The Role of Love in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel

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THE ROLE OF LOVE IN THE PHILOSOPHY
OF GABRIEL MARCEL

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of love has fascinated thinkers and writers of all times, while it can hardly be denied that the fact of love has influenced the life of every man for good or evil. But love is experienced and realized in many forms, from that most obviously manifested in the love of a mother for her child to the ineffable love of God for man revealed in the Christian religion. Literature is replete with attempts, more or less successful, to express the mysterious nature of this fundamental experience of man in its diverse forms. Nor, as is well known, has the subject been neglected by philosophers. In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the question, perhaps because of an ever widening awareness of the radical need for love among men to restore order and unity to a seemingly chaotic world.

The contemporary French philosopher, Gabriel Marcel (1890- ), who is frequently classed among the modern existen- tialists, is not alone, then, in his speculations on the nature and meaning of love. While Marcel's professional talent as a dramatist gives added force to his philosophical expression, the inspiration and direction of his thought in general is new,
vital, and worthy of the studied consideration of all who are concerned to restore philosophy—and metaphysics in particular—to its rightful place of eminence.

It is the specific purpose of this paper to offer an exposition of some of the basic points in Gabriel Marcel's analysis of love. However, in order to do this without doing avoidable violence to the profundity and complexity of his thought, it has been considered necessary to give first a general exposition of his philosophical views. In the final chapter of this paper we hope to show some parallel lines of thought among contemporary scholastic philosophers and to consider in part the related problem of knowledge in Marcel.

With one exception Gabriel Marcel's purely philosophical writings have appeared in the form of the journal or the essay. The exception is of recent date and consists in the publication of the Gifford Lectures which he delivered in 1949 and 1950. However, he has also written at least seventeen plays. While we have not used his plays in this study, a word on the rôle assigned by Marcel to the drama should be noted. Marcel

1 Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being: I. Reflection and Mystery, Chicago, 1951. Only the first volume of these lectures has been published to date. Volume II is scheduled for publication in Fall, 1951.

2 A list of these plays is given by Roger Troisfontaines in Existentialisme Chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, ed. Etienne Gilson, Paris, 1949, 208.
finds in the drama a medium through which can be conveyed the spiritual conflicts which man experiences. However, his plays cannot simply be considered philosophical dialogues. Rather, they are intended to portray some of the concrete metaphysical situations of life. And

Thus the ground was prepared aesthetically for the philosophical investigations concerning being and having, death, love, the test, and presence. . . . In the drama metaphysical thought seizes upon itself for the first time in concreto: the import of human existence first is and then is given theoretical formulation."

In this connection it is interesting to note that one of the most important of Marcel's philosophical essays, "Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique," appeared first as an appendix to the play, Le Monde cassé.

As references are frequently found to several of Marcel's essays which have been gathered together and published in book form, we refer the reader to the bibliography, where the essays will be listed under the title of the book in which they now appear.

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CHAPTER II

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
AND METHOD OF MARCEL'S PHILOSOPHY

The whole of Gabriel Marcel's philosophical writings are marked by his violent reaction against the idealism of Descartes, Kant, Hegel and their interpreters and against the methodic reduction of thought to a system, which these philosophies offer as a complete explanation for the whole of reality. Inasmuch as Marcel began his own philosophical itinerary from within the structure of idealism, it may be well, without going into the complexities of idealism in its various forms, to consider a few of the general characteristics of this position.

The primary postulate of idealism is an epistemological one. A subject of knowledge is in immediate contact only with his ideas and not with things existing extramentally. Between the subject and extramental objects there is an irreducible opposition which cannot be dissolved by any process of knowledge which will enable the subject to be united in any direct way with the object. Universal ideas which are the object of thought account for, exhaust, and in some formulations of idealism cause the
entire reality of whatever exists outside the mind. Absolute knowledge is thus possible through a dialectical process whereby the thinking subject may proceed from idea to idea and eventually encompass the whole of reality. Existence itself is no problem; it is simply absorbed into thought, with the result that individual existing things have no ontological status. In such a position, objective knowledge takes on a peculiar meaning, consisting in a knowledge of necessary essences, or universals, or natures, which the subject confronts within itself but which, if the point were pressed, do not exist as knowable in the things we sense or experience in our everyday encounters with things. But at the same time the objective character of knowledge not only dominates but excludes any transcendent element in the sense that the object, which is an idea, fully accounts for itself and the reality it represents, allowing no room for anything transcending it or any real participation of the subject as knower in the world of external objects.¹

In the degraded rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century man—the individual, the person—is divested of all reality, all worth. He truly becomes a cog in a gigantic machine. If he is considered at all either by himself or by

¹ Marcel de Corte, La Philosophie de Gabriel Marcel, Paris, (no date), 46-52.
others, it is only as "an agglomeration of function", social, biological, or psychological. "Cause explains effect and accounts for it exhaustively." There is no longer any meaning to words such as mystery, existence, liberty.

It is this that Marcel rebelled against. While he began his philosophical speculations with a refutation of rationalism and the ideal of absolute knowledge and progressed to a positive and integral realism, his fundamental problem concerns the existence of man, and it is at this center that the various lines and aspects of his thought converge. Recognizing man's need for transcendent reality,

Marcel could not remain satisfied with an object which had been artificially severed by classical idealism and by Husserlian phenomenology from its setting in concrete contingent reality. More than a decade before Hartmann he was pleading for a return to ontology. Similarly, he anticipated the more recent investigations of Heidegger and Jaspers into the human situation as temporal and existential.

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3 [Ibid., 4.]


5 [Collins, "Gabriel Marcel and the Mystery of Being," Thought, XVIII, 673-675. The nature of Marcel's realism will be discussed in greater detail later; cf. infra, 63-64.]

