause of her mother's internment was an attempt to poison her father, this knowledge stands between her and her love for Alain de Puyguerland, destroying her faith in the future and rendering her a slave of this fascination of the past. "Amédée. - Mon enfant... j'aimerais mieux te voir affronter l'avenir. Ton avenir. Ce passé ténébreux, dans lequel tu ne peux pas entrer, ne peut que te souffler au visage je ne sais quelles vapeurs... déletères... Stella. - Tu me demandes de me tourner vers l'avenir. Il me semble que je n'ai pas d'avenir. Je n'ai devant moi qu'un mur; et c'est justement... le passé." (p. 216.)

But her situation is rendered all the worse by Eveline's interference. The latter, inspiring in her a doubt as to her father, suggesting that he was to blame and that her mother's motive was simply to gain freedom from an intolerable tyranny. The gnawing problem of her mother's death becomes the cause of further separation between herself and her father.

Then Eveline, judging Alain unfit for her, interferes in their love and prevents what alone could give Stella release from her obsession, namely a happy marriage with the
man whom, but for Eveline's strictures, she would naturally cling to. It is only when Alain, driven to despair, is on the point of committing suicide, that, confronted by the fact of death, Stella can finally shake off her doubts and acknowledge the power of her love.

The prime cause of estrangement is Eveline's misjudgment of her husband: unable to comprehend him or allow for his weaknesses, she sees in him a creature devoid of all affection. "Vous savez comme moi qu'il n'a jamais eu le sentiment d'autrui." "Tu le sais parfaitement, un être ne vaut pour ton père que par l'image de lui-même qu'il contemple au fond de ses yeux. Pour peu qu'elle soit flatteuse..." (p. 266.) Indeed, this is true of Amédée, who has constituted an ideal image of himself which he presents to others, transforming himself in his relations with others into a cipher. But Eveline cannot realise, beneath this, his essential solitude, the frustration of his feelings. "Je suis très seul, maman," he declares pathetically to his mother. It is Arnaud who senses this and reveals it to Eveline finally: "Crois-tu que je ne me juge pas coupable envers lui? Il est pour moi comme une ile où je n'aurais pas encore trouvé le moyen d'aborder. Je prie chaque jour pour y parvenir. Et puis, Eveline, si bizarre que cela paraisse, c'est seulement maintenant et à ton contact que je prends conscience...de sa misère." (p. 276.) And it is he who senses the true explanation of the poisoning: in some way, his mother was not the cause but the unwilling agent:
"Simply parce qu'il s'attendait à ce qu'elle l'accomplit, parce qu'il en avait besoin, tu comprends. Comme s'il fallait qu'un événement survînt pour justifier à ses yeux la pitié qu'il avait de lui-même... Peut-être ceux que nous appelons des criminels ne sont-ils quelquefois que des fascinés. Mais ce crime emprunté dans lequel elle ne pouvait se reconnaître... je pense qu'il l'a séparée d'elle-même. Et c'est alors que sa raison s'est troublée... qu'elle a été vraiment perdue." (p. 277.)

In the drama Arnaud acts as a spiritual presence to explain and reconcile: the subtle motives of each, incomprehensible to pride and reason and interpreted too readily as evil intentions, are interpreted by him in the spirit of charity and true comprehension — only thus can the evil doubts rising out of the past and poisoning the present be exorcised.

Arnaud, moreover, is himself prompted by a mysterious presence, the agent of a Spirit moving in him and under whose influence he becomes himself an influence for good: "Je n'éprouve pas le besoin de donner un nom à mon... partenaire; je sais seulement que c'est une présence... pas une présence humaine... quelqu'un dont je ne peux pas parler, mais pour qui je suis toi. Il est là. Il veille." (p. 278.)

Through time, Eveline comes to realise her error: the error of judging others in a spirit of pride: "Pour parler ton langage qui ne sera jamais le mien, Arnaud, peut-être... oui, peut-être ai-je péché par orgueil. Tu vois, j'en
conviens, je ne m'obstine pas... Le chemin que j'ai suivi jusqu'à présent ne m'a conduite nulle part. J'aimerais changer de route. Puisque tu as des lumières qui me sont refusées, pourquoi n'acceptes-tu pas de me guider? Je serais docile... et humble, je t'assure. Et peut-être apprendrais-je à être plus justé envers lui — puisque tu penses que je l'ai méconnu..." (p. 279.)

But the final instrument of this reunion is once again death, all-powerful to reveal the presence and call to communion. As Arnaud bends over his sleeping father, he cries: "Encore un peu de temps, et toutes ces phrases dont il s'est enchanté se perdront dans le silence; cette affectation dont il est dupe tombera de lui; il restera là seul, désarmé, sans défense, comme un enfant que le sommeil a terrassé et qui serre encore son jouet contre lui. Devant le vivant qui pêrole et gesticule, Eveline, si nous savions évoquer le gisant de demain!..." (p. 288.)

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In passing judgment on Marcel's drama, we must bear in mind the aims it sets before it.

We are free to term it a religious drama, provided we use this term in a wide sense and do not seek to "confessionalise" his plays. It is to be remembered that the conceptions involved in it, although taking their full significance from the context of Christianity and even
Catholic doctrine, remain independent of those: they were, indeed, formed before his conversion and are conceptions inherent in his purely philosophical outlook. The attempt of Father Fessard to "confessionalise" Marcel's drama is, to our mind, doing it a grave injustice and a greater disservice. In many ways, Claudel's religious tragedy is much more confessional, witness *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, which is quite inseparable from Church doctrine. Marcel's drama has a greater universality and a wider appeal. And it is precisely in those dramas where the confessional note intrudes and gives a certain sanctimonious atmosphere, e.g. *Le Fanal*, that he is least successful.

His plays (to be judged as drama) must be taken as belonging to the "intimiste" school and in many respects recall the work of M. Jean-Jacques Bernard (1). It is a drama of personal relationships attempting to delve into the mysterious sources from which spring human motivation and feeling and which call men to solitude or communion.

It is therefore a contemporary and especially an Existentialist drama. But it would not be possible, in our view, to term it a great tragedy, for a purely "intimiste" drama could not, by the limitations it imposes itself, pretend to that status. It would seem that tragedy, to attain both the universality and the power of great drama, must, as M. Thierry Maulnier has said, have a symbolical content:

the use of legend and mythology, consecrated by time, is no mere appendage but a vital necessity for poetic effect; it is the element in which the eternal themes of man's destiny have to be clothed in order to transcend the local and the actual. That an existential drama can work in this sphere is borne out by M. Sartre's *Les Mouches* and especially by M. Anouilh's *Antigone*, both of which restate the legendary in terms of man's present problems, interpreted existentially: but *Huys Clos* remains an "intimiste" drama and its power is limited.

Within the limits set, Marcel's drama is of considerable value: he lacks neither psychological insight nor power of dialogue and dramatic construction. Its principal merit is, as the genre requires, the extreme subtlety with which hidden motives are suggested or brought to the surface and the complexity of feelings is rendered. In this respect, we cannot fail to reflect on the element of "artificiality" of such a drama. At first reading, this artificiality might seem to be lack of spontaneity and truth, but, on consideration, if artificiality there is, it is of the type found in the works of Mrs Compton Burnett (or even Henry James), and inseparable from the evocation in their complexity of feelings and moods, and from the seizing of those sudden contacts and ruptures of contact that characterise the life of the spirit. This very artificiality is the proof of the dramatist's intimacy with his spiritual material.
If Marcel's drama does not have the powerful pathos of great tragedy, it has a power of its own, the spiritual power to influence. It is, as he wished it to be, a "call". It works almost insidiously upon the feelings to induce, not by any effect of pathos nor by any poetic appeal, that confrontation of the self with itself from which alone springs spiritual renewal.

And it has this power to operate as a "présence dramatique" precisely because it is everywhere impregnated with the presence of the dramatist. We feel at all moments his sincerity and his self-effacement before the "message" of which he is the vehicle.

This is only possible because the dramatist has achieved his desire to transcend the "order of for and against" and, turning his back on judgment or condemnation, has found the plane of contemplation.

In this chapter we have attempted to study the principles of Marcel's tragic sense of life and bring them into relation with his plays. And at the conclusion of our study, we can comprehend more clearly the nature of this tragic sense. It is above all a type of contemplation transcending but steeped in life's conflicts. It is neither optimism nor pessimism, for both of these are judgments, both fail to transcend the "order of for and against".

The true tragic sense, as Marcel sees it, is not far removed from the spirit of charity; and it is for this reason that, given it, man achieves a true spirituality,
without it he succumbs either to the allurements of the pathetic illusion or to those of an empty frivolity, passing under the names of pessimism on the one hand and optimism on the other.
Together with Maritain, Blondel, Claudel and Péguy, Gabriel Marcel is a stern opponent and critic of the values of the contemporary world. However different their starting-point, those five Catholic thinkers are united in the defence of the order of Grace and of the transcendent realm this order reveals.

Marcel's most lucid and penetrating exposé of the weaknesses of contemporary thought is to be found in a lecture given to the Federation of the Association of Christian Students in December 1930 and entitled Remarques sur l'irréligion contemporaine (reproduced in Etre et Avoir). In it he examines the nature and sources of contemporary disbelief and the validity of the claim that the religious question is "périmée". This claim, he finds, is made by three different schools of thought - Rationalism, the "philosophy of technique" and the "philosophy of life".

Rationalism rejects religion and the religious viewpoint by virtue of the 18th century Enlightenment doctrine or doctrine of rational progress to which it remains wedded. Now, a critical examination of this doctrine reveals its limitations and defects. In the first place, it reposes on a radical misunderstanding of religious values. It conceives the history of humanity on analogy with the
development of the individual from childhood to maturity and it associates religion with what it considers the immaturity and ignorance of the child-mind. The Rationalist critique of religion rests on the arbitrary assertion that the spontaneous and non-reflective beliefs of the child-mind possess no value as knowledge, but derive from the incapacity of a reason not yet developed; and that religious belief in the adult is, as it were, a survival from this immature, childish phase of mental development. But this assumption is quite arbitrary. "Il sera toujours permis," writes Marcel, "de se demander s'il n'existe pas des valeurs liées à l'enfance." (E.A. p. 263.) Contemporary literature, as represented by Péguy and Gide, for example, and even more contemporary psychology have indeed rehabilitated childhood and the child-mentality.

To those familiar with 18th century philosophy it is obvious that the total misunderstanding of the religious mentality apparent in Voltaire's Essai sur les Moeurs, in D'Alembert's Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopédie or in Condorcet's Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain is due to an interpretation of belief in terms of "non-value". Reducing the mind to one homogeneous reason, with analysis as its mode of operation, they are inevitably led to equate belief with ignorance; to consider all immediate non-reflective products of thought as having a purely negative character, as springing from a mere "absence of reason". That such an interpretation is quite inadequate
even they, and particularly D'Holbach, surmised at times, when, confronted by the constant recurrence throughout history of similar beliefs, they found difficulty in accounting for such universality in terms of a purely negative interpretation. It is precisely the role of Lévy-Bruhl in particular, among contemporary psychologists and sociologists, to have rehabilitated belief as a positive value and, by demonstrating the heterogeneity of mind, to have rehabilitated the primitive mentality, preserved intact in the child and in the adult believer, as a positive mode of knowledge with its own logic of participation. In short, Rationalism fails entirely to account for the values of the religious as of the child mentality, not to mention all the values of art and life which have a like source in the immediacy of feeling.

In the second place, says Marcel, Rationalism is the creature and victim of pride. Curiously enough, Rationalism claims to have destroyed the anthropocentrism of Medieval times. In fact this is untrue: if for Medieval thinkers, such as Saint Bonaventura, man appeared the centre of the universe, it was solely in so far as he was the image of God: "en sorte que cet anthropocentrisme dont on sourit n'est en réalité qu'un théocentrisme appliqué." (Ibid.; p. 267.) It is, on the contrary, Rationalism itself which has succumbed to the sin of pride and the error of anthropocentrism; for it promotes the human reason to the rank of ultimate reality under the title of "Thought" or "Spirit". Marcel is here echoing Maritain's attack on Rationalism which, by "making
the human reason and its ideological content the measure of what is", represents the "extreme of madness (1)." Thus, in the contemporary Idealism of Brunschvicg, mind is made identical with God, but a God deprived of all the qualities which give meaning to the term: that is to the immanent God of Absolute Idealism (2).

Finally, with its depreciation of "matter" and sense-experience Rationalism turns its back upon the contingent and the concrete: "C'est qu'il est en réalité complètement désarmé en face de l'histoire - d'une histoire réelle quelconque, fût-ce simplement une destinée individuelle." (Ibid., p. 269.) And by this elimination of Time, matter and sense it finds no place for tragedy: "Tout sentiment du tragique lui fait défaut, et aussi, ajouterai-je, et c'est capital, tout sens du charnel." (Ibid.) The depreciation of "matter", not in the crudely materialistic sense of the Marxists, but in the Christian sense of the "body" and the "flesh", is indeed the most important defect of Idealism. It has its source, curiously enough, in Descartes and in what Maritain calls his "péché d'angélisme". For, whatever importance the Cartesian concept of matter may have for modern science, the divorce of mind and matter, whereby the one becomes


(2) Cf. Marcel's reply to Le Roy's definition of God as the necessary explanation of the sufficient condition of truth: "Un Dieu... en deçà de l'existence, qui n'est personne et pour qui nous ne sommes point, ce n'est à mes yeux qu'une fiction abstraite et sans vertu." (Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie, 1928, p. 85.)
indifferent to the other, is a gross distortion of the Christian concept (1). In the Christian doctrine, Saint Augustine included, matter and mind are conjoined; rather than possessing a separate metaphysical reality, matter serves to define those activities centred in carnal desire and concupiscence which Marcel calls the activities of "Having". With matter divorced from mind, the flesh, sin and evil cease to retain the spiritual significance which they had in Christian theology. Moreover, it was a natural step for later Idealists to eliminate matter altogether from such a dualism. Thus Marcel sees cause for regret in the Cartesian dualism, in what Whitehead has stigmatised as the "bi-furcation of nature" and which, in the opinion of both, has had lamentable consequences for metaphysics and religion.

Idealism, says Marcel, has established itself in the contemporary world largely through its association with the development of technique in the applied sciences. A technique may be defined as "any discipline tending to assure man's mastery over a specified object". (Ibid., p. 271.) It is aimed, as we have already seen, at securing possession and power over the real and is thereby conditional on the conversion of the real into an "object": "Un objet est d'autant plus objet, il est, si je puis dire, d'autant plus

(1) "Je crois pour ma part que la substitution du concept cartésien de matière à la notion confuse et riche de la chair qui est impliquée dans toute philosophie chrétienne constitue tout autre chose qu'un progrès au point de vue métaphysique." (E.A. pp. 269-70.)
exposé qu'il sert de matière à des techniques plus nombreuses et plus perfectionnées." (Ibid.) On the plane of technique progress is a fact. The modern world has evolved a veritable "philosophie de la technique". Its achievements in construction, its machines all represent victories of the power-motive. The modern world has, to employ an expression he uses in Position et Approches, become "fonctionnalisé".

Meanwhile, this "conquête de techniques", this extension and expansion of the activities of "Having" has had the most disastrous results. The universe has lost its metaphysical significance and become a mere field for exploitation. Even the self has been made the "object" of techniques, as witnessed by the development of practical psychology, sociology and psycho-analysis. Man comes to see himself as a machine whose mechanism can be adjusted by an appropriate treatment: "à reconnaître en soi-même certains vices de fonctionnement auxquels on doit pouvoir rémédier par des dispositifs d'ordres variés, par une thérapeutique individuelle ou sociale." (Ibid., p. 283.) All this has been accompanied by an acerbation of frustrated emotions and the resultant search for their satisfaction in vicious pleasures: "En fait nous voyons bien que l'extraordinaire perfectionnement des techniques est lié à un appauvrissement maximum de la vie intérieure." (Ibid.,
The triumph of Objectivity at the expense of Existence is the central fact in the contemporary world and at the root of what Marcel has called elsewhere the "carence de la spiritualité". The modern world, he says in Position et Approches, has lost the sense of the "exigence ontologique"; the problem has entirely replaced the mystery. And this frustration of the spiritual life has led in modern times to various attempts to substitute for the individual spiritual life a corporate spiritual life by the subjection of the individual to the ends of society; the origin, notably, of the totalitarian philosophy. These attempts are all based on what Marcel calls, referring to the maxim of Durkheim, "the sophism of sociologists according to which there is more in the whole than in the sum of the parts." (Ibid., p. 275.) A manifest sophism, for "on ne voit pas pourquoi une société d'ignares dont l'idéal individuel consisterait à trépider dans des dancings et à vibrer à des films sentimentaux ou policiers ne serait pas elle-même une société ignare". (Ibid.,

(1) This "technicisation" of man, Marcel would agree with Maritain, has one of its principal sources in Cartesian Dualism and the divorce it institutes between mind and body as dual substances, the one spirit, the other extension: the universe becomes a mechanism to be regulated in accordance with the dictates of thought. On this technicisation and the "morale exclusivement technologique" which Descartes has bequeathed the modern world, cf. J. Maritain, Le Songe de Descartes, Paris, Corrêa, 1932, pp. 275-81.

Jaspers has laid similar stress on man's enslavement to the "dominion of apparatus" whereby "the individual is merged in the function. He exists only as 'we'". (Man in the Modern Age, p. 48.)
Such attempts must all fail, in view of their starting-point. There exists at present only one society, or rather community, which is properly a spiritual community; that is the Church "où les êtres sans s'agglomérer mécaniquement forment au contraire un tout qui les dépasse". (Ibid., p. 276.) And for only one reason, that this community is founded on the spirituality of each individual member and that all are bound as by a common spiritual bond (1).

What then is the nature of this essential spirituality? It is the very contrary of a technique. The subject participates and is one with the reality enveloping him. He seeks no hold upon it, for such a relationship is the contrary of a "prise". "La religion...fonde en effet un ordre où le sujet se trouve mis en présence de quelque chose sur quoi toute prise lui est précisément refusée." (Ibid., p. 277.) Spirituality is in fact a mode not of "apprehension" but of "contemplation".

Contemplation has lost its meaning in the modern world. For this many factors are responsible: the exaltation of the practical and moral virtues; above all the Idealism of Kant, with its view of knowledge as a formal construction, limited to the phenomena which the mind orders by the

(1) "What frees us from solitude is not the world, but the selfhood which enters into ties with others. Interlinkage of self-existent persons constitutes the invisible reality of the essential." (K. Jaspers, Man in the Modern Age, p. 222.) Cf. also Berdyaev's distinction between society and community in his Solitude and Society, transl. by G. Reavey, New York, Scribner and London, Geoffrey Bles, 1938.
application of the forms of the Sensibility and the categories of the Understanding to sense-experience, has discredited the Realism which allows for an immediate prehension of Being in an act of contemplation:

Je pense qu'ici le moralisme sous toutes ses formes, avec la croyance à la valeur presque exclusive des œuvres, a certainement contribué dans une large mesure à jeter le discrédit sur les vertus contemplatives; et de plus le kantisme, en introduisant l'idée d'une activité constructive comme principe formel de la connaissance, a certainement tendu — exactement dans le même sens — à leur dénier toute réalité positive, ne fût-ce que par la séparation radicale qu'il instituait entre raison théorique et raison pratique. (Ibid., p. 278.)

Contemplation, and therefore spirituality are possible only in a philosophical Realism. The chief instrument in the decadence of spirituality in modern times is the subjectivism which Kant has left as a heritage: "Je crois hors de doute que si le subjectivisme pur devait être considéré comme une acquisition définitive de l'esprit moderne, la question religieuse devrait être regardée comme périmée. (Ibid., p. 279.)

The return to Realism is the condition of the revival of spirituality and religious belief. There is no spirituality possible unless we admit a direct contact of the mind with reality; faith, prayer, adoration are rendered meaningless in an Idealism which denies the mind access to the noumenon; or in a Subjectivism, or doctrine of "practical reason", which explains them as mere "attitudes" of the will: "Je pense donc que c'est simplement à condition de s'appuyer
730.

Spirituality is bound up with a mode of contemplation or, as he calls it more often, "participation" whose operation depends, like that of the Phenomenologists, on a preliminary ascesis aimed at the "vision of essences":

Nous avons peut-être perdu contact avec cette vérité fondamentale que la connaissance implique une ascèse préalable — c'est-à-dire au fond une purification — et pour tout dire qu'elle ne se livre dans sa plénitude qu'à celui qui s'en est préalablement rendu digne. (Ibid., p. 281.)

Spirituality is the difficult conquest of a mind which sets itself to transcend Objectivity and the temptation to convert itself into a technique, and which finds its reward in the receipt of a veritable "grace": "Si la réalité enveloppée dans l'adoration exclut toute prise possible du sujet, inversement celui-ci nous apparaît en fait saisi par une élection incompréhensible qui émane précisément du tréfonds mystérieux de l'être." (Ibid., p. 283.)

There is a third viewpoint inimical to religious belief, that of the "philosophy of life" of which Nietzsche is the foremost representative. Certainly modern Vitalism is a philosophy of the concrete; it gives full value to immediacy, to the sentiment of life — "de ma propre vie" — as it is present in the experience of the individual. But it ends up more often than not in a hypostatisation of life; the concrete experience being transformed into an abstract notion,
as in the \textit{Elan vital} of Bergson: "...elle cessera de considérer la vie comme phénomène ou comme ensemble de phénomènes biologiques observables, pour y voir une sorte d’élan ou de courant spirituel. Mais du coup elle perd son assiette expérimentale." (Ibid., p. 287.)

Where however it does endeavour to remain within the limits of concrete experience it involves an error catastrophic in its spiritual consequences. This error dominates a major part of contemporary literature, and may be expressed in the proposition: "Je coïncide avec ma vie; je suis ma vie." (Ibid., p. 288.) It is at the root of Gide's type of "sincerity", his refusal to "dominate" his instincts and immediate impulses. The self for him, à l'état pur, is pure spontaneity; it is wholly immanent in time. His ideal of total "sincerity" implies the destruction of all restraints upon the immediate impulses; for the acceptance of moral restrictions involves continuity, a continuity which sets deceit at the very heart of life and pure personality. In Gide's view, only the present has value; past and future are without status. Ethical principles, on the contrary, have significance only for a self which, albeit subject to temporal contingency, yet contains within it a certain permanence. An ethical philosophy, such as Marcel's, must for that reason accord value and a certain authority to past and future, even although they are made "real" only in present experience. Gide's "ethic" marks an attempt to
preserve in its purity the temporal discontinuity of the
self and, to this end, to shake off the yoke of the past.
An ideal which would render impossible all faith and fidelity,
in short Ontology itself: "Secuuer ce joug du passé, c'est
uniquement en fait se livrer à l'instant, c'est s'interdire
sous une forme quelconque tout engagement, tout voeu quel
qu'il soit." (Ibid., p. 289.) Gide's philosophy may rightly
be termed, to employ Marcel's expression, an "instantanéisme".
At its root is Immanence, a "réalisme du temps" which
identifies the self with the succession of its states - with
its "life".

Against such a philosophy Marcel reacts most strongly
by a distinction between my "life" and my "self": "...il n'y
a de salut et pour l'intelligence et pour l'âme qu'à
condition de distinguer entre mon être et ma vie." (Ibid.,
p. 291.) This means first of all that the self transcends
its partial realisations in contingent temporal experience.
It constitutes an eternal essence which finds in Time only a
means of realisation:

"Dire mon être ne se confond pas avec ma vie,
c'est dire essentiellement deux choses. La
première, c'est que, puisque je ne suis pas
ma vie, - c'est donc que ma vie n'a été
donnée, que je suis en un certain sens peut-
être humainement impénétrable, antérieur à
elle, que je suis avant de vivre. (Ibid.)

Secondly, it implies a tragic ethic; for if the self
transcends its life, life, or more properly Existence, entails
a ceaseless struggle to realise, over and beyond the dis-
continuity of temporal experience, the essential transcendent
self. Life is not acceptance of time nor of our discontinuity, but an arduous transcending of time:

La seconde, c'est que mon être est quelque chose qui est menacé dès le moment où je vis, et qu'il s'agit de sauver, que mon être est un enjeu, et que peut-être le sens de la vie est là; et de ce second point de vue je suis non pas en deçà mais au delà de ma vie. Il n'y pas d'autre façon d'interpréter l'épreuve humaine, et je ne vois pas ce que notre existence peut être si elle n'est pas une épreuve.

(Ibid., pp. 291-2.)

We see therefore how Gide's ethics, by its failure to recognise a transcendent self, deprives both past and future of significance and accords value to the present alone. To live in time becomes the end of the moral life; and its sole accents are those of an exaggerated hedonism. For Marcel, time and the present instant are but means to a greater end, to the realisation of a transcendent self which serves both as a formal and a final Cause; a present instant whose value depends upon its power to make actual, in a timeless simultaneous moment, both past and future.

In conclusion, we may say that the "philosophy of life" in general remains wedded to a pure subjectivism and naturalism. Much of contemporary thought and literature is vitiated by the repudiation of the Transcendent and Eternal Order.

In another lecture given to the same audience in February 1934 Marcel analyses more fully the factors of religious disbelief. The unbeliever, he states, quoting Max
Scheler's *Homme du ressentiment* affirms that all valid values are universal and refuses to subscribe to the "subjective" values of religious experience. He fails to see that his refusal to accept religion is equally subjective. In all matters of belief and disbelief there are no "universal" values. There is no such thing as a religious "scepticism". It would only be possible if the believer could put himself in the place of the unbeliever and inversely; but it is precisely the character of belief (or unbelief) to be incommunicable, springing as it does from the individual personality: "...dans des situations qui engagent le tout de la personne, ceci n'est plus possible; personne ne peut se mettre à ma place." (Ibid., p. 308.) The refusal to believe is therefore itself a belief no less subjective; and religious disbelief has itself no adequate rational grounds. Faith is a "fact" and even the disbeliever may come to experience it. Too often in our day disbelief is simply a result of "inattention".

The contemporary world presents, however, another phenomenon - the refusal to believe par principe, by virtue of what Marcel calls a "héroïsme à outrance". Such is the attitude of M. André Malraux and other disciples of Nietzsche. But here, says Marcel, we are no longer in the realm of values at all. This attitude is a mere exaltation, or emotional state refractory to any evaluation or judgment, for it contains within itself nothing which may serve to distinguish it from other exaltations, erotic, aesthetic, etc.
In a more recent phenomenological study, Marcel has analysed the nature of faith and belief in its relations with mere "opinion (1)." This study has the added value of being conducted on a personal plane and one of most scrupulous sincerity. Marcel has seen, indeed, that the problem of belief and unbelief does not concern the Christian as member of a body of believers opposed to a body of unbelievers. In strict fact, the conflict of belief and unbelief is set in the heart of the Christian himself. What this essay studies is the "symbiose de la croyance et de l'incroyance au sein d'une même âme. S'il y a un devoir pour le croyant, c'est de prendre conscience de tout ce qu'il y a en lui de non-croyant." (R.I. p. 159.) A problem which he believes he can tackle because "je suis venu tard à la foi catholique; par mes affections les plus proches je demeure engagé en quelque manière parmi les incroyants; je suis à même de comprendre mieux que d'autres leurs difficultés." (Ibid., p. 158.)

A certain "duality" is intrinsic to the Christian's experience. He is liable at certain moments to see his faith lose its immediate, compelling power and degenerate into an "opinion". Between these two, belief and opinion, reigns a chasm. Their nature is wholly different. Opinion, says Marcel proceeding to analyse its "structure", fluctuates between two limits: on the one hand an impression, on the other an affirmation. Its root is a certain "sembler", an

(1) De l'Opinion à la Foi in Du Refus à l'Invocation.
appearance of fact which is transformed into a "claim":

...une opinion est d'une façon générale un semblant qui tend à se changer en un prétendre; cela, ajouterai-je aussitôt, à la faveur d'une irréflexion. (Ibid., p. 162.)

Its first moment is experience, a certain residue of "fact", which becomes an opinion in favour of whose truth a claim is made in face of others, and that by virtue of an irrational presumption:

Admettons que j'aie fait deux ou trois constatations dont chacune prise séparément serait d'ailleurs sans doute sujette à caution; ne disons même pas que j'en ai tiré une inférence; tout s'est passé au fond sur le plan affectif, le plan de l'impression; et c'est à ce moment que le "change" a eu lieu, que j'ai converti l'impression en opinion. (Ibid., p. 163.)

The opinion thus evolved has this further characteristic that the claim put forward on its behalf is "depersonalised". It is advanced in terms of an "on dit", "tout le monde dit", "tut le monde sait", or even "mon journal affirme". And the very depersonalised nature of the affirmation betrays the motive behind the affirmation, namely some aversion, hatred or desire. An opinion, therefore, has its basis in some appearance of fact which is erected into a depersonalised affirmation, put forward as a generalised claim, a "revendication idéale" by virtue of an irrational choice. Fortified by later "facts" and "arguments" carefully chosen, it takes on all the appearance of a "conviction".

Marcel now proceeds to apply these findings to the case of atheism. He asserts that the latter belongs strictly to the realm of opinion or at least "conviction".
therein, as in all opinions, an "apport empirique" and a "revendication idéale", and proceeds to scrutinise their validity.

As for the first, the element of experience is both negative and positive. On the one hand, the atheist declares he has no experience of God; on the other, that he has experienced facts, notably the fact of evil, which preclude the existence of God. But, in both cases he is relying on an "idea of God": in the first case he is putting himself outside of experience to pass judgment on this experience; in the second he is attempting to put himself in the place of God to explain how God has created or must create. From which it may be concluded that "opinion" is linked with a "non-participation":

...l'engagement et l'opinion s'excluent réciproquement. Ceci entraîne cette conséquence métaphysique que je n'ai d'opinion sur l'univers que dans la mesure où je me dégage en réalité de lui. (Ibid., p. 170.)

As for the second element of atheism, its "revendication idéale" proceeds from an act of irrational will. Marcel here quotes Maritain: "Dieu, écrit J. Maritain (Le Sens de l'Athéisme marxiste in Esprit - octobre 1935), est absolument rejeté en principe, et en vertu d'un dogmatisme métaphysique absolu...et cela au nom de la collectivité sociale, de l'homme collectif ou collectivisé... L'idéal social communiste apparaît comme la conclusion d'un athéisme originel posé en principe." (Ibid.) Erected thus into a principle, atheism
becomes a conviction.

It might here be asked: is this not simply "faith"? Marcel denies it; and attempts to define the difference.

A conviction is turned towards the past: it is simply an opinion, a generalised principle, itself chosen in virtue of some desire or aversion to which the subject has assigned a definitive character. It is a "judgment which posits the immutability of its object", it involves "the pretension to arrest time". (Ibid., p. 172.)

At its root can only be an irrational decision, and it itself is, in every sense of the term, a "pretension". For, in affirming his conviction, the affirmer is saying either that he has foreseen all the objections, which is manifestly absurd, or he is saying: whatever should happen, I will stick to my conviction. And it is the latter, a gratuitous decision, which is its ground:

Ces réflexions nous conduisent à penser que l'apposition de l'indice définitif ou inébranlable à l'énoncé d'une conviction implique toujours une prétention au fond de laquelle se discerne soit une illusion actuelle, soit un consentement au mensonge intérieur. (Ibid., pp. 174–5.)

If now we turn to belief (croyance) and faith; does it not seem that they are condemned to relativism if, as opposed to mere opinion and conviction, they are defined as subject to growth? Not if we recall that this growth and "change" to which they are subject is something quite different from fluctuation, that it is a type of prophetic vision, a finality and intentionality. It is, in Bergson's
terminology, the "ouvert" (as opposed to the "clos").

It is in this feature that we have the inner nature of belief. Belief is something other than "believing that" (which is mere opinion): it is "believing in". Belief is essentially "faire crédit à"; it is "engagement". It may be said that conviction too bears on something beyond the self: but it involves no engagement, no fidelity promised and no promise given:

Certes, la conviction portait, elle aussi, sur quelque chose qui était extérieur à moi; mais elle n'impliquait de ma part aucun engagement vis-à-vis de cet X. Ma conviction portait sur X; je marquais ma position à propos de X; je ne me liais pas envers X. (Ibid., p. 176.)

Here, then, is the essence of belief and its ground: not in any gratuitous decision, but in the engagement which the transcendent imposes and requires. Moreover, belief must bear and can only bear on "une réalité soit personnelle, soit supra-personnelle". For it is fidelity, confidence in and troth plighted to: "On ne peut avoir confiance qu'en un 'toi', qu'en une réalité susceptible de faire fonction de 'toi', d'être invoquée, de devenir un recours." (Ibid., p.177.) That is why faith in "science", etc., is meaningless. We can only have faith in "scientists", that is as persons, and such faith enters into the normal categories of fidelity.

Belief, then, has its ground in this "engagement" which involves a "prise de l'être sur nous". Its ultimate limit is faith, "l'assurance invincible fondée sur l'Être même".
As such, all belief is, in some form or another, love, and so "unconditional", in the sense that it cannot lay down conditions; it cannot be a "pretension".

Concluding, Marcel comes back to his original statement that, within the heart of the Christian himself, faith conflicts with opinion. The "vulnerability of faith is linked with the remnant of opinion subsisting in it" (Ibid., p. 179) — the temptation of transforming love into a claim or a pretension.