6 [Ibid., 676. The first important works of Heidegger and Jaspers did not appear until 1927 and 1932 respectively, while the main works of Kierkegaard were not translated from the Danish until 1920 and later.]
Marcel, of course, is not unique in his reaction against rationalism and idealism. It is, on the contrary, the primary impulse of those modern philosophers since Kierkegaard who have come to be called Existentialists. On the positive side this common reaction seeks to center its philosophical speculation around the problem of the individual human existent, his situation in the world and his relation to other existents. In all the members of this "school" there is an explicit consciousness of the relation between life and doctrine. From this basis of concern for human existence, however, several divergent lines develop. Here we may discern some of the characteristics of Gabriel Marcel's thought. While, for example, the German existentialist, Martin Heidegger, previsions the systematic orientation of a philosophy of existence culminating in the construction of an ontology, Marcel hesitates to affirm this direction. Although admitting the possibility of developing a concrete philosophy, he does not believe that this would be a formal philosophy of being, i.e., an ontology. Rather it would be a systemization of the essential exigencies of man springing from his need for an Absolute.\(^7\) Thus, it is not so much a philosophy of existence as a philosophy of existing, concerned with existents in their very singularity.\(^8\)


\(^8\) Ibid., 304.
his better critics, Marcel de Corte, expresses Marcel's particular emphasis, it is not so much about existence as in the very presence of existence.9

Perhaps these distinctions will be clearer if we notice for a moment just what Marcel's conception of philosophy is, or rather, what philosophy should be. "Philosophy," he tells us,10 "will always, to my way of thinking, be an aid to discovery rather than a matter of strict demonstration." But, we may ask, what is the term of this approach, what are we seeking to discover? Truth, certainly, but for Marcel truth does not consist in the logical coherence of a system of ideas. Rather it is judged by the sincerity and the authenticity of the experiences which have led to these ideas.11 Truth is a spirit, a light:

Truth is not a thing; whatever definition we may in the end be induced to give to the notion of truth, we can affirm even now that truth is not a physical object, that the search for truth is not a physical process, that no generalizations that apply to physical objects and processes can apply also to truth.12

To have objective knowledge of something is to know that thing in its essence, its necessity, and its eternity. It is to know it


10 Mystery of Being, 1-2.


12 Marcel, Mystery of Being, 18.
as completely independent of the knowing subject and, with reference to actual existence, as purely possible. Now, while such knowledge may be perfectly valid for the scientist or the mathematician, it can never satisfy the philosopher, for the philosopher is by definition a "lover of wisdom", and, as such, he cannot fulfill his destiny unless he appropriates to himself what he seeks to know. This is only possible if he is himself involved in the object of his quest whence he can understand what it is in its actual existence and not simply what it looks like.\textsuperscript{13}

Strictly speaking, then, there is no term to the search. Philosophy is a continuously renewed and perpetually progressive investigation.\textsuperscript{14} What we seek to discover in the process is the ontological importance or consequence (poids) of human experience through a reflection on these experiences as they have been personally and intimately lived.\textsuperscript{16} The philosopher, therefore, has

\textsuperscript{13} Marcel, \textit{Journal M\'etaphysique}, 253-254, 278, 281-283.

\textsuperscript{14} Gilson, \textit{Existentialisme Chr\'etien}: Gabriel Marcel, 3: "L'insach\'evement est essentiel \'a toute pens\'ee concr\'ete, car l'unit\'e r\'eelle de son objet n'est pas celle d'un syst\'eme, et c'est avec cette unit\'e m\'eme qu'elle s'efforce de communier."


\textsuperscript{16} Marcel, \textit{Du Refus \`a l'invocation}, Paris, 1940, 87: "J'ajouterai m\'eme--et c'est une d\'ifference importante--que celui qui n'a pas v\'ecu un probl\'eme philosophique, qui n'a pas \'et\'e \'etreiben par lui, ne peut en aucune fa\c{c}on comprendre ce que ce probl\'eme a signifi\'e pour ceux qui l'ont v\'ecu avant lui." Thus, "It is not death that is a philosophic problem, but the fact that I do die." (Emmanuel Mounier, \textit{Existentialist Philosophies}, trans. E.A. Bl\'ow, New York, 1949, 9.)
an almost infinite field of investigation open to him, the field
of the manifold situations of human existence. In these situa-
tions he seeks to penetrate the meaning of the "I" and the pro-
found depths of being in which and by which "I am." We have
said that for Marcel philosophy is perpetually progressive, and
this is because its object is fundamentally historic. Hence, it
is built up (or as Marcel would prefer to say, it is hollowed out
or it lays a foundation) at the same time that it is practiced.
It is engaged in life itself; it is lived in actu exercito.

For a philosophy so conceived Marcel sees in phenomen-
ology a method best adapted to its investigations. Let us keep
in mind from the outset, however, that for Marcel the phenomeno-
logical method is and remains a tool, an instrument for examina-
tion, and in no way is identified with the result achieved.
While it remains true that

... between a philosophical investigation and its final
outcome, there exists a link which cannot be broken without
the summing up itself immediately losing all reality,

this is not to say that this "summing up" is simply the totality
of the investigations pursued, as would be the case in Husserl's
system of phenomenology.