The Christian must therefore be attentive to "le poids mort que l'opinion vient jeter dans la balance infiniment délicate des opérations spirituelles". (Ibid., p. 182.)

In this significant essay, Marcel not only analyses most clearly his conception of faith, but suggests a point of view whose importance we must increasingly stress. It is his belief that the Christian, and most of all the Catholic, cannot and must not set himself up in opposition to the unbeliever. Hitherto Marcel has seemed to be the "adversary" of certain notions and assertions, and he will continue to oppose the errors of his time and to affirm his Christian convictions. But yet the character of this criticism changes perceptibly in his later works. Marcel, as in this essay, sees that the Christian cannot divorce himself from his fellows, that, Christian as he is, he participates in a common "human reality", that the Christian is one who has more clearly and thoroughly reflected on this reality, not one who claims to have discovered another. He therefore must
transcend the "order of for and against", as tragedy does; if only because Christianity is the supreme tragic religious consciousness.

This viewpoint proceeds partly from a more clearly conceived existentialist comprehension, but especially from a deeper intuition of what Christianity means.

The Christian is a man amongst men; as a man he participates in human reality; saved and enlightened he may be, but he cannot divorce himself from the evil which he shares with his fellow-men. If he knows faith, he also knows the unbelief, different in quality and significance, yet still the unbelief of the unbeliever. So too, he cannot shut himself off from all responsibility in the evil of the world. He too is implicated therein.

Marcel's whole tendency in his religious thought will be to interpret his Catholicism in terms of a more deeply construed fidelity towards his fellows. He sees the Christian's task as involving a certain assumption of responsibility before and towards men for the evil man commits. And this new responsibility leads him to reject more and more the method of opposition and define more clearly the spirit of Christian charity as the unifying and transforming power wielded by the bearer of God's witness before and among men. For it is in the principle of "attestation" that the Christian's rôle and specific power are summed up.
In all the philosophies current in the contemporary world which repudiate religion and the transcendent Eternal Order there is no place for the "témoin", for the man who "testifies". Alienated from Being, delivered over to the resources of his contingent finite self, he recognises no spiritual principle, nothing to which he may devote himself; and without devotion the soul is a pure "néant". Devotion or "attestation" of the spiritual principle is the very essence of spirituality; faith itself being an "attestation perpétuée (1)."

Marcel's adherence to the Catholic dogma has its source in this doctrine of "attestation". He sees in the Church and its dogma what he has called a "thesaurus", a spiritual tradition perpetuated by a long succession of "witnesses" throughout the contingencies of history. This act of attestation to Church and Christian tradition seems to him the essence of orthodoxy as opposed to mere "conformisme"; it appears to him no less binding upon the believer than patriotism and love of country upon the citizen. Indeed, to accept, to endure and to perpetuate the various spiritual realities revealed in time is the moral task of man. On the other hand, Marcel is no conformist. Religion is valid only in so far as it is lived. And religious formulas, as

distinct from dogmas, must be brought into harmony with intuitions. This supposes a constant labour of criticism and revision. He does not believe, like Maritain, that the Thomistic formulas are valid for to-day; indeed, he declares that the primary duty confronting religion to-day is to reconstitute the Christian truth. For Christianity is not a "sublime philosophy" but living Truth: "C'est sur le terrain de la Vérité d'abord que le combat religieux doit être poursuivi; c'est sur ce terrain seul qu'il sera gagné ou perdu." (E.A. p. 295.)

To understand in what consists this "reconstitution" of the Christian truth, we must consider some important and recent essays, all of them phenomenological and descriptive.

The first is the Méditation sur l'idée de preuve de l'existence de Dieu in Du Refus à l'Invocation. The process of "proving", - and Marcel is here concerned with the persuasion of the non-believer - he there declares, is intentional: proving is "proving to". It involves a union of one mind with the other in such a way as to act upon the latter's "field of apperception". It is assumed that one field of apperception is in some sense wider than that of the other, and persuasion is the participation of the two fields in such a way that the zone of obscurity marginal to the
narrower field is "enlightened" by the content of the wider:

On pourrait dire, il me semble, qu'il s'agit pour moi d'obtenir de lui, c'est-à-dire en réalité de son attention, qu'il concentre sur ce que j'ai appelé son champ d'aperception une clarté assez intense pour qu'elle gagne par voisinage cette région adjacente qui pour moi était déjà lumineuse, mais pour lui était encore dans l'ombre. (R.I. p. 227.)

It follows, then, that at the root of all persuasion is a phenomenon of communion or participation:

...une communication entre soi et autrui qui ne peut s'effectuer que sur la base d'une certaine situation concrète... Cette situation concrète comporte la présence effective ou au contraire le défaut d'un koinôn ti, ou, si vous voulez, d'un vinculum, qui est lui-même concret, bien qu'en un autre sens tout idéal. (Ibid., p. 232.)

Yet for this communion to take place, an essential condition must be observed. The Christian cannot consider himself as set against his hearer or interlocutor, or view himself as the detainer of a truth which is his own by right. Any such claim would render impossible that unity and that "enlightening" of one mind by another through that unity. It requires, therefore, the realisation on the Christian's part of his position both as a recipient and as a vehicle: that his faith is itself a "response" to a "call" and that only by an act of self-effacement can he become in his turn the instrument of a "call". He cannot seek to persuade by any technique, nor least of all by any violent harrying of his hearer's mind (and that excludes argument as such, for the production of arguments is a claim to some body of truth
opposed to a contrary body of truth deemed heretical and belongs to the "order of for and against"). Persuasion can only take the form of an "attestation que je porte ou non par ma vie, c'est-à-dire non pas seulement ou essentiellement par des actes précisables et dénombrables, mais par ce que je dégage ou rayonne pour autrui". (Ibid., p. 234.) And that is essentially what is called "charity".

Yet it may be asked how the Christian, confronted by the non-believer, can avoid adopting, or at least seeming in the eyes of his opposite to adopt, an attitude of estrangement. Is it not the fact that he possesses a faith which the latter does not? And how can mere "testifying" be a power of persuasion when his testimony is essentially private? It is this that Marcel would deny. For he sees in the experience of the believer not a different and contrary type of experience from that of the non-believer but a deeper one: faith appears to him the inevitable term of experience 'once it has reached "a certain degree of internal concentration".

La preuve est un moment dans une certaine éristique intérieure qui demeure malgré tout subordonnée à la position d’un invariant, ou, si l'on veut, d'un système de valeurs incontestées en tant que valeurs.

(Ibid., p. 231.)

Thus it is that persuasion is essentially an "enlightenment" of one mind by another, the penetration or infusing of an obscure zone by the light emanating from a more vividly illuminated centre; it is the "raising of a parenthesis".

But even more important, the experience of the Christian
is not wholly and simply a region of light: on the contrary, faith cohabits with a measure of unbelief in his mind. No doubt it is not the incredulity of the atheist, but at least it is that element of non-faith which Marcel termed "opinion". So that the Christian "bears witness" in all humility within a unity of two experiences which, diverse in quality, are not diverse in kind. It is not as a Christian with a capital C, some special and superior type of man, but as a man, whose experience is in every way a human reality that he is called upon and enabled to testify and to influence. So much is this so, Marcel says, so intimate is the participation if accomplished in the true spirit of charity and humility that the very incredulity of the non-believer can radiate upon, confirm and strengthen the Christian's faith; not by procuring a sense of superiority but as a witness of the inner reality of faith:

Je suis amené ainsi à mesurer mon inégalité par rapport à cette foi dont je semblais dire qu'elle était mon partage, c'est-à-dire à faire encore la part de mon incroyance au sein même de ce que j'appelle ma foi. Et par là s'établit aussitôt une communication entre moi et celui qui se déclare tout simplement incroyant — communication dans une lumière de vérité qui est aussi une lumière de charité; — cette communication peut même aller jusqu'à une sorte d'interversion, non pas objective, certes — ce qui n'offrirait aucun sens — mais portant sur le rapport que je pose entre moi et l'autre; puisque je puis aller jusqu'à reconnaître que l'autre, qui se déclare incroyant, atteste plus véritablement, plus efficacement que moi qui me prétends croyant, cette réalité qui est enveloppée dans mon acte de foi. (Ibid., p. 234.)
Marcel is not averse even to basing thereon a new version of the ontological argument, but one which "s'exerce sur un Je crois qui ne peut s'expliciter que sous la forme Je crois en Toi, qui es mon recours unique". (Ibid., p. 235.)

The importance of this statement lies in the refusal to establish a radical and insuperable distinction between Christian and non-Christian experience, to set the Christian against the non-believer, and the insistence on the true character of the Christian life which is not to oppose, judge and condemn, but to testify to the spiritual transcendent; fidelity and charity are, indeed, the two ways of the Christian life. It is in the light of these convictions that Marcel attempts to reassess the function and mission of the Christian, and in particular the Catholic, in the contemporary world.

In his essay entitled L'Orthodoxie contre les Conformismes in Du Refus à l'Invocation, Marcel seeks to define the nature of orthodoxy. He believes that the transformation of orthodoxy into mere "conformism" is disastrous in its consequences: not only so, but it distorts the nature of a properly understood orthodoxy.

"Conformism" is essentially the subjection to "un certain mot d'ordre émanant non d'une personne, mais d'un groupe qui se donne comme incarnant ce qu'il faut penser, ce qu'il faut apprécier, dans un pays déterminé, à un moment précis de la durée, mais en se gardant, bien entendu, de reconnaître
l'indice de relativité qui affecte toute modalité historique
de la connaissance ou du goût". (R.I. p. 239.) This means
that its root is always (whether it be political or religious)
the claim to some closed body of truth exclusive of all other
truth and against which it has to combat. The Catholic (for
Marcel is concerned principally with Catholic orthodoxy) is
thus once again subjected to the abstract order of "for and
against". The most noteworthy example, Marcel finds at the
time he writes, is the conflict between Catholics of the
right and Catholics of the left during the Spanish Civil war
and which was, at bottom, the conflict of two "conformismes".

Orthodoxy, on the contrary, is a manifestation of
fidelity, the obedience to the Word of God and to the Divine
Spirit. It is therefore opposed to mere "conformism", as
is Bergson's "morale ouverte" to the "morale close":

La morale de l'Evangile est essentiellement celle de l'âme ouverte. "L'acte par lequel
l'âme s'ouvre a pour effet d'élargir et d'éléver à la pure spiritualité une morale
emprisonnée et matérialisée dans ses formules." (Ibid., p. 244.)

Marcel takes over Bergson's distinction and defines orthodoxy
as essentially "open". Not that this means that the
believer must suspend his judgment and remain in a state of
indecision and passivity with respect to life and political,
social or religious problems, remaining "en suspens en ce qui
regarde les instances dernières de la destinée humaine".
(Ibid., p. 245.) Indeed Marcel recognises, as a condition
of true orthodoxy, a certain "discontinuity" between faith
and life, allowing for a margin of freedom without which fidelity would cease to be a "response" and become a mere subjection. Thus on all political problems, such as the Spanish war, the Catholic is in the same case as his fellow-men. His convictions must be formed in the light of a careful analysis of the conditions and facts:

Comment ne pas en conclure, si paradoxal que cela puisse sembler, que si le catholicisme est avant tout exigence d'universalité, notre devoir de catholiques est de comprendre d'abord qu'il n'y a sans doute aucun sens à vouloir ici penser en catholiques; mais qu'il s'agit simplement, en présence d'une question qui mobilise en nous le meilleur et le pire, d'une part d'user autant que cela est possible d'un esprit critique aujourd'hui trop discrédité, et cela bien souvent au nom d'une conception erronée et simpliste de l'intuition. (Ibid., p. 242.)

Yet this is not the essential of his orthodoxy; the essential is the submission to the Word of God. That is his particularly Catholic and Christian attitude which must at all times motivate and penetrate his life, actions and convictions. It is this which is the true "orthodoxy"; the submission not to closed principles, but to the ever-living and vivifying spirit. And that manifests itself not in a spirit of aggressive denigration or violent condemnation, but in a spirit of charity and comprehension: the will "de ne nous départir ni envers les uns ni envers les autres de cette justice et de cette charité hors desquelles il n'y a place que pour la violence partisane". (Ibid., p. 242.)

Ne pourrait-on pas dire dès lors que tout manquement à la Charité de la part, je ne
Herein, then, consists the true orthodoxy - it is essentially "testifying", for "notre condition chrétienne fait de nous des témoins". (Ibid., p. 249.) The Christian is confronted by two ways of life: he may testify for Christ or against Christ, by the presence or absence of charity in him. He is faced by an ultimate Yes or No. That is the fundamental and irreducible opposition which is within himself. There and there alone is the problem and measure of his orthodoxy: between those two terms there is nothing. It is only an error on his part, and the gravest of all errors for the Christian, to seek to elude this fundamental decision by erecting an abstract body of fixed "opinions" and attributing to them the value of an orthodoxy and seeking to make them the essence and principle of the Christian life:

L'erreur de tout conformisme est de croire qu'on peut intercaler un moyen terme entre ces deux témoignages, entre ce Oui et ce Non dans lesquels vient cristalliser toute destinée spirituelle, hors de quoi il n'y a place que pour les nuées inconsistantes de l'opinion. (Ibid., p. 249.)

It is in a similar spirit and towards similar conclusions that his essay on tolerance is conducted, where again the inquiry is on strictly phenomenological grounds.
Tolerance, he affirms, is intentional: 'on se montre tolérant par rapport à.' At its root, he assures us further, is 'the recognition not only of a fact, but of a right'. (R.I. p. 270.) As such, tolerance is not primitive, it is rather a 'contre-intolérance' which implies an act, decision or choice on the part of the tolerating subject. We see this already in a certain form of 'intolerance' where, for example, the father of a family says he will not tolerate certain expressions being held before his children. Here, the 'intolerance' does not condemn the expression in question as such, or in all cases, but in a specific case, in the interest of some person or persons: it is the expression of an obligation assumed. "Le refus de tolérer se justifie donc par une obligation de sauvegarde." (Ibid., p. 272.)

If we take tolerance itself, in its essential nature, we find the same factor of responsibility assumed with respect to others. This is sufficient to exclude from tolerance as an ethical category what normally passes for tolerance but what is mere indifference or scepticism with regard to opinions. Such tolerance is only possible to a self which treats others as indifferent and abdicates all 'interest', in the Kierkegaardian sense, in their persons.

On the contrary, the essential moral tolerance exhibits the above-mentioned sense of obligation with respect to others. Here, the self treats the other as a person and respects his opinions as the expression of his personality:
Pour autant que je tiens à mon opinion, que j'ai conscience d'y tenir, il peut se faire - à condition que j'imagine fortement l'autre et le lien qui l'unit à son opinion - que je me mette assez à la place de cet autre pour concevoir cette opinion comme respectable en raison même de l'intense conviction avec laquelle il y adhère. (Ibid., p. 274.)

And he does so because he recognises an obligation towards this personality:

Dès lors une croyance étrangère à la mienne m'apparaîtra comme étant elle aussi l'expression - mais différente - d'une autre réalité personnelle qui doit être elle aussi sauvégardeée. Toute tentative personnaliste, au sens large, pour fonder, pour légitimer la tolérance, s'appuiera, me semble-t-il, sur cette postulation. (Ibid., p. 275.)

The question then arises, for religious tolerance in particular, as to how much tolerance of probably heretical unbelief can be justified without leading to a form of scepticism and passive acquiescence in error:

Mais la question fondamentale qui se pose à nous est de savoir sur quel principe on peut fonder une tolérance qui soit vraiment une contre-intolérance et qui cependant ne soit pas l'expression ou le témoignage d'un scepticisme complet, mais au contraire la vivante incarnation de la foi. (Ibid., p. 277.)

It is solved for the Christian as soon as he recalls his specifically Christian condition: "La fin que se propose le croyant orthodoxe, ou qu'il est censé se proposer, est le service de Dieu, de la volonté divine." (Ibid., p. 279.)

His situation is one of "transcendence"; he is there to "respond" to the "call" of the Divine will, and by his testifying to transmit to others this call. He stands
within a "triadic" relation: he is a "mediator". But he can only succeed in his task by love and humility, by testifying in such a way as to show that "dans tout cela je suis instrument, je ne suis absolument pas cause, rien ne vient de moi, je me maintiens par rapport à la volonté de Dieu, dans la condition d'humilité absolue qui sauvegarde sa transcendance". (Ibid., p. 281.) To act and speak with the conviction that he is doing so, on his own behalf and in favour of an exclusive truth to be imposed by forceful means is to destroy the aim and hope of his testimony by imposing "une image exécrable du Dieu dont je dis être l'interprète". (Ibid.)

Such is the "essential", Christian tolerance: it is equally removed from scepticism and from intolerance; for the Christian without abdicating his faith can yet, by the conviction that this faith is, not his in the sense of a weapon to be levelled against his fellows, but the vehicle of a transcendent spiritual presence, respect, modify, and enlighten their opinion in the spirit of love, charity and grace.

Yet, Marcel recognises that this "essential" tolerance is limited when we pass to the political and social sphere. Here it is the tolerance of the father of a family which must operate, for "toute considération de transcendance est ici exclue par définition". The leader of a state would be guilty of abdicating his obligation to the community were he
not to impose certain restrictions on its members. Yet, on the other hand, a system of intolerance is equally to be rejected in this field. Those who support it are wont to make an analogy between the doctor dealing with an epidemic and the state confronted by the spread of revolutionary ideas. But, in his view, such an analogy and the "remedy" proposed are quite false and are an unwarranted confusion between the social and the biological:

En principe, il est difficile d'admettre qu'il puisse être légitime de traiter des êtres pensants ou soit-disant tels, même si les fins qu'ils poursuivent nous paraissent entièrement maléfiques, comme des rats pesteux ou comme des moustiques qu'il s'agit d'exterminer.

(Ibid., p. 282.)

The tolerance exercised in society can only be a compromise and its limits cannot be traced a priori, being dependent on the relative innocuousness of opinions and actions in any given conditions.

Undoubtedly, such tolerance is empirical and far removed from the absolute tolerance of Christian charity, but, says Marcel "je crois pour ma part que le social comme tel est le royaume du decevant, et nous sommes justement ici au coeur du social". (Ibid.)

In conclusion, tolerance is a point varying between mere indifference and the "essential" tolerance of Christian life:

...ce que nous mettons sous le nom de tolérance est en réalité une cote mal taillée entre des dispositions psychologiques qui s'échelonnent d'ailleurs elles-mêmes entre la bienveillance, l'indifférence et le dégoût, un machiavélisme larvé - et un dynamisme spirituel d'une essence
It is natural that Marcel should be preoccupied with the problems of Oecumenism. He shares largely the views expressed by Father Congar in his *Principes d'un "Oecuménisme" Catholique* (1), although he would stop short, he declares, of the "ирénisme si large dont elles sont empreintes". (R.I. p. 268.) Marcel as a Catholic certainly accepts the view that the Catholic Church represents most fully the Christian faith. But he affirms that, in their dealings with their fellow-Christians, Catholics must avoid converting this conviction into a "claim" or "pretension" to an exclusive truth with which to batter or bludgeon the "heretic". His conviction must only express itself in the form of a living testimony beyond all problems:

"... ceci revient à dire que l'erreur sera atteinte bien plus directement par toute action non polémique, mais positive, par laquelle les catholiques s'efforcent, non de purifier leur doctrine, mais de l'incarner et de la rayonner toujours plus parfaitement. Il ne s'agit pas tant pour eux de proclamer: "Notre Église est l'Église, elle est la Plénitude," que de rendre cette vérité manifeste, non à leurs adversaires — car sur ce plan ce mot n'a plus et ne peut avoir aucun sens — mais aux frères épars, souffrants et partiellement aveuglés."

He must aim at a "compréhension aussi aiguë que possible de l'autre en tant qu'autre". (Ibid., p. 263.) In actual fact, whatever opposition there is does not exist on the plane of doctrine at all, but on the plane of historical Christian experience, an experience which must be considered one:

Ainsi présentée, cette opposition, sans qu'on puisse aller jusqu'à soutenir qu'elle ne signifie rien, n'est que le schéma, fallacieux de ce qui doit être regardé comme un drame interne à la conscience chrétienne elle-même. (Ibid., pp. 258-9.)

The basis for comprehension and for oecumenical action lies in this fact and the implications which are contained therein.

In a certain sense, the Catholic Church cannot consider heresy as something for which it has no responsibility, for heresy is internal to the historical and living experience of the Christian Church:

Par conséquent, lorsque nous prenons position contre elle, nous ne devons pas seulement accuser l'hérétique et rejeter la faute tout entière sur son orgueil peccameux, mais nous sommes aussi tenus de nous reconnaître au moins partiellement responsables de l'erreur dans laquelle il est tombé. Du point de vue philosophique tout au moins...il me paraît indubitable que l'hérésie, du point de vue même de l'Eglise, ne peut pas être regardée comme une sorte de calamité externe qu'elle n'aurait qu'à constater; l'hérésie lui est en quelque façon interne, bien qu'en un autre sens, suprême celui-là, elle-même en tant qu'Eglise, en tant que Corps du Christ, en soit certainement et de toute éternité indemne, et que l'idée d'un péché de l'Eglise tel que le conçoit un Berdiaeff doive être résolument réjette du point de vue catholique. (Ibid., p. 253.)
Even more, heresy may and must have its function in the providential government of the Church:

L'erreur, la faute même a sa fonction mystérieuse dans l'économie providentielle; il n'est permis à aucune créature, non pas même aux plus savants docteurs de la traiter simplement comme "ce qui n'aurait pas dû être." (Ibid., p. 267.)

Positively, too, it may be said that the Catholic Church lacks certain values which have been realised through the dissident Churches. Marcel quotes Father Congar when he says: "ce que nos frères séparés ont soustrait à l'Eglise et réalisé en dehors de nous manque à notre catholicité explicite et visible." (Ibid., p. 266.) "On pourra même penser que, dans la mesure où l'existence des formes dissidentes du christianisme comme corps religieux tient à l'affirmation de certaines valeurs dont il existe chez eux une perception particulièrement aiguë, ces corps religieux représentent eux aussi des familles spirituelles qui ont leur message propre et en un sens leur mission." (Ibid., pp. 266-7.) And he adds this reflection on Luther: "oui, peut-être que ce qu'il y a de vrai dans l'expérience religieuse luthérienne manque, non certes à la substance de l'Eglise catholique, mais à l'incarnation, à l'explicitation plénière de ses principes vivants." (Ibid., p. 267.)

Nor can it be denied, according to Marcel, that the dissident Churches are in effect Churches:

...une tradition, une Eglise qui compte des martyrs dans son sein... L'existence de ces Martyrs suffit...à conférer à une communauté...
determinée une réalité qui transcende en quelque manière absolument les jugements qu'on sera en droit de porter sur la doctrine que ses membres professent. (Ibid., p. 253.)

It is in the light of this double recognition, of the dissidents' place and function in the historical Christian experience and of their constitution as Churches incarnating in their manner (however inadequately and, for Marcel, unjustifiably) the Mystic Church, that an oecumenical activity can be successful and legitimised:

L'Oecuménisme véritable commence quand on admet que les autres - et pas seulement les individus, mais les corps ecclésiastiques comme tels - ont aussi raison, bien qu'ils disent autre chose que nous, qu'ils ont aussi de la vérité, de la sainteté, des dons de Dieu, bien qu'ils ne soient pas de notre chrétienté. (Ibid., p. 261.)

And this action must bear upon that essential and common Christian experience and faith which transcends ecclesiastical differences:

...à l'instant précis de l'histoire où nous sommes, toute collaboration entre chrétiens catholiques et non-catholiques en vue d'une œuvre de justice, contribue en quelque sorte à préparer la voie à cette réunion en elle-même si difficilement pensable - cela dans la mesure même où cette collaboration supprime cette fatale distinction entre le "nous autres" et le "vous autres", qui est en soi un principe d'irritation réciproque et de guerre. (Ibid.; p. 266.)

It cannot be said that Marcel has completely overcome the difficulties of the Catholic philosopher. Whatever may be said, the acceptance of one tradition out of other traditions, which by their nature are all historically
justified, must in practice lead to an opposition, for it is the claim to institutional primacy and supremacy which is the cause of conflict. Moreover, the adherence to Catholicism renders the way of an Existentialist philosopher decidedly uneasy, as we see in the essay in question. For Marcel seems to define a Church as being essentially a tradition and realisation of a temporal destiny, as distinct from its doctrinal affirmations (cf. Ibid., p. 258); and, certainly, no Existentialist would deny that the thinker must work within the conditions of his situation. But the sectarian is also obliged to admit the primacy of his doctrine and conclude the "inferiority" of other historical manifestations; whereas without this doctrinal adherence he would be free to interpret wholeheartedly the spiritual progress in terms of a pluralism of traditions each and all collaborating towards the realisation of man's spiritual nature. Marcel, it is obvious, is torn between these two attitudes, and he is prevented from coming down on either side.

This is the dilemma of all Catholic philosophers. Marcel, however, does his best to overcome it by refusing to submit to what he calls "confessionalism" or catholic "paternalism"; yet he cannot avoid it when he broaches subjects such as the preceding. In the writer's view, Marcel is least happy when he speaks as a Catholic philosopher.
It must, however, be said that those occasions are extremely rare. And they are so because his religious thought is at bottom recalcitrant to dogmatism and legalistic forms. It is through and through ethical in character, and as a critic of the contemporary world he speaks not as a sectarian but as the exponent of a certain spiritual and universally Christian attitude to life.

We find his prescription for the present-day evils of society in his essays devoted to the family and in his obiter dicta on Church and State. If he is preoccupied principally with the family, it is by reason of the fact that the latter is the prototype of the spiritual unit or "society", to use Whitehead's expression, within which man's spiritual destiny is realised. It is indeed only in such units that the communion of selves, collaborating in the accomplishment in time of eternal spiritual values essential to the individual's self-realisation, is to be found.

The "obliteration" of the sense of the family he declares to be the most significant phenomenon of modern times. It is the expression of a "décroyance", a disbelief in life itself and in its transcendent implications. Modern science has accustomed man to regard himself either as "un simple maillon dans une chaîne sans fin" or as "la résultante de forces purement naturelles". (H.V. p. 130.) From such a viewpoint the family is robbed of any moral or religious significance; and whatever relationships it exhibits are
presented as mechanical, objective and purely natural.

On the contrary, Marcel affirms, the family is essentially a community, and a community whose links are only definable in relation to a transcendent order of value, spiritual and sacred, giving them order and significance:

En d'autres termes, contrairement à l'illusion tenace qu'entretient l'humanisme, il y aurait lieu d'affirmer que les relations familiales, comme les choses humaines en général, ne présentent par elles-mêmes aucune consistance, aucune garantie de solidité; c'est seulement là où elles sont référées à un ordre surhumain dont il ne nous est donné ici-bas de saisir que les indices qu'elles revêtent un caractère authentiquement sacré. (Ibid., p. 131.)

This double factor of transcendence and communion is what places the family in the "articulation of the vital and the spiritual". (Ibid., p. 130.) The family relationship is not merely biological. It involves "piety" which is none other than a "notion proprement sacré du réel". (Ibid., p. 139.) This piety is seen most clearly in paternity. The essence of paternity is lost whenever marriage is converted into a mere contract or converted into a mere instrument of procreation. On the contrary, it is fundamentally a certain mode of "fidelity" which Marcel terms the "voeu créateur", namely the assumption of a responsibility towards a reality which transcends the family and is yet only realised in and through the family:

La paternité, nous l'avons vu, ne se laisse aucunement réduire à la procréation, qui, humainement parlant, peut à peine être considérée comme un acte. Elle n'existe qu'en fonction d'une responsabilité assumée.
et maintenue. Mais d'autre part nous constatons qu'elle dégénère aussitôt qu'elle se subordonne à des fins strictement spécifiées, telles que l'assouvissement d'une ambition par l'intermédiaire de l'enfant traité comme pur moyen. (Ibid., pp.159-60.)

Seen thus, the relationship between man and his partner is a certain communion within a common fidelity:

Il n'est donc certainement pas vrai de dire que la procréation est la fin du mariage. Il faut bien plutôt admettre que l'une et l'autre forment des phases complémentaires d'une certaine histoire que chacun de nous a à vivre, et à travers laquelle il accomplit sa destinée d'être créateur. Le sens de ce mot créateur est ici très précis: il vise la collaboration active qu'il est donné à chaque être libre d'apporter à l'œuvre universelle qui s'accomplit dans notre monde et sans doute infiniment au delà. (Ibid., p. 121.)

Married life is "une action de grâce, une attestation créatrice". (Ibid.)

Moreover, the life of the family as a whole, once children are embodied in the unit, must be infused with this same spirit of charity of one member to the other and this same consciousness of membership which is its condition. The family, as the prototype of all human societies must, then, if it is to fulfil its spiritual function, be the focus of a certain irradiation of spiritual life; a certain "générosité" seen in those who "sèment la vie sans calcul par une irradiation de la lumière de vie qui les a eux-mêmes éclairés et pénétrés". (Ibid.) Only then can it become the temporal image of the "divine paternity".

The same spirit of charity and love which should
manifest itself in marital relations should guide the relationship of parents and children, and Marcel condemns the excess of "paternalism", which can only arise when children are treated as possessions and not as partners in the common labour of creating destiny.

Churches and States constitute similar societies; in that so far as they are living spiritual organs they are founded on bonds of communion and require from their members a fidelity which is of the order of "attestation". But these raise in another form the question of authority. In an interesting essay entitled *Obeissance et Fidélité* which, for obvious reasons, was banned by the Vichy Régime, Marcel examines what is due to those in authority in the state. He affirms that life itself constitutes a "service" and that the disappearance of the virtue of service and consecration, with its corresponding loss of the sense of hierarchy, is to be deplored, and indeed he renders it largely responsible for France's disaster. But he refuses absolutely to identify service and obedience. A child, he declares, may be extolled as "obedient", but such an epithet applied to an adult is merely insulting; and to demand obedient citizens, as the totalitarian states would have them, marks a degradation of man.

To obey has, he goes on, only one meaning: it is an act whereby the citizen responds to the command of the leader. It is a question of function pure and simple: the latter's
function is to command, the former's to obey. But precisely by reason of this fact, appertaining to the mechanism of social and political life, the act of obedience is limited to certain specific ends; the obligation it entails is limited; it does not, as Marcel puts it, engage the whole person, for he maintains full liberty to approve or disapprove:

La fonction du chef est de commander, la fonction du sous-ordre est d'exécuter, c'est-à-dire d'obéir. La fonction, dis-je: il suit de là que le devoir d'obéissance n'engage pas foncièrement et nécessairement l'être de celui qui obéit. Cette obligation ne porte que sur des actes précis qu'il est tenu d'exécuter, ou dont il est tenu de s'abstenir, quel que soit d'ailleurs son sentiment personnel ou son jugement. (H.V. p. 176.)

Government, then, has no right to call for obedience except when it delimits the zone of application: to insist on total obedience brings about the slave-state, of which we have seen recent examples:

Ajoutons que l'obéissance ne va pas sans une sorte de statut, explicite ou non, précisant la sphère dans laquelle elle est exigible. Plus les frontières de cette zone d'application tendent à s'effacer, plus l'obéissance risque de se dégrader et de se confondre avec une servilité générale, dont le caractère avilissant doit être non seulement reconnu, mais proclamé. (Ibid., p. 177.)

This means that the citizen owes obedience to the authority only inasmuch as the latter exercises his clearly defined function. Outside that he is like any other citizen and he has no claim on our obedience, although he may be the object of our fidelity:
Fidelity is the relationship of man to man in a community: it cannot command or demand: it is love, charity and, as such, mutually creative:

Créatrice, lorsqu'elle est authentique, elle l'est au fond de toute manière, car elle possède le mystérieux pouvoir de renouveler non seulement celui qui la pratique, mais encore son objet, quelque indigne qu'il ait pu être d'elle à l'origine, comme si elle avait une chance - il n'y a rien ici de fatal assurément - de le rendre à la longue perméable au souffle qui anime l'âme intérieurement consacrée. (Ibid., pp. 184-5.)

If, then, the leader is the object of fidelity, he is so in the same manner as all the members of the community. In actual fact, fidelity as the basis of society, goes not to him nor to any other member but to the "oeuvre commune" which together all, leader included, are accomplishing:

C'est par là que la fidélité révèle sa vraie nature qui est d'être un témoignage, une attestation; c'est par là aussi qu'une éthique qui la prend pour centre est irrésistiblement conduite à se suspendre au plus qu'humain, à une volonté d'inconditionalité qui est en nous l'exigence et la marque même de l'Absolu. (Ibid., p. 185.)

Marcel thus envisages a society based on communion and fidelity. His vision is clearly Augustinian: the vision of a City of God where Christian charity is the motive force and the hierarchy established, as in Fénelon's Télémaque, is the creature and creation of order and love.
Yet he does not move wholly on the plane of the ideal. His remarks on the essential, although limited, sphere of obedience can be linked with his views on toleration. He seems to admit that the Christian charity possible in the field of personal relations cannot be wholly infused into the State: that there remains a place for the "functions" of authority, provided these are exercised towards specific ends; and that within these functions will be confined a certain "intolerance", due to the fact that authority is called upon to assume a responsibility towards the community which is not charity but preservation; provided again that its refusal to tolerate is directed towards clearly defined and limited dangers.