17 Marcel, Du Refus, 89.
18 de Gorte, La Philosophie de G. M., 44.
19 Marcel, Mystery of Being, 5.
In the hands of Marcel, the instrument is used for a descriptive analysis of concrete human situations. He accepts what we call our everyday experiences, and with acute profundity examines them in all their tragic and hopeful implications. He is concerned to show the intention of these experiences rather than their psychological content, without attempting to explain them by reducing them to their simple elements. Further, it is to be noted that the situation being analyzed is taken in its entirety and all the aspects of a person involved in an experience of whatever nature are considered. For example, in his discussion of the question of the union of soul and body, Marcel does not prescind from the feeling one has of an intimate connection between "me and my body." On the contrary, the subjective aspect of feeling in this instance takes its place along side of the evidence of unity manifested externally and is included in the totality of the lived experience. Indeed, it seems to be one of the characteristic marks of Marcel's philosophy that, while it becomes necessary at times for him to "distinguish in order to unite," he is constantly aware of and stresses the fact of man's unity. Let us cite just a few of the many texts which bring out this emphasis:

20 Ricoeur, Marcel et Jaspers, 77; cf. Marcel, Du Refus, 55: "Je procèderai suivant la méthode qui m'est habituelle et qui consiste dans une analyse non pas du fait de conscience, mais plutôt du contenu de conscience, c'est-à-dire de ce que la consience a réellement en vue dans un certain nombre de situations-types, nettement discernables les unes des autres."

21 Mystery of Being, 94.
... we cannot isolate, in order to transform them into distinct entities, the various aspects of a single life, which is, precisely, the life of oneself.\textsuperscript{22}

... we must be very careful indeed to avoid artificially separating one level of the self from the other; we must avoid assuming that the self of reflection and ingathered-ness is not the same self as that of lust and vengeance. We are not in the physical world, and cannot say, "There is this self, there is that self," as we might say, "There is an apple, there is an orange." I would prefer to call our two selves, which are not really two selves, or our two levels of the self—which have not, however, the sharp measurable gap between them that the notion of a level physically implies—different modulations of existence.\textsuperscript{23}

It would certainly not be proper to deny the legitimacy of making distinctions of order within the unity of a living subject, who thinks and strives to think of himself. But the ontological problem can only arise beyond such distinctions, and for the living being grasped in his full unity and vitality.\textsuperscript{24}

It is perhaps obvious that the use of the phenomenological method in a philosophy of the concrete will in all likelihood be accompanied by concrete examples and illustrations. However, for Marcel the illustrative device is an essential component of the method, without which the truth to be attained would never develop. As he says:

\ldots for a philosophic approach like ours, which is essentially a concrete rather than an abstract approach, the use of examples is not merely an auxiliary process but, on the contrary, an essential part of our method of progressing. An example, for us, is not merely an illustration of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 69.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 130.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Gabriel Marcel, \textit{Being and Having}, trans. Katherine Ferrar, Westminster, England, 1949, 171.
\end{itemize}
an idea which was fully in being even before it was illustrated. I would rather compare the pre-existing idea to a seed; I have to plant it in the genial soil that is constituted by the example before I can really see what sort of a seed it is; I keep a watch on the soil to see what the seed grows up into.25

The results of investigations at this level do not give ontological truths, however. In fact, for a single phenomenology several truths are possible, which would not be the case if experience were a purely objective fact. But if the observer is an integral part of the observed data, the experiences differ according to the points of view he adopts.26 Hence, while remaining on the phenomenological level, the philosopher cannot make any pretentions to a universally valid metaphysics.27 For Marcel, however, these preliminary investigations are an approach and a guide. They merely provide a series of deeply probed experiences pointing to something beyond the observable data and revealing man's need for transcendence. The nature of this exigency in man, as well as the nature of its object, are the more properly philosophical questions, not to be solved, of course, but to be lived.

In this higher level of discourse, the distinctive instrument of

25 Mystery of Being, 116.


27 It is in their failure to recognize the limits of phenomenology and in their consequent claim to describe the authentic unique experience that the philosophers of atheistic despair are to be criticized. (Cf. ibid., 78.)
philosophical thought, i.e., reflection, is brought into play. We shall see later in some detail the important place of reflection in Marcel's philosophy. At this point let us just briefly indicate its rôle. There are two stages of reflection. The first or primary reflection on an experience tends to dissolve it into its several parts so far as they can be separated and viewed as objects apart. Secondary reflection, however, recognizes and reconquers the unity of that experience in an essentially recuperative movement of thought. As it is the vital purpose of philosophy to reveal man's concrete situation in its totality, the latter stage of reflection is the "special high instrument of philosophical research." 28

There is one further point which should be considered before proceeding to an exposition of Marcel's philosophy. Marcel has been accused of developing a philosophic view which is intrinsically connected with and dependent upon his religious beliefs, 29 perhaps because of his frequent preoccupation with the Christian notions of faith, hope, charity and salvation. Such criticisms, however, reveal a thorough misunderstanding of Marcel's method and starting point. First of all, it is a known

28 Marcel, Mystery of Being, 83.

fact that Marcel was not baptized until 1929, when he joined the Catholic Church, fifteen years after the original entry in his first Journal and six years after its completion. Now, while it is true that his subsequent writings and lectures contain marked developments and some revisions, it is equally apparent to anyone who will subject his earlier and later works to a comparative analysis that the conclusions to which he is led by his more mature reflection are implicit in the first recordings of his speculation. Nor can Marcel be charged with confounding the natural and the supernatural:

I should like to note that from my own standpoint the distinction between the natural and the supernatural must be rigorously maintained.30

Marcel recognizes the specific nature of the philosophic discipline and does not base his thought on a priori suppositions of the Christian revelation. Throughout the Journal he is concerned with speculation on the act of faith, analyzing the describing the concrete conditions necessary for a person to place such an act.31 Later, after his conversion he describes his spiritual experience and reflects on his own act of faith,32 but

30 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, 30.
32 Being and Having, especially 203-216; Du Refus, especially, 158-182.
his perspective always remains philosophic. He legitimately neglects certain aspects of his experience which would be of particular interest to the theologian or at least only mentions them in passing. 33 "The philosopher," Marcel tells us, 34 must not be apart from his world." If he is to reveal the significance of the human experience he must himself be implicated in it and must take into account all that it implies of contingency and relative necessity. He can thus no more abstract from the historic situation in which he is placed than he can disregard the more immediate elements of consciousness and feeling. Marcel himself aptly justifies his position and direction on this point:

A serious objection remains to be mentioned. It will perhaps be said: All that you have said implies an unformulated reference to the data of Christianity and can only be understood in the light of these data. Thus we understand what you mean by presence if we think of the Eucharist and what you mean by creative fidelity if we think of the Church. But what can be the value of such a philosophy for those who are a-Christian—for those who ignore Christianity or who do not accept it? I would answer: it is quite possible that the existence of the fundamental Christian data may be necessary in fact to enable the mind to conceive some of the notions which I have attempted to analyse; but these notions cannot be said to depend on the data of Christianity, and they do not presuppose it. On the other hand, should I be told that the intellect must leave out of account anything which is not a universal data of thinking as such, I would say that this claim is exaggerated and in the last analysis, illusory. Now, as at


34 *Mystery of Being*, 36.
any other time, the philosopher is placed in a given historical situation from which he is most unlikely to abstract himself completely; he would deceive himself if he thought that he could create a complete void both within and around himself. Now this historical situation implies as one of its essential data the existence of the Christian fact—quite independently of whether the Christian religion is accepted and its fundamental assertions are regarded as true or false. What appears to me evident is that we cannot reason today as though there were not behind us centuries of Christianity, just as, in the domain of the theory of knowledge, we cannot pretend that there have not been centuries of positive science. But neither the existence of Christianity nor that of positive science plays in this connection more than the role of a fertilising principle. It favors the development of certain ideas which we might not have conceived without it. This development may take place in what I would call para-Christian zones; for myself, I have experienced it more than twenty years before I had the remotest thought of becoming a Catholic. 35

35 Philosophy of Existence, 29-30.
CHAPTER III

GABRIEL MARCEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTING

It is a constant hazard of any philosophy based on experience to succumb to the temptation of subjectivism. Gabriel Marcel is acutely aware of this danger and constantly strives to avoid the pitfall. Most of his critics and interpreters agree that he has been successful here. It is true, of course, that his approach has been and will no doubt remain subjective, but there is a difference between authentic subjectivity and subjectivism which is the difference between truth and error. The path between subjectivism and pure objectivity which Marcel has chosen to follow is no doubt étroit et sinuex, but, as we hope the following pages will show, it can be safely traversed.

The very notion of experience reveals the dangers. Experience is not something that is given to us from the outside, i.e., it is not something that can be dissected into any number of parts which can be analyzed and which taken together add up to a given situation. Within an experience there is, so to

1 E.g., Troisfontaines, Existentialisme et Pensée Chrétienne, 17-18; Colin, in Existentialisme Chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, ed. Gilson, 29-31; Ricoeur, Marcel et Jaspers, 79-83.
speak, an element which is not reducible to a given or an object, and it is this element in fact which renders the situation a unified whole. For within any and every experience there is its subject, the "I", who is intimately involved and whose involvement gives meaning to the experience. I can never stand away from a situation which is mine, view it from the outside, abstract from my own engagement in it, and still maintain that it is my experience.

Let us see how these remarks bear on what, from one point of view, is the starting point of Marcel's philosophy. What I can neither prove nor place in doubt is my own existence. This is what Marcel calls the existential indubitable, the touchstone or primordial existent, which if it were denied would preclude the possibility of affirming the existence of anything else. The self here involved is not, however, the "I" of the Cartesian cogito, the epistemological self. It is rather the immediately existential "I", which can only be recognized and not deduced:

La réalité que le cogito révèle . . . est d'un ordre tout différent de l'existence dont nous tentons ici non point tant d'établir que de reconnaître, de constater métaphysiquement la priorité absolue.

2 Mystery of Being, 88; cf. Journal Métaphysique, 310-314; Du Refus, 25.

3 Journal Métaphysique, 315.
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.4

However, this privileged recognition of the existential "I" has as its immediate correlative the recognition of the self as existing in the world: "Ce qui m'est indubitablement donné, c'est l'expérience confuse et globale du monde en tant qu'existant."5

Now, the affirmation of this world of existents is based on my awareness of myself as existing in or with my body, i.e., as an incarnate being:

... 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.6

Through reflection on this first datum of consciousness, I can come to an explicit recognition of other existents.

It would perhaps be well to follow in some detail the phenomenological analysis of this experience of "me and my body" and see how some of the main characteristics of Marcel's thought follow from or pertain to it. Actually, one could just as well consider any of the human experiences that Marcel subjects to scrutiny, for example, fidelity or hope, and show equally well the import of his speculation. We have chosen this particular

4 Du Refus, 25.
5 Journal Métaphysique, 313.
6 Du Refus, 28.
experience as a center, however, for two main reasons: (1) It will have specific application to Marcel's treatment of the notion of having, to be considered in the next chapter; and (2) in his first systematic and full-blown presentation of his philosophy (the Gifford Lectures), Marcel himself uses this as a starting point.

What is this "I" of which I say, "I exist", and of which I am aware as being somehow or other connected with my body? It seems that I can say that I have my body, or that I use my body, or again that I am or am not my body. What is the significance of all these statements which from one point of view appear to be entirely valid, yet actually do not express the fullness of the conjunction? The use of the possessive pronoun my would seem to indicate a relation of ownership. If I then consider my body as simply my instrument, I am faced with the question: an instrument of what? An instrument is merely a means of extending the virtual powers of its user, and if I say that my body is the instrument of my soul I attribute to my soul the virtual powers of the body, of which the soul is supposed to assure the actualization. In effect, this is simply to convert the soul into a body. And the same question is again in order, leading to an infinite regress.7 The body is not necessary to the soul only and especially in the fashion of an instrument.