With regard to the Church, Marcel has rarely touched on the problem of authority except to condemn the "excesses of a paternalism directed in a theocratic sense". (Ibid., p. 167.) The Church, for him, is essentially a community; it is the very epitome of a "témoignage perpétué", for it, more clearly than the family or any human society can be, is the recipient and incarnation of spiritual and God-given values.

It is obvious that it is in this light, and that alone, that the Church interests Marcel: as the essential society, not as an emblem of authority nor as the expounder of theologies. Hence it is that his religious thought transcends mere Catholic philosophy; it is the vision of a philosopher first of all. It must refuse a totality of truth to any religious form or sect and, in actual fact, it involves
the vision of a plurality of societies themselves capable of communion and interpenetration, collaborating, each within the limits of its personal entity and the finite conditions of its historical development, in the realisation of human destiny and the spiritual values that man, by his freedom and witnessing, is called upon to accomplish and make manifest under the guidance of Divine grace.

Nothing in this vision is incompatible with Catholic tenets, but it is none the less independent of them. We venture to suggest that to call Marcel a Catholic philosopher, as Claudel may be termed, is to misunderstand his significance: the substance of his thought is ethico-religious, but his influence and conclusions far transcend any sectarian limitations.

Indeed, we go so far as to suggest that his spirituality has its roots not only in Christian but in pre-Christian modes of thought, as many statements testify. The loss of spirituality, that "carence de la spiritualité" of which he speaks, is the most significant and striking phenomenon of the modern world, invaded as it is by technique. It is it which accounts for the obliteration of family life, of the sense of social communion, as well as of the personal virtues. But its precise root is metaphysical. It appears as an ennui or souci which eats at the vitals of man's hope and confidence in life and his will to realisation. And this in its turn is but the expression of a rupture of the "lien
The contemporary "reflux de la vie", with its accompanying "taedium vitae", with its lassitude on the one hand, and its urge to feverish pleasure on the other, is a sort of "traumatisme ontologique", made possible by "la rupture ou plus exactement le relâchement du lien ontologique qui unit chaque être en particulier à l'être dans sa plénitude". (Ibid., p. 292.) What is attacked is the very notion of a human order, the very faith in man himself as a creature with a spiritual mission and destiny.

This destruction has reached its term in the contemporary "refusal of salvation", the philosophy of despair and radical pessimism which is the most actual form of Nihilism. With this philosophy, the refusal of spiritual values has become value itself. The contemporary "nihilist" "en vient à nous proposer une apologétique à rebours, une apologétique de l'absurde pour laquelle le néant de valeur devient en réalité la valeur suprême". (Ibid., p. 290.) And he does so by virtue of an "idéalisme solipsiste" which disrupts the spiritual "organon" within which man finds his centre and participates in Being.

It is, in Marcel's view, the whole realm of values that is so endangered; for value is nothing if not "incarnated", if not "incorporated in a cause", which transcends the individual and is realised and achieved within the common life of a community by the process of fidelity and mutual creation.
It is precisely this "loyalty" of which Royce spoke that is now discredited with the discrediting of humanism.

In this situation, asks Marcel, how can we proceed? Is it sufficient to admit this ethical pessimism as radical and to have recourse, as Karl Barth does, to a "metaphysics of faith" pure and simple?

Car si l'on peut dire que la mort de Dieu au sens nietzschéen a précédé et rendu possible l'agonie de l'homme à laquelle nous assistons – il reste légitime en un certain sens d'affirmer que c'est des cendres de l'homme que Dieu peut et doit ressusciter. Ne trompé-je en présumant que le barthisme en particulier tire une partie de sa force du pessimisme radical auquel l'événement nous réduit sur le plan proprement humain? (Ibid., p. 219.)

Modern followers of Kierkegaard are willing to "sacrifice the ethical". But Marcel refuses to do so for his part, for it would simply consecrate a divorce to be deplored between the religious and the moral life:

Avons-nous le droit, même dans une perspective strictement chrétienne, de faire en quelque sorte le sacrifice de l'éthique? A quoi reviendrait au fond un tel sacrifice? Il consisterait en somme à sanctionner une division de fait qui tend à se créer entre des êtres qui tendent d'établir leur existence sur une mystique d'une part, et de l'autre des êtres qui cherchent simplement à se débrouiller le moins mal possible dans l'aventure incompréhensible et en fin de compte affreuse où ils ont conscience d'avoir été jetés par hasard, ou, ce qui revient au même, par le jeu de forces inhumaines et incontrôlables. (Ibid., pp. 219-20.)

It is undesirable in itself precisely because a mysticism of faith of this sort cohabiting with an amoral plutocratic social system would be and is morally sterile:
The Christian, indeed, cannot simply retire from this dilemma and leave an "irreparable rent in the very stuff of which our humanity is made". (Ibid., p. 222.) It would be tantamount to denying his Christianity, to "empting the notion of salvation itself of its substantial content".

For Marcel's part, he will not, given his philosophy and religion, admit this dualism between religion and ethics. And certain passages are of the utmost significance for Marcel's religious thought. Marcel, indeed, believes in a sort of natural morality or incipient grace which is antecedent to the gift of Christian faith and is, at bottom, independent of the latter. And this natural state of grace is none other than the primitive ontological link of selves with the Divine and spiritual order inherent in the universe:

It is the primitive "piété envers la vie" which is lost to-day: 

J'incline fortement à penser que cette piété est le seul vinculum authentique qui puisse
reliever les hommes entre eux en deçà de la Révélation, et que tout universalisme abstrait qui prétend s'en passer, si droite que soit l'intention qui l'anime, ne peut en fait que préparer la voie à un nihilisme dont nous discorrons partout l'action dévastatrice. (Ibid., p. 226.)

Marcel speaks of it as a "grâce naissante qui palpite au cœur de la nature". It is evident that he turns his back completely on the supernaturalism of Kierkegaard and Karl Barth. Indeed he claims that such an excessive supernaturalism can actually sterilise the spontaneity and confidence in life which is God's natural gift to man:

Chacun de nous peut connaître en effet des chrétiens surnaturalisés à l'excès, et qui ont perdu le sens, ne disons pas de la nature, mais plus exactement de cette grâce naissante qui palpite au cœur de la nature. (Ibid.)

For this reason he rejects the teachings of Jansenism:

Bien des âmes marquées par le jansénisme ont cédé sans nul doute à la tentation de renier l'humain et de désérer la terre, sans pour cela peut-être se rapprocher beaucoup du ciel. (Ibid., p. 127.)

And, on the contrary, he is ready to recognise the spiritual importance of pagan religio:

Mais en contre-partie, je serais très disposé à croire qu'il existe une religio dont les païens eux-mêmes nous ont laissé d'admirables témoignages, une piété envers les morts et les dieux du foyer, qui, en deçà de toute spiritualité proprement chrétienne, assure la solidité de ce pacte entre l'homme et la vie auquel j'ai eu si souvent l'occasion de me référer; et il n'est que trop compréhensible que là où cette religio a cédé à la pression impitoyable, non pas de la technique, mais d'une mentalité fascinée et désorbitée par les progrès de la technique, on voie se multiplier comme de nos jours les infractions
At the basis of the ethical life we can admit a "sorte de piété pré-chrétienne ou péri-chrétienne". And it is this "sense of the sacred" that must be restored. Religious in itself, it cannot wholly be restored by professing Christians alone, nor need it be, although it is true that this natural grace can only become really fruitful when the actual grace of faith has been added thereto.

However that may be, Marcel recognises at the root of the personal life a primitive influx of grace which seals the pact between man and life, man and his fellows. He thus recognises, with Rilke, "a permanent value of Orphism which cannot be neglected with impunity", (Ibid., p. 11.), a "reverential love of the created" whose loss is equivalent to a "desacralisation of the real". (Ibid., p. 355.) As he sees it, the first condition of fidelity, hope and communion are to be found in the individual's harmony with cosmic forces and rhythms or what elsewhere he calls the "sens éthico-lyrique de l'essaimage humain". (Ibid., p. 127.)

The ethico-religious task of our time Marcel conceives to be the reviving of this sense of the sacred by the promotion of small communities:

On peut penser que c'est à de petites communautés, essaimant les unes apres les autres, qu'il appartiendra de former ce qu'on pourrait appeler des centres exemplaires, c'est-à-dire en somme des noyaux de vie à partir desquels pourrait se reconstituer le tissu lacéré de l'existence morale authentique. (Ibid., p. 229.)
Such communities would be the preparing ground for a future spiritual society of plural units participating in the common work of creating humanity in the image of God. It is certain that the Personalist groups which have sprung up in France and Britain have their origin in these suggestions and it is noteworthy that persons of differing faiths and creeds participate therein.

This task, says Marcel in conclusion, must to-day involve the most urgent prise de conscience of man's enslavement to technique. It is, he believes, clear to all, since the discovery of the atomic bomb, that in the problem of technical advance we are confronted with the problem of sin in its acutest form. The recent war itself, technical above all, has confronted humanity with sin as never before: to each and all, war appears as sin itself. And the fact that from now on war and technique are irrevocably linked calls for clarification of the relationship between technique and sin.

It is a question of correlation, says Marcel, but not of identity. For a technique as such is not evil. It may be defined as an "ensemble de procédés méthodiquement élaborés, et par conséquent susceptibles d'être enseignés et reproduits, dont la mise en oeuvre assure la réalisation de telle fin concrète déterminée (1)." Indeed, in itself it

is rather a good, if we look at it from the point of view of the inventor, where the creation of the technique is purposive. Where a technique becomes open to objection is when the technical invention is put in the hands of those whose sole end is to utilise it as a means and thereby loses its "authenticity".

It is at this point that technical progress is put at the service of evil, becoming "technique de pêché et du pêché (1)." For it puts an unsurpassable instrument in the hands of man's evil pride which by its use develops in the modern world into a veritable "autolâtrie". We see it in its most visible form in the mania for speed records. And it assumes gigantic proportions in the cult of ever greater and faster machines and ever more highly developed systems of transport and communication. All this technical progress is accompanied by a progressive isolation of men. Paradoxically, the ever greater means of communication themselves have only developed this isolation of aggressively minded groups and nationalities:

L'expérience contemporaine permet d'affirmer... que l'uniformisation, bien loin d'acheminer les hommes vers une certaine assimilation concrète de l'universel, semble tendre au contraire à développer en eux des particularismes de plus en plus agressifs et à les dresser les uns contre les autres (2).

Linked in this way with the evil propensity to self-deification and a wild claim to a "cosmic regency", the cult

(1) Ibid., p. 90.
(2) Ibid., p. 83.
of technique has corrupted man's feelings. It has led him in particular to envisage human relationships themselves in terms of technique and human beings as so many instruments: as when the worker is considered in view of his productive power as a mere "cost" or factor in the profit-system. Modern capitalism, indeed, has ended in "la réduction à la condition d'esclaves de multitudes d'êtres humains auxquels la qualité d'êtres est pratiquement refusée (1)." This inhumanity accompanying the age of technocracy found its logical conclusion in the extermination of the inmates of concentration camps by the Nazis once their usefulness was judged exhausted; for after all, the system dreamed by the Nazis was simply a "univers de la pure technique". Hence it is that modern technocracy has created for itself a "problematic" universe, a world of counters and ciphers devoid of all that is meant by human relationships. What it has done is to destroy the initial "mystery" of being. It has meant the "effacement progressif de ce monde du mystère qui est à la fois celui de la présence et celui de l'espérance (2)." This mystery of being is simply the consciousness of "enracinement"; the ensemble of habitus that compose man's condition as a real, living being and by virtue of which he is a being of communion and not of solitude:

Mais il apparaît aussi de plus en plus

(1) Ibid., p. 91.
(2) Ibid., p. 88.
It is these feelings which are proper to him as a human being that have been destroyed, and it is only on the condition that he finds them again and experiences anew the "mystery of being" that man can regain his power for spiritual progress:

Therein lies, according to Marcel, the fundamental sense of the Sartrian philosophy, which is the philosophical expression of the spiritual disruption that has delivered man body and soul over to the world of technique. In an unpublished lecture (3) he analysed the implications of this philosophy in this light and attacked it in the severest terms. He believes it to be the outcome of a long historical process which, by a sort of "neutralisation of the past", has resulted in the "temporal insularisation of contemporary man". Thanks to this divorce from his spiritual context, man has been led to a philosophy of unbridled action which finds its most aggressive expression

(1) Ibid., p. 92.
(2) Ibid., p. 91.
(3) Les Techniques d'avilissement dans le monde et la pensée d'aujourd'hui, given at Brussels, Vienna, etc., in 1945.
in Sartre's dictum: "faire et en faisant se faire":

On ne peut nier plus aggressivement l'existence
d'une nature, d'un héritage, plus profondément
celle d'une investiture, ou, dirai-je, d'une
participation à une réalité qui nous sacre à
même que nous pénétrons en elle (1).

But what, Marcel asks, does this doctrine represent except
the "prétention du technicien", the degradation of the
"human nature" into a matter for manipulation?

The consequences are seen in all their danger to-day in
the hysteria and desequilibrium which characterise the post-
war world and which the Sartrian philosophy has codified and
attempted to justify as a way of life. On the one hand, an
exaggerated sense of self, a super-man complex, on the other,
an excessive self-depreciation. The individual sets himself
up as God and, simultaneously, sees himself as a "déchet du
cosmos". These excesses are, as is known to all psycholo-
gists, symptoms of one prevailing self-idolatry; and Marcel
goes so far as to describe the self-depreciation character-
istic of contemporary man as a "flagellation d'essence
étrique".

No doubt, he concludes, the notions of risk, wager, etc.,
have their place in ethics, and certainly any existential
ethic, but subordinated to the notion of Being:

Certes la valeur de ces notions existentielles
est irrécusable, mais à condition qu'elles
soient maintenues à la place qui doit leur
être légitimement assignée, c'est-à-dire sous
la dépendance de structures qui ne sauraient
être mises elles-mêmes en question (2).

(1) Ibid.
(2) Ibid.
The task of the philosopher to-day is to restore the equilibrium of man's nature: what is required is "a thought centred on being and not on doing", to restore "that unity of poetic vision and philosophic creation" upon which modern thought has turned its back, entering upon the path of a veritable "misosophie".

It is not, then, technique itself which is the sin, rather it is that the opportunity it offers has been too strong for human pride and sinfulness to withstand; and once succumbing to the temptation, he has become the slave of the machine-mind and been in his turn transformed into a machine. So that now there has been created a veritable "corps de pêché", a load of sin under which we labour and are stifled:

Yet by this very fact, says Marcel, the evil and sin are general. We are each and all involved therein. It is not for any of us, and least of all for Christians, to pose as superior to the universal sin. The fundamental problem for man to-day, each and every individual, is the willing assumption of this load of sin with a view to repentance:

Le problème tragique qui se pose à l'homme aujourd'hui est de savoir, s'il assumera

(1) Technique et Péché, p. 93.
Tragic it is by the fact that our slavery to technique has rendered this repentance a task beyond our powers; for sin itself has entered into the realm of the "problematical". We have become accustomed to see in sin and evil themselves a mere maladjustment which can be put right by some external manipulation of parts. Whereas they are essentially "mysteries":

Le mal n'est pas seulement sous mes yeux, il est aussi en moi; bien plus: en un semblable domaine la distinction de l'en-moi et du hors-de-moi se révèle vide de sens (2).

Our only hope is to move once and for all from the realm of problems to the spiritual revaluation which Marcel calls "recueillement":

Mais comment la reconnaissance du mystère est-elle possible? Elle ne l'est qu'à la faveur d'un ressaisissement intérieur qui n'est autre que le recueillement (3).

By this spiritual reassessment we may hope to regain the sense of communion and participation that will renew our moral, and ultimately, our social life; although the superhuman nature of the task points to the necessity of Divine inspiration and the enabling power of Divine grace.

In this we find Marcel's final word on man's present-day

(1) Ibid.
(2) Ibid., p. 87.
(3) Ibid., p. 87.
780.

problem. As he sees it, the task is not primarily one of material or social reform, but of spiritual rebirth, for when the source of the moral life is contaminated, all that springs therefrom will be contaminated. This, he says, is not the time for "les grandes ambitions plus ou moins utopiques et vagues", but for spiritual renewal and purification; the rest will follow if only by the fact that man will be free to apply his techniques in the pursuit of his true spiritual ends:

Mais ce n'est que dans le recueillement, on peut l'affirmer, que peuvent prendre naissance et se rassembler les puissances d'amour et d'humilité capables de contrepeser à la longue l'orgueil aveugle et aveuglant du technicien enfermé dans sa technique (1).