7 Du Refus, 29: Mystery of Being, 99-100.
Rather, the body serves as a kind of sympathetic mediation prior to the instrumental mediation, although both are intimately mingled.

Can I say that I am identical with my body? Such a position implicitly nullifies the "I" in a gross materialism, while to deny any connection between my self and my body is to deny an immediate and obvious fact of experience.

We seem then to be able to maintain no knowable relation between the self and the body. And this should not be surprising. For as soon as we affirm a relation we set up two terms, each of which is an object that can be defined and verified. The two terms of the relation become a problem and a matter for scientific knowledge. But as such I place myself outside the relation, considering myself then as a third thing somehow related to this body. The my no longer has any significance: "The moment I treat my body as an object of scientific knowledge, I banish myself to infinity." Thus, we have an apparent paradox:

Étre incarné, c'est s'apparaître comme corps, comme ce corps-ci, sans pouvoir s'identifier à lui, sans pouvoir non plus s'en distinguer--identification et distinction

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9 Du Refus, 30
10 Ibid., 31-32.
11 Being and Having, 12; cf. Journal Métaphysique, 252.
This fundamental link unifying me to my body is in the order of the meta-problematic, the order of mystery.

Before going further, let us consider the celebrated and important distinction that Marcel makes between problem and mystery.

A mystery is a problem which encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem.13

A mystery cannot be reduced to the elements that constitute it nor to prior elements and, consequently, discursive thought is not possible. It transcends the order of subject-object. A problem, on the other hand, is concerned precisely with this subject-object relationship and can be analyzed in terms of its precedent elements, while in the process one term or set of terms can be substituted for another.

A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I am myself involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity. A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique.14

12 Du Refus, 31.
13 Philosophy of Existence, 8.
14 Being and Having, 117.
philosophy is above all concerned with mystery and it is in this that it is distinguished from the sciences properly so-called which know only problems. It is the capital error of philosophy to degrade mystery by attempting to convert it into a problem or into pure objectivity under the pretext of thus making it more intelligible.

However, we must be careful to avoid confusing the order of mystery with the unknowable. "Il n'y a de mystère que dans l'ordre du connaissant." To apprehend a mystery is precisely to recognize it as mystery and not susceptible to being formulated in objective terms or grasped in objective concepts, but this recognition is itself an essentially positive act of the mind, based on a fundamental intuition which is, so to speak, broken up in a reflection and recovered and understood in its unity in recollection.

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15 Mystery of Being, 213-216.
16 Being and Having, 117.
17 Journal Métaphysique, 160.
18 Being and Having, 118: "The recognition of mystery is an essentially positive act of the mind, the supremely positive act in virtue of which all positivity may perhaps be strictly defined. In this sphere everything seems to go on as if I found myself acting on an intuition which I possess without immediately knowing myself to possess it—an intuition which cannot be, strictly speaking, self-conscious and which can grasp itself only through the modes of experience in which its image is reflected, and which it lights up by being thus reflected in them. The essential metaphysical step would then consist in a reflection..."
What is the nature or the import of this primary intuition? In a sense it can be said that what has been defined as mystery is the object of intuition. But some important precisions have to be made here. This intuition cannot be purely and simply given as such. Properly speaking it is not something possessed. Rather, it seems to be an assurance that extends across or underlies every movement of thought. The more central it is the less it is able to turn back and apprehend itself. It cannot then be directly reflected in consciousness, nor can it even be approached except by a second reflection, whose function it is to inquire from what origin it has been possible to make the first reflection which postulated the ontological without knowing it.19

We can perhaps clarify these notions if we consider them in connection with Marcel's approach to the central mysteries of being and knowledge. Knowledge by its very nature transcends itself. Thought is always thought of something other than itself.20 This is to say that while thought bears only on

upon this reflection (in a reflection 'squared'). By means of this thought stretches out towards the recovery of an intuition which otherwise loses itself in proportion as it is exercised. "Reflection, the actual possibility of which may be regarded as the most revealing ontological index we possess, is the real place in whose centre this recovery can be made."

19 Philosophy of Existence, 13-14.
20 Being and Having, 30.
essences, by this very process of objectivation it does not exhaust itself. The act of thinking cannot itself be adequately represented; it can only be grasped as such. Thus, there should be no contradiction in the fact of thinking of a mystery. From this it is clear that thought is immanent in being, and while being is immanent in thought, it also transcends it. Thought is not limited to particular beings; in an obscure way it arrives at being in itself:

A blindfold knowledge of Being in general is implied in all particular knowledge. But here, take care in what sense we use the words "Being in general." Obviously there is no question of Being emptied of its individual characteristics. I should express myself better if I said that since all knowledge concerns the thing and not the Idea of the thing—the Idea not being an object in itself and being incapable of conversion into an object except by a subsequent...

21 Ibid., 126.

22 Ibid., 36. As early as 1912 Marcel saw the necessity of this notion for any kind of a realistic philosophy. He speaks of it in relation to a philosophy of intuition, and it would seem that at this time the influence of Bergson on his thought was particularly strong: "Une philosophie de l'intuition ne peut se constituer que sur la base d'une dialectique qui permettrait d'établir l'immanence de l'être en tant qu'être dans l'esprit; une telle dialectique elle-même suppose une critique du savoir absolu qui manifeste la transcendance de la pensée par rapport au savoir, et l'intuition même se réduit au fond à l'acte par lequel la pensée affirme qu'elle est en elle-même transcendante à ce qui n'est en elle que pure objectivité." ("Les Conditions dialectiques de la philosophie de l'intuition," Revue de métaphysique et morale, Paris, XX, 1912, 652.) Later, indeed, Marcel strongly cautions that care must be taken in the use of the word intuition, and adds that it is Bergon's theory of intelligence which above all needs revision. ("De l'Audace en métaphysique," Revue de métaphysique et morale, III, Nos. 3-4, 1947, 240.)
thought-process of doubtful validity—it implies that we are related to Being.  

This entry was made at a time when Marcel was making his greatest effort to break with every possible form of idealism. On this point at least the final decisive step is made when he adds that being is not affirmed, but it affirms itself.  

Thus, the justification of the ontological realism of Marcel does not depend on an epistemological inquiry:

... there exists well and truly a mystery of cognition; knowledge is contingent on a participation in being for which no epistemology can account because it continually presupposes it.  

It is based, then, on an ineffable and mysterious mode of participation in being, which we experience by means of an intuition. Marcel de Corte's summary is particularly clear and penetrating on this point:

L'ontologie existentielle de M. Gabriel Marcel se développe, ou semble se développer, de la sorte, entre deux intuitions du mystère de l'existence: celle qui engage l'être qui s'interroge sur soi dans la totalité de son être concret, et celle qui atteint, au delà de cet engagement la participation de l'existence humaine à l'intégralité même de l'existence concrète. Elle s'édifie dialectiquement sur un autre mystère: celui de la connaissance, que nous ne pouvons espérer de pénétrer en soi puisqu'elle est

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23 Being and Having, 28. Cf. the important text from Du Refus, 193: "... j'ai admis, me semble-t-il, a priori, bien avant de pouvoir tout à fait justifier à mes propres yeux cette affirmation, que plus nous saurons reconnaître l'être individuel en tant que tel, plus nous serons orientés et comme acheminés vers une saisie de l'ètre en tant qu'ètre."

24 Philosophy of Existence, 8.

25 Ibid.
To return to our consideration of the self existing as intimately linked with a body, we can now better understand the status of the question. If we are beyond the level of the problematic, how are we to analyse and elucidate this experience in order to bring out its real significance and perhaps even recognize some of its metaphysical implications? It is in an initial reflection that I think of myself as apart from or in some kind of relation with my body. A second reflection, however, brings me to the recognition of the fallacy of this disruption of a unity. I pass beyond the disjunctions and articulations of abstract thought in returning to the concrete experience in its totality.27 Or, to speak more correctly, we are in a sphere where we cannot even speak of any relationship. The antinomy between myself and my body, interior and exterior, the same and the other, has been dissolved or transcended from the start.

When I transfer my gaze to the world about me, I experience a certain area which I also call mine. This experience

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26 *La Philosophie de G.M.*, 10. Pierre Colin notes that for Marcel participation does not designate, as in Platonism, the communication of a same nature to different individuals, but rather the rapport spirituel of two free beings who consent to and are united with each other, each respecting the personality of the other. (*Existentialisme Chrétien*; Marcel, ed. Gilson, 42-43.)

27 *Du Refus*, 34.
is in fact simply a prolongation of my experience of myself. Beyond even this area of what is mine, everything that exists is in an analogous relation to that which binds me to my body and my possessions, and it is just the mysterious and intimate character of the latter which colors every existential judgement:

... moi ayant conscience de mon corps, c'est-à-dire le saisissant à la fois comme objet (corps) et comme non objet (mon corps) voilà par rapport à quoi se définit toute existence. Affirmer l'existence d'un être ou d'une chose quelconque, ce serait en somme dire: cet être ou cette chose est de même nature que mon corps et appartient au même monde; seulement cette homogénéité porte sans doute moins sur l'essence (objective) que sur l'intimité enveloppée dans le mot mien, mon corps.

It is interesting to note in the progress of Marcel's thought as he freed himself more and more from his idealist formation and terminology the development, indeed, the transformation of his notion of existence. In his earlier years he had so far identified existence with objectivity that he believed that one could not say that God exists without converting God into an object. Later, however, although there is no change in Marcel's

28 Ibid., 120-121.
29 Journal Métaphysique, 305; cf. 261, 265; Being and Having, 9-12.
30 Journal Métaphysique, 156: "Existence et prédication. N'existe que ce qui peut être objet de prédication, ce qui peut être repéré (pour émettre un jugement d'existence, il faut repérer par prédicats). D'où une relation très nette entre le fait qu'il n'y a pas de sens à dire que Dieu existe et l'impossibilité de lui attribuer des caractères, de le convertir en lui." (Entry of December 14, 1918.)
idea of objectivity, existence takes on a new meaning for him. In reality, existence can never be dissociated from existing things. It is neither posited nor conceived nor characterizable. Rather, existence can only be recognized as a pure immediate and as a participation. Still later when Marcel is struggling to see the relation between being and existing, he adds that there can be no idea of existence strictly speaking, because existence is the very limit or the axis of reference for thought itself. As thought, too, is a mode of existence, it is within existence and as such cannot really go beyond it. But it is the special privilege of thought that it can in a measure abstract from existence for strictly limited purposes. However, insofar as thought is accompanied by knowledge and returns to being, the abstraction is recognized for what it is and thought is again existential.

Now, let us return once again to the consciousness of the self as existing. At the level at which we have examined this experience, which properly speaking has been the level of phenomenology and not of ontology, we have been concerned only

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31 Ibid., 309-329. (An appended essay entitled "Existence et objectivité.")