(1) Ibid., p. 94.
CHAPTER XV
CONCLUSION; EXISTENCE AND ONTOLOGY

The philosophy of M. Gabriel Marcel, reacting against the pretensions of Absolute Idealism, has its roots in contemporary Realism, but in a Realism which finds its natural prolongation in a philosophy of Existence. Turning its back upon Rationalism, it reaffirms the rights of immediate experience; like the philosophy of Whitehead, or the final philosophy of Schelling, it appears as a form of empiricism, albeit differing from the "atomism" of Hume, being, to quote M. Wahl, the "affirmation de la non déductibilité de lêtre...du donné, c'est-à-dire de quelque chose d'immédiat qui est accueilli, reçu (1)."

This empiricism differs, however, from that of the neo-Realists in being something more than an epistemology. It is subordinated to and finds its true significance when referred to a metaphysics of Existence. At the basis of his thought is the distinction between Existence and Objectivity and between the essential and the empirical self. The task of philosophy becomes essentially "ethical" in character, rather than speculative, in that it is not concerned with analysing the nature of the objective world, but with describing the conditions whereby the true self may

(1) Vers le concret, Recherches Philosophiques I, 1931-2, p. 5.
be realised by the transcending of Objectivity. The type of knowledge with which it deals is "essential" or "existential" knowledge, defined by Kierkegaard in the following passage: "That essential knowledge is essentially related to existence does not mean the above-mentioned identity which abstract thought postulates between thought and being; nor does it signify, objectively, that knowledge corresponds to something existent as its object. But it means that knowledge has a relationship to the knower, who is essentially an existing individual, and for this reason all essential knowledge is essentially related to existence (1)."

For, the transcending of Objectivity can only be accomplished by a definite breach with the linear and uniform movement of reason, by an act which is of the nature of will, feeling and passion and which Kierkegaard and Jaspers call the "leap". Any objective approach to the "mystery" of existence is banned by reason of the fact that the subject who seeks knowledge of his existence is involved in that very existence and cannot transform himself into an object of thought without "exiling himself to infinity", as Marcel puts it, or, in Kierkegaard's words, "abstracting from his existence". "The real subject," says the latter, "is not the cognitive subject, since in knowing he moves in the sphere of the possible; the real subject is the ethically existing subject... For an abstract thinker to try and prove (1) Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 177.
his existence by the fact that he thinks, is a curious contradiction; for in the degree that he thinks abstractly he abstracts from his own existence (1)." The realm of existence is opened up through a subjective reflection, a mode of "inwardness" which, at bottom, is a mode of contemplation rather than of knowledge. "For an objective reflection the truth becomes an object, something objective, and thought must be pointed away from the subject. For a subjective reflection the truth becomes a matter of appropriation, of inwardness, of subjectivity, and thought must probe more and more deeply into the subject and his subjectivity (2)."

The starting-point of existential reflection is, for Marcel, the *Ego sum*, the primitive "ontic truth" which confronts the subjective thinker once he has withdrawn from the sphere of Objectivity. It is revealed in the fact of "incarnation", the mysterious union of body and mind which characterises existence à l'état pur. It is not a cogito in the Cartesian sense, or presentation of self to thought in all the clearness and distinctness of an intelligible idea, but the mysterious "presence" of a Being transcendent, yet immanent within the concrete self of passion and history.

The transcendent essential self as revealed in existence is not therefore the object of an intuition of pure thought; it constitutes rather "ce qui résiste", the hard core or

(1) Ibid., p. 281.
(2) Ibid., p. 171.
"ombre" which the existing subject comes up against, the irreducible "au delà", never wholly permeable to thought, whose veiled presence lurks within the depths of spatio-temporal experience and which opens immediately on to the existent realm of other selves and things. For this immediate presence of self to self is the condition of all other presences. Given this starting-point, the task of philosophy or metaphysics becomes the elucidation of those situations involving the _ego sum_ which provide the "concrete approaches" to Being - love, death, faith, etc.

At the centre of such an Existentialism is the recognition of the contingent nature of existence, and of the metaphysical significance of the despair which accompanies the situation of the self enmeshed in Objectivity and temporal succession. In despair Marcel sees the very essence and sign of the "exigence ontologique", constituting in itself the "ontological weight" of human experience.

The problem of Time is consequently central in the Existential philosophy. And in its solution of this problem it remains true to its starting-point as a philosophy of the actual and of the concrete. It considers the Eternal to be revealed and realised only in what is most real in Time, in immediate and passionate experience. "It is only momentarily," says Kierkegaard, "that the particular individual is able to realise existentially a unity of the infinite and the finite which transcends existence. This unity is realised in the moment of passion... In passion the existing subject is
rendered infinite in the eternity of the imaginative representation, and yet he is at the same time most definitely himself (1)." Similarly, Marcel affirms that real time or duration provides the sole point of contact between the finite and the infinite, Time and Eternity. The essential self is revealed and realised in passion, willing and feeling, in a present of simultaneity wherein the eternal is mirrored.

We have already made a full comparison between Marcel's philosophy and the Existentialisms of both the Germans and Sartre. As opposed to those schools, it is in the affirmation of the transcendent order of Divine Grace that we have the final key to Marcel's metaphysics. We may say of it, as we may say of Descartes's, that the existence of God and His activity are throughout implicit therein.

One of the sources of Jaspers' pessimism and admission of failure is the recognition of the "antinomies of the Dasein", implicit in the contingent character of existence, which renders impossible a total and continuous realisation of the essential self. A recognition which leads him to the conclusion that metaphysics is doomed to failure, and that in this failure consists the very significance of metaphysics (2).

(1) Ibid., p. 176.
(2) We may note in this connection the apocalyptic strain present in Jaspers' thought, notably in his conception of the "epochal consciousness". (Cf. Man and the Modern Age, Introd.) — a strain very prevalent, often in a morbid form, in modern German thought, and particularly powerful in Rathenau and Spengler. This strain is correspondingly absent from Marcel's work.
Now Marcel is saved from such pessimism by his affirmation of the transcendent Deity and Grace. On the one hand, the discontinuity which characterises existence is overcome by the action of Divine Grace which fills in the gaps in existence and by a sort of continuous creation constitutes the personality of the existing and believing subject. On the other hand, the margin which subsists even in the most deep existential experience between the existing self and the essential self, and which might be a source of despair and doom Ontology to failure, requires some guarantee; and it is God Himself who provides such a guarantee and sufficient principle of explanation.

Finally, Marcel's philosophy is a "philosophie du sentiment" and, as such, substitutes the criterion of value for that of truth. It cannot therefore have demonstrative validity unless and until some guarantee is found that the intuitions of feeling are "true". Marcel is confronted by the same problem as confronted Descartes. Although the immediate experience bears within it a subjective self-evidence and needs no guarantee as such, it yet requires for its objective certainty to be grounded in some external principle of validity. And, as for Descartes, it is God who provides this objective guarantee. The gap that subsists between being and truth is "bridged", as Marcel puts it, by God:

Je ne peux plus en aucune façon admettre l'idée d'un au-delà de la vérité; il y a
longtemps d’ailleurs que cette idée suscitait chez moi un malaise. Cette marge entre la vérité et l’être se comble en quelque sorte d’elle-même dès le moment où la présence de Dieu a été effectivement éprouvée, et ce sont les vérités partielles qui cessent, aux yeux de la foi, de mériter leur nom. (E.A. p. 27.)

So that the metaphysics of Marcel finds its ultimate principle of explanation in God. In this light it is seen to fit in to the eternal French philosophic tradition from Descartes and Malebranche onwards, a tradition which has no parallel in the German Idealism from which the contemporary German Existentialism derives. The cornerstone of this tradition is the double intuition of the self and of God, or rather, as the intuition of God is implicit in the intuition of the self, the double moment of a single intuition: Je suis, Dieu est (1). In Marcel’s philosophy, the famous phrase of Pascal: “Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne me possédais” regains its full significance.

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Perhaps the central problem raised by such a philosophy is the relation between immediate and mediate knowledge, feeling and intelligence. Marcel’s philosophy exhibits itself primarily as a "philosophie du sentiment". M. Wahl, in his remarkable article on the Journal Métaphysique, has

(1) Cf. the comment of J. Chevalier on Descartes: "La pierre d’angle de sa philosophie: Je suis, Dieu est." (Descartes, Paris, Plon, 1921, p. 57.)
suggested some of the difficulties in this order. What is the validity of an évidence du sentiment? We are well aware that feeling may deceive us. It is obvious that it does not contain within itself its own grounds of validity. Marcel, as we have just seen, recognises the margin between value and truth and has recourse to God to breach the gap. Yet the problem remains as to the status of demonstrative and rational knowledge; has the latter any rôle to play in this new Ontology and generally in experience of the real? Might it not be asserted that such experience contains a conceptual and rational element inseparable therefrom. Both Fernandez and Hocking answer in the affirmative. The former indeed would suggest that feeling is not knowledge at all, but simply an emotional state preceding or accompanying conceptual thought. This view is surely too dogmatic; immediacy has certainly some value as knowledge. Yet none the less the problem once again arises: is there a conceptual, rational element adhering, so to speak, to experience, and if so what is its status?

If we pose those questions with regard to Marcel's philosophy, we have first to enquire what he means by immediacy or, as he sometimes calls it, "le sentiment". And here we must refer back to the remarks made in Chapters I and VII when comparing Marcel's doctrine with that of Bergson. The term intuition he employed where it was appropriate, that is in his Idealistic phase - for example, in the first part of
the *Journal Métaphysique* - and very occasionally later, in his theory of sensation. From then onwards it no longer appears.

Intuition in the Bergsonian sense is non-relational (in the sense in which Bradley defines feeling as "non-relational thought"), all relation being referred to the secondary intellectual process; and it is this that explains his conception of duration which is properly outwith spatial and temporal distinction. For Marcel, on the contrary, immediacy is not purely and simply non-relational; it involves in fact the sense of spatial and temporal differentiation (a before-after sense and a near-far sense).

For this reason, immediacy constitutes in Marcel's philosophy a type of non-conceptual reflection and it embodies a dialectic. Whereas Bergson's intuition is pure and absolute, being prior to any distinction of subject and object, Marcel's immediacy is the medium of a "dialectique d'approfondissement" whereby, within immediacy itself, the subject participates more or less in the "presence". Thus immediacy is what characterises the "mystery" and its mode is best described as participation, or better as "recueillement". Its opposition to intuition is clearly expressed in the following passage:

*Mais comment la reconnaissance du mystère est-elle possible? Elle ne l'est qu'à la faveur d'un ressaisissement interieur qui n'est autre que le recueillement. Je me garderais qu'à moi de parler ici d'intuition. Car ce ressaisissement n'est
Hence it is that Marcel repeats constantly that participation, as he defines it, is not a simple, direct vision culminating in the fusion of subject and object, but a type of relation involving degrees where subject and object are, even at the deepest level, both one and distinct. His doctrine of participation is quite different from a doctrine of mere affectivity, as Bergson's still is in spite of its claims.

It is this conception of immediacy (as opposed to pure intuition) that justifies and provides the basis for his Ontology. For, as M. Wahl has underlined in his book *Vers le Concret*, there is no absolutely concrete experience other than the presumed mystical, where subject and object are one out with space and time and which transcends ontological reflection entirely. We may say of Bergsonism as of mysticism that, intuition posited, there is nothing more to be said.

In his conception of immediacy, moreover, Marcel is in agreement with Whitehead and James and, with certain reserves, Bradley. Neither of the two first would banish relation entirely from immediate experience. Feeling, for Whitehead, is experience "with a minimum of analysis". But to conceive it as without some differentiation is to create a psychological abstraction. Feeling, as the non-relational pure and

(1) *Technique et Péché*, loc. cit., p. 87.
simple, is, as Bradley saw, the basis of experience, but experience itself is the field of qualities which are never relationless, precisely because experience involves process (1).

It is, however, the views of James that are fruitful in this context. James finds in immediate experience, as forming part of sensation, all those relations such as space and time, which intelligence is later to develop. In other words, concepts and conceptual relations are extracted from the data of immediate experience and are but elaborations of it. "Whether our concepts live by returning to the perceptual world or not, they live by having come from it. It is the nourishing ground from which their sap is drawn (2)."

The substitution of the static for the dynamic is not then a distortion but an elaboration; and the conceptual process has its ground and justification in what is already contained in immediacy: it is what James calls a "conceptual translation". Concepts and percepts are "consubstantial"; they are "made of the same kind of stuff, and melt into each other when we handle them together (3)." James goes further; for if this is so, immediate and mediate together compose the tissue of experience. "The universal and the particular parts of the experience are literally immersed in each other and both are indispensable (4)." Together they form the texture of experience in all its richness. "Perception

(1) Cf. R.W. Church, Bradley's Dialectic, pp. 27-8, 40-1.
(2) Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 80.
(3) Ibid., p. 107.
(4) Ibid.
prompts our thought, and thought in turn enriches our perception (1)."

Now, there is in Gabriel Marcel's doctrine the basis for such a reconciliation of immediate and mediate knowledge and for the integration of the latter in an enlarged concept of experience. For what he terms immediacy is no mere irrationality or affectivity but a type of reflection, prior to the conceptual process and developing within the concrete and the dynamic, as opposed to the abstract and the static, yet at the same time containing within it the elements from which the conceptual is presumably elaborated. Thus it would be possible for him to legitimate the conceptual process as bearing upon the same "stuff" as immediate presentification, and, to go further, to make a place for the former in experience of the real.

There are several passages where Marcel moves in this direction. Thus, for example, he criticises the radical dualism established by Bergson between feeling and intelligence, asserting that they differ only as modes of a single reflection, as thought "thinking" and as thought "thought". "Il faudrait opposer au bergsonisme en tant que système", he writes, "le bergsonisme en tant que mode de penser." (R.I. p. 21.) What he calls the "abus du bergsonisme" consists in "une théorie de l'intelligence qui n'en rend pas compte, mais qui, au lieu de la penser, au lieu d'en épouser (1) Ibid., p. 108.
du dedans les démarches, tend à s'arrêter à la représentation matérielisante qu'elle s'en forme". (H.V. p. 10.) In another passage he is much more explicit and attacks "la distinction classique et arbitraire... entre sentiment et raison". (Ibid., pp. 228-9.)

Unfortunately, he does not really succeed in doing away with this dualism, although he has the means for so doing in his own theory. On the contrary, he insists that "une philosophie concrète est une philosophie de la pensée pensante", (R.I. p. 21), thereby excluding mediate knowledge from any rôle in his philosophy of experience. Even more, he tends to describe such knowledge not only, as is just, as secondary and derived, but to treat it as distorting in itself. He speaks more often than not as if conceptual knowledge, being objective, were sin itself, the very source of our loss of communion. Whereas, as his essay on Technique et Péché declares, the root of such loss is not technique itself but the use made of it by the individual who, in his pride, substitutes objective categories and anonymous relationships wholly for the immediate; and this he does for the purposes of power rather than of knowledge. The temptation has been to refer "Objectivity" to the sin of intelligence, to a sin of the mind rather than to a sin of the will. But it is a confusion which is not strictly implicit in Marcel's premises.

The question becomes all the more important for an Existentialism that purports to establish an Ontology.
may, without accepting his Thomistic conclusions, agree with M. de Corte when he says that a minimum of abstraction is essential to Ontology, for we have not only to "experience" but also to "understand" the real. When Marcel speaks of faith or hope as containing within themselves their own reasons and as being incapable of objective verification or when he rejects the whole philosophy of the "verifiable", he is endangering his own metaphysical position. No one can deny that the existential experience has its own proper validity and constraining force. But to substitute "value" purely and simply for truth is to risk an arbitrary separation from which metaphysics can only suffer. M. Georges Blin has criticised Marcel's doctrine on this score, affirming that Marcel "reste en-deçà de la métaphysique dans la mesure où celle-ci doit proposer une doctrine valable pour la totalité de l'être (1)." We may agree with him so far as to stipulate that an Ontology, to be complete, requires as much a dialectic of essences as a dialectic of existence, objective verification as well as subjective revelation. On the other hand, one must reject the implication of M. Blin and M. de Corte that an Existentialism such as Marcel's - indeed any Existentialism - cannot establish an Ontology. This is to confuse entirely the subjective existential experience, as described by Marcel, with mere subjectivism, and it is to fail to recognise the supreme contribution of Existentialism.

(1) Gabriel Marcel, métaphysicien de la foi, Fontaine, Dec., 1945, pp. 131-2.
to ontological reflection, namely the postulate that Ontology starts from and is grounded in a subjective revelation, whose description (not verification) constitutes the proper dialectic of ontological speculation. This is not in dispute. What we may ask is whether, at some later stage, this dialectic has not to be supplemented by an objective verification of the traditional type, whether, in short, a discursive treatment of Being, of its modes and categories has not a still essential part to play in a fully constituted Ontology.