32 Ibid., 304.

33 Being and Having, 38.

34 Ibid., 27.
with existence as encountered in everyday experience and not with an absolute existence on which all other existents depend. However, we can probe more deeply into this experience and see what further it implies of ontological value. When I reflect on the fact of my incarnation and on my situation in the world, I can set up a dualism between the self as thinking and willing and the absolutely contingent empirical self. However, at the same time I can go beyond this dualism in a recuperative second reflection, which is a personal and free act of thought, where I recognize that I can no more place my situation in the world in question than I can place myself in question, and where the apparent dualism is united in a rapport that is non-contingent, i.e., that is not empirically determined. Both myself and my situation, as well as my thinking and empirical self, are immediately present to me. Thus I recognize that my situation does not depend on me but, on the contrary, I depend on it. My situation transcends me, but while it is true that I depend on it, it is not imposed on me. Rather, it is present to me and open to my free acceptance and ratification. This is to say that interiorly I can either accept or reject it. And it is just at this point that I make a choice which constitutes me as a person or which denies my very being:

35 Mystery of Being, 89.
36 Journal Métaphysique, 6.
Le point de départ d'une philosophie authentique—et j'entends par là une philosophie qui est l'expérience transmuée en pensée, c'est cependant la reconnaissance aussi lucide que possible de cette situation paradoxale qui non seulement est la mienne, mais me fait moi. Je rappelle encore cependant que cette situation, si radicale soit-elle—et personne ne mettra jamais l'accent plus fortement que moi sur la valeur ultime d'une certaine écœité--, ne se laisse saisir que par rapport à une liberté qui est d'abord et avant tout le pouvoir de s'affirmer ou de se nier elle-même.37

For when I choose to accept and open myself to that which is beyond me I affirm that my personal situation can have its foundation only in a personal and transcendent Absolute who has freely willed both me and my situation in an atemporal and sovereign act, and I am thus no longer simply a contingent fact, but a person willed by God.38 In so relating my concrete situation to the God who has willed me I recognize fully my own status as creature. As my own being is present to me with the being of others, it is not possible for me to possess my proper being without possessing the others and God, while, inversely, the presence of others is the condition of my true presence to myself.

Strictly speaking, it is not from an act of thought that this affirmation proceeds, but rather from an act of faith,39 involving the free and personal engagement of my whole being.

37 Du Refus, 39-40.
38 Journal Métaphysique, 6.
"L'esprit ... ne se crée comme esprit que par la foi en Dieu."\(^{40}\) This is to say that my spiritual personality is constituted in the unique and original relation established between myself and God by my personal free act of faith. Freedom is at the crossroad of the "I exist" and the "I believe."\(^{41}\) It is to be noted, however, that Marcel does not conceive of freedom as simply being an agonizing power of alternatives, of the option between affirmation or denial. He is more positive in his analysis, seeing in liberty the joyous response to a freeing call or invocation.\(^{42}\)

We have arrived at a point which has perhaps been the central concern of Marcel's philosophical research, the act of faith. It was from the observance of this experience, in others first more than himself, that he seems originally to have become dissatisfied with the systems of thought in which he had been formed. It continued to engage him as he realized more and more its religious significance, and after his own conversion to Catholicism it revealed new depths. As we have already indicated, Marcel remains on the philosophical level of discourse. Nevertheless, by the very orientation of his thought, he sees a concrete philosophy as necessarily open to Revelation and, in a

\(^{40}\) Journal Métaphysique, 46.

\(^{41}\) Ricoeur, Marcel et Jaspers, 221.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., 224-225; cf. Marcel, Du Refus, 46, 72-73.
sense, requiring it for the full understanding of the actual human condition.

Equally central to Marcel's thought, however, is the human experience of love which stands beside faith in value and sublimity. Indeed, the two cannot be dissociated:

Par là se trouve posé à côté de la foi l'amour. J'ai dit ailleurs que l'amour est la condition de la foi, et en un sens, cela est vrai. Mais ce n'est là qu'un aspect. Je crois qu'en réalité l'amour et la foi ne peuvent et ne doivent pas être dissociés. Lorsque la foi cesse d'être amour, elle se fige en une croyance objective à une puissance plus ou moins physiquement conçue; et d'autre part, l'amour qui n'est pas la foi (et qui ne pose pas la transcendance du Dieu aimé) n'est qu'une sorte de jeu abstrait. De même qu'à la foi correspond la réalité divine (qui ne peut être pensée autrement qu'en fonction d'elle), de même à l'amour correspond la perfection divine. Et l'unité de la réalité et de la perfection en Dieu, bien loin de devoir être entendue au sens des vieux intellectualistes (ens realissimum) ne peut se comprendre qu'en fonction de l'unité de la foi et de l'amour sur laquelle je viens d'insister. Je cesse de croire en Dieu à partir du moment où je cesse de l'aimer; un Dieu imparfait ne peut être réel.43
CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF LOVE IN A CONCRETE PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTING

A. The Triadic and Dyadic Relations of Persons

There is in reality a triadic relation in any dialogue between two persons. There is the person speaking, the I; the person spoken to, the Thou; and the object of the dialogue, the He or It.  It makes no difference if the dialogue is wholly interior, as, for example, when I am interrogating myself about some action I performed. The three-fold relation is still present. Implicitly or explicitly I proceed by a dialectic of questions and answers, a process which is essentially informative, serving either (1) to instruct someone else about myself or about a third thing, (2) to instruct myself about myself, or (3) to learn from another about himself or some other. In any case and at any instance in the discourse a judgement is brought to bear on the object of the discourse, which is always considered as something exterior to the dialogue itself and independent of it:

1 Journal Métaphysique, 145.
De même, lorsque je parle de quelqu'un à la troisième personne, je le traite comme indépendant--comme absent--comme séparé; plus exactement je le définis implicitement comme extérieur à un dialogue en cours qui peut être un dialogue avec moi-même.2

But to judge is to classify. To judge an individual exactly is to classify him correctly, that is, to establish him in certain common categories in such a way that a continual revision of the initial classification will not be necessary. As such, the judgement has no ontological value, since it bears essentially on a third person, an object, that which is able to be placed in a category.3 Thus, to consider someone as an aggregate of qualities which can be predicated of him is to treat him as an object, as a third person, as not present.