Indeed, Marcel on many points seems to have recognised this. After all, on no other grounds can he justify his acceptance of Catholic dogma; if at times he seems almost to speak with the accents of a Modernist or a Fideist (M. Blin suggests Quietism), he undoubtedly accepts those dogmas for their "truth" as much as for their experiential "value".

Moreover — and few seem to have noted this — his Thomistic digression on conceptual knowledge and the realistic implications of such knowledge marks an attempt if not to introduce a dialectic of essences, at least to define its mode of operation and its status.

The upshot of this digression was the view that the distinction between intelligence and feeling is one between two modes of thought inclusive in the order of Being. Both are directed towards knowledge of Being, the one immediate, the other mediate. Feeling is thought in its pure activity; reflection is thought in its derived activity, experience poured into the mould of ideas and rendered capable of
communication. In all activities of reason the mind operates by means of concepts, by which alone the intelligible aspects of reality can be grasped and reasoned about. The task of intelligence is to substitute for the variety of the real, and to represent it as, a homogeneous system of concepts and relations; not in the positivist sense that the concepts are mere "commodities of thought", for Marcel's epistemology is grounded in Thomistic Realism; they are expressive of the universal and intelligible aspects of Being in general.

In this connection Marcel's cavalier treatment of Science in a passage previously quoted is subject to criticism. He there defines Science as a vast "questionnaire". Science, he declared, composes a table of questions which she asks of reality and to which she appends the respective answers in the form of a series of predicates. On the one hand, a series of definite questions prepared in advance; on the other, a table of answers.

But this is not so. In seeking the answers to her questions Science finds that reality can offer no fully satisfactory answer; it constantly outstrips the question, for it is wider than the categories of the experimenter. Thus, the answers necessitate the transformation of the question, the addition of new questions and so on. So Science progresses continually; and it is by this process of revision of his "questionnaire" that the scientist is assured that he is at grips with reality, a reality, as Meyerson has shown, ultimately irrational and irreducible to a final
answer (1).

In other words, the "ideas" and symbols with which Science operates are descriptive of reality, even although the reality they describe surpasses them and they let escape its concrete. They are no mere object of thought; under them are subsumed characters of real things. Marcel has gone too far in this passage in his criticism of Science; seeking to present it as a purely abstract system, transforming it, to employ an expression of Maritain, into a "poème subjectif". This point of view is belied by Marcel's later epistemological Realism, which rehabilitates the concept as being "directed towards" the real. All that he is justified in saying of Science, or of intelligence in general, and all that he requires to say for his purpose is that they operate on the plane of Objectivity and not of Existence; opposing thus to the activities of Science and intelligence, however legitimate in their sphere, the activities of feeling and the mode of

(1) Cf. J. Baruzi: "Comme si le propre des sciences...n'était pas, au contraire, de briser les cadres qui leur préexistaient, de sans cesse déborder les questions d'où elles furent issues, et, étrangement, de répondre à d'autres, informulables jusque-là, imprévisibles et chimériques, et finalement peut-être de nous contraindre à l'impossible." (Review of the Journal Métaphysique, loc. cit.) This is in general agreement with Whitehead's definition: "There is the advance of detailed knowledge within the method prescribed by the reigning working hypothesis; and there is the rectification of the working hypothesis dictated by the inadequacies of the current orthodoxy." (Adventures of Ideas, p. 286.) Cf. also Collingwood's doctrine of question and answer (e.g. An Autobiography, Pelican Books, 1944, Chap. V.).
immediacy (1).

Suffice to say that this anti-science tendency and generally the exclusion of discursive modes of thought are not a necessary consequence of his premises. These would, and at times do, enable him to maintain that reason and feeling are two legitimate modes of activity of one mind and thought; that they are not strictly heterogeneous in nature. There is nothing to warrant his being accused of the "dualism" of modern philosophers such as Bergson or even Meyerson stigmatised by M. Parodi, a dualism which he traces back to Romanticism (2). What he can say and is correct in saying is that they differ not in essence, for mind is one in confrontation with the real, but in function. On this recognition of the heterogeneity of function of reason and feeling Marcel's whole philosophy is based. The primacy is at all times attributed to the latter; for in immediate experience all our knowledge of the real is ultimately grounded. The conceptual

(1) The anti-science tendency involves certain obvious dangers, particularly when associated with a measure of Occultist theory. Although metapsychical experience can and should find a place in an Existential philosophy, it must not entail the setting up of a veritable anti-science. If appeal is made to the former, it is all the more necessary that the criterion of "value" be supplemented by that of "truth" in the philosophy that does so. On this score, the remarks of Jaspers are very much to the point, when he speaks of an "anti-scientific superstition" proving as dangerous as the preceding "science of the doctrinaires". "Effective intercommunication of minds becomes impossible amid the nebulosity of this superstition, which destroys the possibility alike of genuine knowledge and genuine scientific faith." (Man in the Modern Age, p. 159.)

(2) L'Essence du romantisme, Rev. de Mét., 1931.
activity of the pure intelligence is a secondary and derived activity. (In this light, Marcel's use of the term "participation" to denote such immediate knowledge is suggestive. It seems a reminiscence of Lévy-Brühl's theory of primitive mentality, where the latter is described as a species of "empathy", whereby the subject participates in and becomes through "pre-logical" processes the object of his thought; intelligence and the conceptual activity being described as secondary and derived - a theory which gives scientific and sociological support to the doctrine of the heterogeneity of the knowing mind anticipated by such thinkers as Pascal (1).)

This recognition of the heterogeneity of function of reason and feeling together with the primacy given to the latter is the essential for Marcel's philosophy and for the creation of the Existential Ontology. He need not revert to the above-mentioned dualism; and in fact, as we have shown, he does not wish to do so. It would be possible for him, and of advantage to him, to show how the two modes might operate together and also to develop a dialectic of essences as a secondary but important line to his philosophy.

He is prevented from doing so, as suggested, largely by his tendency to equate the sin of "Objectivity" purely and simply with the discursive mode of thinking, in the same way as he is inclined at times to speak as if technique were sin in itself. There is a seeming confusion here between

(1) It must also be said, however, that Lévy-Brühl's theory has had its share in propagating the unwarranted dualism mentioned above.
Objectivity as a mode of reflection and Objectivity as a moral category. It is the latter that is condemned; and it is not the necessary consequence of the former. The evil is not purely and simply in the idea or concept, but in the substitution of those for the feeling to the total exclusion of the latter; and the failure thereby to refer it to the feeling and so infuse value into abstract truth. Moreover, that failure is the product of an act of will; the evil is a sin of the will, in every sense an act of "treason". From which it would appear that there is a fidelity in the field of discursive thinking just as much as there is in immediacy.

Marcel, by his insistence on treason as the fundamental factor of Objectivity, has recognised this himself. Indeed, his doctrine develops on much the same lines as that of Descartes, and like the latter, he is led to put the cause of error in the will, not in the judgment.

We may even suggest that immediate knowledge itself is not just something given and acceptable as such. Are there not cases where subjectivity itself is distorted and the presence falsified? Is that not what we find in sentimentality, one of the temptations of any existential philosophy that insists on "passionate experience". The problem of the "false presence" has hardly been tackled by the Existentialists (although Sartre's analysis of "mauvaise foi" is partly concerned with it). Here it is not a question of substituting an abstract idea for the real self; it is the taking of a feeling (using it in the sense of a revelation) as the sincere
expression of one's being. It is not sufficient, perhaps, to term immediacy the "authentic life" (as Kierkegaard himself does after all) and leave it at that. There may be within the realm of presences an "unauthentic", it too the product of a sin of the will, of a false fidelity. One can experience an "absence" of being in the midst of the most passionate experience; one can betray one's self in one's deepest feelings no less than in one's abstract imaginings.

Let us combine this argument with the preceding one. If it is admitted that conceptual knowledge has its ground in immediate knowledge, and that it is not as such the sin of Objectivity, then there is no reason why a logical explicitation should be excluded from an existential philosophy, or why the verificatory intelligence should not be called upon to provide a dialectic of "essences" and a science of the categories of Being to accompany the descriptive dialectic of immediacy, provided always that it is vivified by the latter.

We should then have an existential philosophy of experience wherein the full richness of experience would be represented, there being no valid reason to deny discursive thought its properly delimited and secondary role in the living texture of thought. Even more, Ontology would then fulfil the dual function it is called upon to fulfil if it is to be fully constituted as the supreme philosophical discipline, first to provide a faithful and undistorted description of the realm of value and being embodied in subjective or transobjective experience, secondly and no less
to verify experience as universal and universally significant truth. By so doing it would become a complex activity for the infusion of truth into value and of value into truth. It would be not only a union of thought and being for, it cannot be too strongly stressed, the existential dialectic is already that - it is already reflection, ontological reflection pure, and for that reason it is the constitutive substance of Ontology - but it would also be Science.

That Marcel has been fully alive to the problem is apparent from what has been said. And it is in an attempt to solve the difficulty that he calls upon God to "fill the gap", as he says, between value and truth, between truth and being. Once again it is along Cartesian lines that Marcel is thinking. But his assumption has not the warrant of Descartes'. For what is required for the bridge to be secure, for him as for the latter, is the discovery not only of a God but of a perfect God. However, apart from any question of a vicious circle (which the writer would deny in both cases anyway), there is nothing in Marcel's subjective evidence of God's presence to establish His perfection.

It follows from this that there is an additional reason why in his doctrine value and truth should be bridged by a rehabilitation of discursive reflection. In seeking to construct such a bridge his precursor Pascal has on the whole gone further and been more successful. It is his greatness as a thinker to have shown how the two modes of knowledge or "manières de croire" intervene alternately to constitute our
knowledge of reality. On the one hand, reasoning depends for its first principles on feeling, whose intimations, in their turn, become premises for discursive argument. On the other, arguments and rational proofs converge to establish belief or évidences du coeur. So that the two orders of value or belief and of truth or verification mutually support one another and provide mutual guarantees of validity. The same appeal to reason and feeling as a combined source of knowledge is present in Rousseau (1), while in contemporary philosophy Whitehead, following William James, has endeavoured in like manner to avoid the disadvantages of an epistemological dualism. We have sought to show that the basis for such a revaluation is already present in Marcel's own philosophy, and it is in this direction that one would hope earnestly for a future development. His type of meditation is one which, avoiding all systematisations, develops organically in accordance with the inner dialectic of his mind, now throwing out new shoots, now picking up loose strands. Whatever gaps may remain, the intensity and purposiveness of his speculation permit continuous development. Moreover, the comments made affect not only the Existentialism of Marcel but all Existentialisms.

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In the preceding discussion we have had occasion to refer to Descartes à propos of Marcel. Indeed, there is underlying his philosophy a whole series of traditional postulates. In many respects his thought is the least revolutionary of all those evolved by contemporary Existentialists. An attempt has been made to bring this out by endeavouring to show how, at its various stages, it repeats and develops the themes of traditional French religious thought. It would not be going too far to say that Marcel's philosophy is a restatement of the latter in existentialist terms and on the basis of an existentialist method.

In her interesting study (1), Mme. Rachel Bespaloff has insisted on this traditionalism of Marcel, attributing to him what M. Wahl, in a review of her book (2), calls "une certaine conception professorale de la philosophie". Marcel, she says, refuses to make "une aventureuse revision des données premières de la philosophie"; and in particular he has recourse to the traditional Catholic faith as a facile solution to the problem of the creation of new values. His thought "a quitté la région des durs problèmes, des débats épuisants"; "la pensée 'braquée sur un mystère' est une pensée qui a fini de souffrir, de juger la vie (3)."

This somewhat severe indictment requires elucidation. While agreeing that the bracketing of values with those of

(1) In Cheminements et Carrefours.
(2) Rev. Phil., Jan. - Feb., 1940.
Catholic doctrine may seem arbitrary, we may remark that the private religion of the author is a personal question. And when Mme. Bespaloff discerns in this private faith a "profonde complicité de la pensée et du désir (1)"; the present writer cannot see therein anything which invalidates Marcel's philosophy as such. He would maintain, indeed, that the doctrine of Marcel is independent of any specifically Catholic interpretation and is of value philosophically, to be judged on this basis. Marcel differs, it may be suggested, from Claudel, in that he speaks primarily as a philosopher and not as a Catholic.

The essential problem for the thinker has to do with the notion of values in Marcel's thought. Here his traditionalism is, we agree, obvious. He is no revolutionary. He is led to posit a domain of transcendent values limiting and giving significance to existence and freedom, permitting a continuity of willed existence or that "permanence ontologique" of which he speaks.

Mme. Bespaloff is thereby brought to compare Marcel unfavourably with a Rimbaud who "ne s'interroge pas un instant sur la nature de la liberté - il l'exige (2)"; and above all with Nietzsche. "C'est à cette critique de l'ontologie, chez Nietzsche, que se heurte et se heurtera toujours la pensée de Gabriel Marcel...cette idée d'une permanence ontologique, indépendante de la vie, Nietzsche y voit la

(1) Ibid., p. 84.
(2) Ibid., p. 89.
suprême démission de l'homme devant le réel (1)." For Mme. Bespaloff, in fact, the philosopher of the future has his prototype in Nietzsche, who defines the task of philosophy as a perpetual revision of values, freely and adventurously created, and the philosopher as one who refuses to be "cured", to find a solution. "Que le métaphysicien reste donc semblable au malade qui cherche sa position. Ne lui souhaitons pas de guérir (2)."

This opposition between Marcel and Nietzsche is certainly just and may be taken as the basis of an opposition between the former and the majority of contemporary Existentialists in general, the Kierkegaardian as well as the Nietzschean current, and above all M. Sartre. A short discussion of what it entails might enable us to define the limits and precise nature of Marcel's thought.

We find those limits suggested by Mme. Bespaloff when she speaks of his philosophy as constituting "une interprétation éthique du réel (3)." Marcel's philosophy is indeed primarily an ethically oriented philosophy; and both the religious and the social dimension are dissolved in the ethical dimension.

Consider, for example, the religious consciousness which it exhibits. That Marcel is a religious thinker and an important one there is no doubt. But there would appear to be lacking one essential feature of the religious consciousness

(1) Ibid., pp. 95-6.
(2) Ibid., p. 100.
(3) Ibid., p. 77. In her view, this "ethical" bias is one which "denature l'expérience originelle de la valeur absolue de l'être". (Ibid.)
which Kierkegaard brought to the fore and has become urgent in the contemporary religious mind, whether one follows Kierkegaard to the end or not. This is the element of paradox. It requires that between man and God there be an abyss that can be bridged only by a supernatural aid which is unique in its kind, one which is through and through irrational and arbitrary.

Such faith and supernatural action imply a quite special relationship between God and man, one which cannot in any sense be assimilated to the relation between man and his fellows, even in communion. Faith would then be different in nature from moral fidelity. It has been seen that Marcel rejects the Kierkegaardian and Barthian divorce between faith and morality and anything that savours of Jansenism. Not without reason. For in his thought faith is dissolved in fidelity, because the relation (primary and essential though it be) between God and man does not appear to differ from communion. God is a Person, the Absolute Person, but the chief of a world of persons. The "call" and the "response" that link Him with man are assimilated to those linking persons; so that the whole universe is a "system" of graces of which the Divine "call" and "response" provide the prototype.

The recognition of paradox is bound up with the recognition of the irreducible status of the "néant" in man's being. There seems great reason to affirm a fundamental separation of man from God which can be overcome only by the
paradox of a grace that transcends entirely the human and of which the human can offer no analogy. Now Marcel gives an important rôle to dread and to the sense of "nothingness", but he would at times appear to treat dread and the temporal obstacles to communion involved therein as a sort of "appearance" to be transcended by more or less natural means. As for example in the passages dealing with a "natural grace", where it would almost seem that the grace which saves is simply a promotion of the former. Or when he talks of the experience of the Christian as being but a wider or deeper experience than normal human experience. All these themes suggest a continuity between the moral and the religious, between even the natural and the supernatural. Marcel is loth to recognise the positive and irreducible character of the néant in human experience and therefore has no need to stress and does not even recognise the paradoxical and unique character of the grace which opens up the way to existence.

In this respect, it might be suggested that Sartre's doctrine of liberty, unconditioned, absurd and paradoxical, is simply the Divine liberty as defined by Kierkegaard but transferred from the Divinity to man (Sartre suggests as much when he says that Descartes ascribes to the Divinity the absolute liberty which is man's (1)). What is lacking in Sartre, indeed, is not so much the "religious" as the moral dimension; and perhaps he should be seen primarily as a

"religious" philosopher, whose religion has omitted God!

It is not of course suggested that we have the right to stop at a philosophy of paradox. Upon it must be suspended an ethical philosophy; the paradox of grace opens up the way for an ethical doctrine of communion and participation. And it is Marcel's great contribution to have elucidated these modes of experience which are open to the self once the integrity of his self-consciousness has been restored. It is this Sartre fails to do, leaving us hanging in the air as moral beings, riveted to an ethics of the "untenable". Marcel deserves no less credit for rejecting the out-and-out divorce between religion and ethics, whose orthodoxy is questionable and whose value as a description of the most highly developed religious experience is open to doubt. In any case, its consequences are not without danger; and those contemporary Christians who follow Kierkegaard in his "untenable" philosophy have not a leg to stand on when they criticise M. Sartre.

What we have been trying to suggest is that there is none the less, from the point of view of phenomenological study, a "pure" religious experience which cannot be reduced to the moral experience and vice versa; even although the two must not be allowed to conflict in the fully developed religious experience.

Now, the same may be said of man's situation as a social being. Here once more Marcel is inclined to identify the social and the moral problem, offering a solution of the
former in terms of fidelity and communion. It is however noteworthy that he has himself suggested the limitations of this viewpoint. In his essay on tolerance, for example, he was obliged to recognise that the spiritual tolerance, or charity, existing between persons, differs from the tolerance which the authority can exercise within the community; and he concludes by stating that the social is always a pis aller, the domain of compromise.

Would it not be of value to recognise that the moral community differs quite from the social community? Here Sartre and his group of Les Temps Modernes has applied its Existentialism in a novel and highly interesting manner. They do not propose any specific social ideal but, applying the phenomenological and existential method (encountering what is best and most fruitful in the method of Marxism) to social and political situations independently of party programmes and ideas, seek to determine the immediate ends of political action implicit in a given situation.

This is tantamount to the realisation that the social and political exist in their own right. The relationship between members of the community, and, even more, the relation between authority and citizens in the state, are relations of a different type perhaps from moral relations. Marcel admits as much when he makes the distinctions between obedience and fidelity or between charity and toleration. Any advance, however, towards an elucidation of this particular type of relation is conditional on the recognition
that the study of techniques as such - in their own positive
nature - is not outwith existential enquiry, and on the
avoidance on the part of Existentialists of the temptation to
fasten a sort of original sin upon the techniques of the
social and political life.

In conclusion, it might be suggested that the new
Existentialism distinguish between the three types of reality.
The results might prove extremely fruitful. The "being" of
man has to be elucidated by the existential method in its
three aspects: religious, moral and social. And to each of
these three "beings" belongs its own type of relationship:
between man and God in the first, between person and person
in the second, between the citizen and the community or its
authority in the last. It may then be possible to define
more clearly the type of "fidelity" appertaining to each;
for it is not identical in each. That in its turn would
permit a clearer understanding of the possibilities of the
new Existential Ontology, once it was recognised that there
is, so to speak, an Ontology of the religious, an Ontology of
the moral and, no less, an Ontology of the social and the
political. It would also pave the way for its constitution
as thought and science.

The prime merit of Gabriel Marcel's philosophy is to
have edified the solid structure of the new Ontology. There
remains for those who follow to pursue the clues and to
develop the suggestions his work provides, and, if possible,
to emulate the sincerity and penetration which he himself has
shown.

A word of warning may, however, be sounded. The development of Existentialism in its various fields can be arrested entirely and all its speculations rendered fruitless if two temptations are not guarded against. No doubt, every philosophy has its particular temptation, but Existentialism all the more so since it has recently become the battleground of literary cranks and cliques. There are two principal ones facing it. The first is the temptation confronting the Sartrian current: that of a rather facile pessimism and doctrine of action for action's sake. It is manifest in M. Sartre's unruly disciples, whose conception of the "authentic" life strikes many readers as being the quintessence of all that is unauthentic. But Marcel's philosophy has its temptation too, apparent in some of his young Catholic followers and in certain of the Personalist groups which have sprung up in France and elsewhere. This is the temptation of optimism and sentimentality, confessional or otherwise, which a too facile doctrine of communion and faith might induce. Both these attitudes are emotional states fostered by the desires and passions of individuals who have renounced thought for a ready-made system flattering to their emotions. For such developments, it must be stressed, the original philosophers are not responsible, but unless, among those who follow in their footsteps, the genuineness of thought proper to philosophy is preserved, much of their work may be undone.

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We might end by recalling some of the essential features of Marcel's thought. The latter derives its peculiar quality of distinction from the sincerity of mind by which it is inspired. Sincerity ceases with him to be a simple moral attribute to become, as Berdyaev says of freedom of spirit, with which indeed it is synonymous, a "spiritual and religious category". The sincerity of Marcel is in all truth an "effort de la conscience intégrale (1)." It is the effort of a mind to bring to consciousness the Being latent within it by the continuous movement of a dialectic which, transcending the successive obstacles which Objectivity lays in its path, and avoiding each and every deformation of the reality it seeks to grasp, delves ever more deeply into the very sources of its spiritual power. Of such a "dialectic of sincerity" there is no other example in contemporary French literature except the outstanding example of Jacques Rivière, whose definition of sincerity and its dialectic - "La sincérité est un perpétuel effort pour créer son âme telle qu'elle est (2)" - might indeed have been penned by Marcel.

Sincerity is the pre-requisite of the type of "subjective thinking" in which the Existential Philosophy sees the sole

(1) Berdyaev, Esprit et Liberté, p. 136.
(2) De la Sincérité envers soi-même, loc. cit. The comment of Du Bos on Rivière would apply equally well to Marcel and the quality of his mind: "Ce sentiment d'incessante responsabilité vis-à-vis de la totalité de son Être intime où je vois à tous égards le plus admirable trait de la complexion spirituelle de Jacques Rivière." (Jacques Rivière et la perfection abstraite in Hommage à Jacques Rivière, Nouv. Rev. Franc., April, 1925.)
means of obtaining contact with the transcendent reality within. Of this Existential Philosophy Marcel is, we believe, the purest representative in France to-day. In true existential fashion he starts from a repudiation of Hegelian Idealism and the usurpation of pure thought, that "lunatic postulate", as Kierkegaard calls it. A metaphysics which claims to offer a total expression of reality in terms of pure thought is shown to be mere fantasy. For the concepts by means of which reality is so expressed are, with reference to the ultimate reality made present in immediate existential experience, pure possibilities. "Abstract thought," says Kierkegaard, "can grasp reality only by destroying it, and this destruction of reality consists in transforming it into mere possibility (1)." True, Marcel would admit, no doubt in a way foreign to Kierkegaard and most of the Existentialists, that a dialectic of "essences", a science of the "pure possible" has some rôle to play in Ontology: and we have suggested that he could go further in this direction. Nevertheless, this rôle is and must be a subordinate one. The error of "pure thought" is to fail to recognise this subordinate position of the concept or essence and to substitute it for the reality itself, transforming the real universe, without residue, into a single homogeneous system of identities and logical relations. An error well described by Maurice Blondel in the following passage: "Ainsi (1) Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 278.
envisagée, l'idée, en laquelle ne reste rien de la vie subjective d'où elle procède, mais qui n'en est que davantage l'expression étroite d'une idiosyncrasie, est traitée comme un être à part; et c'est à cet être, lequel n'a d'autre âme que son contour logique, qu'il est donné de décider souverainement de ses relations intérieures et de ses relations étrangères universelles... L'abstrait et le général sont la règle du concret; le particulier, l'individuel, le subjectif sont éliminés de la science: rien n'est vu que sous forme d'un rationalisme impersonnel, par une pensée fixe, rigide, sans entrailles, sans ouverture, sans mouvement, sans soupçon du dedans des choses, infatuant, intolérante et despotique (1).

Against such usurping claims of pure thought, Marcel appeals to immediate personal experience in which Ontology finds its sole ground and starting-point, to the pure subjectivity of a self implicated in reality which, the more deeply it is felt and experienced in action and suffering, makes known its essential and concrete nature.

In Marcel's philosophy, as in all Existentialisms, a revised conception of the Absolute appears. No longer is it a totality or a Platonic essence to be grasped directly beyond and outside Time, but a predominantly "personal" reality immersed in temporal contingency and grasped only in the depths of temporal experience at moments of fragmentary and

(1) L'Illusion idéaliste, Rev. de Mét., 1898, p. 744.
peculiarly intense feeling. "Pour l'hégélianisme," writes M. Wahl, "l'absolu est l'ensemble des relations... Mais contre cette conception vaudra toujours la protestation d'une philosophie qui se fonde sur l'étude des visions du monde étroites et passionnées... Une expérience intense est plus l'absolu que la totalité relationelle des expériences... Notre pensée de l'absolu, ce serait l'affirmation qu'il ne faut pas chercher l'absolu dans la totalité ni dans l'éternité, mais dans le partiel et l'éphémère senti avec intensité (1)."

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Gabriel Marcel's philosophy exhibits itself first and foremost as a philosophy of Existence: a philosophy of subjective experience which maintains that Being is immanent in the depths of mind where it must be sought beyond and beneath the irreducible cleavage between subject and object which abstract thought has introduced. Existentialism, writes Dr Tillich, "aims to cut under the 'subject-object distinction' and to reach that stratum of Being which Jaspers, for instance, calls the Ursprung or 'Source' (2)." There is no philosopher in France to-day who typifies more fully this

(2) Op. cit., p. 56. Dr Tillich speaks of this approach as "mystical", underlining that the term "does not indicate a mystical union with the transcendent Absolute; it signifies rather a venture of faith towards union with the depths of life, whether made by an individual or a group."
existential attitude nor has applied more adequately its subjective methodology to the problem of Being. Nor has he failed to underline to great effect the factors of anxiety and despair involved in human existence, factors which he has associated, in the manner of Kierkegaard, with what is most positive in the Christian notions of sin and guilt, seeing in them at once the mark of man's finiteness and the sign of his transcendent. In his dramas he offers a tragic vision of man and his enslavement to Time in terms which recall Hölderlin's lines:

Doch uns ist gegeben,
Auf keiner Statte zu ruhn,
Es schwinden, es fallen
Die leidenden Menschen
Blindlings von einer
Stunde zur andern,
Wie Wasser von Klippe
Zu Klippe geworfen,
Jahr lang ins Ungewisse hinab (1).

Yet at the same time, Gabriel Marcel has put this dread, to which, in common with all "deep" thinkers, he is a prey, to more fruitful use than other Existentialists. He has, without destroying what is most real and positive therein, transcended whatever menace it contains to the development of a true spiritual life, has rid it of its barrenness and put it at the service of a deepening of his spirituality. His Existentialism has the unusual characteristic of being a philosophy of hope. To no one more aptly than to Gabriel Marcel may the following penetrating comment be applied:

(1) Hyperion's Schiksaalslied.
"Un grand homme c'est quelqu'un qui a été malade et c'est quelqu'un qui s'est guéri. La grandeur de la pensée c'est un pathétique vaincu (1)."

This is possible because Marcel's Existentialism — and here lies its essential characteristic — affirms categorically the existence of the Transcendent. His metaphysics involves an absolutely positive notion of transcendence, thereby avoiding the pseudo-transcendence of the Germans and their disciples. It cannot be too deeply stressed that his philosophy has its source and is grounded in a Realism and a primary judgment of Being. In common with Hocking, Marcel defines the original metaphysical impulse as the "appétit de l'être". Without such a preliminary affirmation of Being (and in positing Being at the outset, as Marcel has said himself, he is in agreement with the Neo-Scholastics) it is impossible to see how a philosophy of Existence can transcend successfully its immanentist postulate and methodology and develop as a true Ontology. The experience of German Existentialism goes to prove that, without it, a philosophy of Existence either remains enmeshed in a purely phenomenological and descriptive standpoint or is incapable of passing beyond a mere negative Ontology into the realm of Ontology proper (2).

(1) Jean Grenier, L'Individu et l'Absolu, Fontaine, Feb., 1942.
(2) M. de Corte's criticism of Existentialism on this score (op. cit.) is valuable, but he is unjust in applying it to Marcel's Existentialism.
It is this Realism that is at the core of Marcel's philosophy. We have termed it at times a "subjective Realism", a term whose sense will now be apparent. It is a term, moreover, which serves to distinguish it from the Realism of the Neo-Realist School of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. The latter follow Cook Wilson's doctrine that "knowing makes no difference to what is known", a view which is tantamount to considering the real as simply "something there". Marcel's theory of participation has nothing in common with this view. He is a Realist in the sense in which Whitehead may be termed one (1). The Realism of both, to repeat our quotation from Professor Emmet, involves a conception of the universe as "a maze of interrelated processes which can only be seen through the medium of minds which are themselves immersed in the process". It is this idea of a participation of selves and beings, immediately present to each other in consciousness, in the mutual process of self-creation, which characterises Marcel's Realism.

Backed by this fundamental Realism, Marcel has been able, while utilising the viewpoints and method of the Existential

(1) "Actually, however, if 'realism' means the doctrine that the known is independent of, and unaffected by, the knowing it, Whitehead is not a 'realist' at all; for his 'philosophy of organism' commits him to the view that everything which forms an element in a given 'situation' is connected with everything else in that situation, not merely by a relation of compresence, but by interdependence. It follows that, where one element in a situation is a mind, and a second element something known to that mind, the knower and the known are interdependent. This is precisely the doctrine which it was the chief aim of the 'realists' to deny." (R.G. Collingwood, An Autobiography, p. 35.)
philosophy, to transcend what might prove to be limiting in its postulate and methodology and thereby to gain access to Ontology and to a religious Ontology in which the Christian concept of grace is central. We would maintain, indeed, that the multiple aspects and standpoints exhibited in his thought, whose variety and continuity we have attempted to preserve in our exposé, represent but successive moments or varying attitudes in the dialectic of a mind confronted by Being and seeking to apprehend it. They are so many means of approach, no doubt among others, to the core of a Reality which invests the self and whose affirmation is the postulate or datum sine qua non of metaphysical thinking.

If that is so, however much an Existentialism, Marcel's philosophy transcends Existentialism. And in actual fact, if we wish to understand his place in modern French thought or in French thought in general, we must recognise that his philosophy represents a restatement in existentialist terms of the classic French philosophy. This philosophy, which has its starting-point in Descartes, and shows a continuity throughout the 17th and 19th centuries is a metaphysics of Being founded on the application of a subjective-realist method. It is further characterised by the affinity and indeed the inseparability it posits between metaphysical and religious speculation. This is the fundamental current of French thought, founded on the Cogito and its double content: Je suis, Dieu est. From it (and again from Descartes) stems the subsidiary philosophie de la conscience, more critical
and largely anti-metaphysical. Gabriel Marcel's thought belongs to, and is a revision of the first and fundamental speculative attitude in terms of the existential method and consciousness and of the new Realism. Its significance lies in its being a powerful and in every way modern expression of the eternal French philosophic consciousness as present in France's greatest thinkers, from Descartes and Pascal to Maine de Biran and Jules Lachelier.

Moreover, the French philosophical mind and the philosophy of which it is the expression exhibit a unique identity between the speculative and the ethical or ethico-religious. The "sincerity" of which we have spoken as constituting the very essence of Marcel's genius as a thinker is at bottom the expression of the will to maintain in close communion the orders of truth and morality, in short to constitute a truth that is spiritual and a spirituality that is truth. To believe that Gabriel Marcel is France's greatest living philosopher is to recognise that he incarnates that supreme speculative fidelity which is the permanent and abiding virtue of his country's philosophical genius. Gabriel Marcel stands to-day in French thought as the symbol of the life of devotion, as the worthy successor of that other noble and symbolic figure to whom modern French thought owes an undying debt, his friend and master, Henri Bergson. No more fitting conclusion could be found to a study on Gabriel Marcel than the generous tribute paid by another great figure of our time, a tribute that is not only most fully deserved but one that
indicates most clearly the source from which Marcel's thought derives its power. "...Gabriel Marcel représente le type même d'une vie entièrement engagée et pourtant toute dévouée au service exclusif de la vie de l'esprit. Le beau mot d'incarnation, qui prend dans sa doctrine un sens si profond, représente l'effort suprême qu'il a sans cesse vécu avant d'en signifier l'expression philosophique. Il est beau qu'en plein vingtième siècle certaines vocations spirituelles aient été si fidèlement servies et avec un désintéressement total si profond, que rien n'ait été attendu ni obtenu d'elles, qu'elles-mêmes (1)."

(1) Etienne Gilson, in Existentialisme chrétien, p. 9.
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(Note. Unless otherwise stated, the place of publication of works in French is Paris, and of works in English, London. The following abbreviations are used: NRF = Nouvelle Revue française; PUF = Presses Universitaires de France; OUP = Oxford University Press; CUP = Cambridge University Press.)

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(See also H. Bremond, Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France, listed under his works in VA; and the relevant works by L. Brunschvicg quoted Ibid.).