On the other hand, when I treat another as a whole and as transcending the order of questions and answers, I establish a relation or a bond between us which admits of no third person. The rapport is here dyadic, and expresses a true participation of friendship or love.4 The passage from pure dialectic to love is made in so far as a person becomes more and more profoundly a Thou for me. In reality, at a first meeting the other is essentially a He, having only the form, so to speak, of a Thou. We appear to each other (and to ourselves) as "a such" or "a such

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2 Ibid., 137.
3 Ibid., 161-162.
4 Ibid., 155.
other." But the more the other becomes a presence, a spiritual co-esse,\textsuperscript{5} to me and not just an object, the less he can be characterized as a "such." The beloved is as little as possible a third person for me. At the same time he reveals me to myself, since the efficacy of his presence is such that I am less and less a third person for myself.\textsuperscript{6}

\ldots plus il s'agit de ce que je suis comme totalité (et non de ce que j'ai) plus la réponse et la question même perdent toute signification.\textsuperscript{7}

Between the two subjects of love, then, there is no intermediary. Love is essentially concerned with what is present and present in its totality. In love alone the individuality of the beloved is not dispersed or broken up into innumerable abstract elements, and it is in this sense that only love can be called a true knowledge.\textsuperscript{8} What is wholly real,\textsuperscript{9} and it is to this that love is directed, is beyond all explication and all reduction.\textsuperscript{10} He who

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5} Cf. \textit{Philosophy of Existence}, 25.
\item \textsuperscript{6} \textit{Journal Métaphysique}, 145-146.
\item \textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid.}, 152.
\item \textsuperscript{8} \textit{Ibid.}, 63.
\item \textsuperscript{9} \textit{Ibid.}, 64: "L'amour ne s'adresse donc pas à ce qui l'aimé est en soi si par ce qui est en soi on entend une essence. Tout au contraire. L'amour porte sur ce qui est au delà de l'essence, j'ai dit déjà que l'amour est l'acte par lequel une pensée se fait libre en pensant une liberté. L'amour en ce sens va au delà de tout jugement possible, car le jugement ne peut porter que sur l'essence; et l'amour est la négation même de l'essence."
\item \textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid.}, 63.
\end{itemize}
loves passes beyond all judgements which classify the beloved, beyond the level of objective knowledge which can only ignore what is transcendent: "Et par là l'amour est la négation de la connaissance." 11

If love is forbidden to judge, however, it is not necessarily blind. Love cannot knowingly dissociate itself from knowledge and still remain love. It would become lost in illusion:

L'amour doit s'apparaître à lui-même comme une connaissance parfait, et, dans la mesure où il n'est plus légitime de dissocier ici l'être de l'apparaître, on peut dire qu'il est une connaissance parfait. 12

In reflection, however, love is seen to be distinct from knowledge and able to be defined as being beyond all knowledge. 13

It is, nevertheless, true that as the lover is a thinking subject he cannot wholly abstain from judging the beloved, but only in

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid. We must be careful, however, how we understand Marcel's statements on love as a kind of knowledge. His qualifying words are important, for Marcel is aware that the act of love is not the act of knowledge, not even of intuitional knowledge; but he is also aware that it is the whole man who acts. It is the proper character of love never to become a mode of seeing. Thus, there is no question of an intuitionism of love. (Cf. Ricoeur, Marcel et Jaspers, 83.) Love itself, as an experience of transcendence, remains on this side of sight, and its intention, as that of faith or hope, is revealed and its transcendent significance manifested in the properly intellectual act of second reflection.

13 Journal Métaphysique, 63.
so far as the beloved is the object of thought. In the measure in which the beloved is the object of love (which strictly speaking converts him from an object to a subject) no judgement can be made. One of the most important metaphysical formulas, notes Marcel fifteen years before his conversion, is the Christian dictum, "Thou shalt not judge."

Love holds its privileged position of transcending judgement because it has received in itself the mediation of the divine. God, who is the absolute Thou, is inaccessible to objective knowledge, and He wholly escapes judgement. Any objectivation concerning God is a falsification: "Quand nous parlons de Dieu, sachons bien que ce n'est pas de Dieu que nous parlons." In so far as creatures participate in God, in so far as they are present to each other as Thou's rather than He's, they, too, are transcendent and escape judgement:

Il faut, je crois, partir de l'impossibilité où est l'amant de juger l'être aimé et se demander à quelles conditions elle tient. J'ai déjà dit que l'amour qui s'interdit toute réflexion est celui qui a subi la médiation du divin. C'est-à-dire que c'est bien en tant que l'être aimé est pensé comme participant à Dieu qu'il est placé dans cet ordre transcendant par rapport à tout jugement, qu'il est conçu comme valeur absolue. Ou plutôt (ceci pour exclure toute interprétation psychologiste) la justification

14 Ibid., 64-65.
15 Ibid., 64.
16 Ibid., 158.
Therefore, Marcel concludes, really to love another is to love him in God.\textsuperscript{18}

Must we say then that love speaks only in the second person, while judgment is limited to the third? In a sense, yes, I can, for example, say to someone I love, "You are good." Now, while such a judgment does not express the same impersonal character which it would if it were made in the third person, it does carry with it references to a purely objective judgment. If my judgment, "You are or you are not such a quality," is intended to inform you of something about yourself, it is because I believe there is something about you which you have not (at least virtually) asked yourself and that, therefore, there is something in you which is of the third person, an object, for yourself. On the other hand, if I intend the judgment to inform you about myself, i.e., that I believe you are such a quality, it is because I consider that there is something of the third person in me for you. If absolute love were present this element of the third person would be wholly absent. There would only be I and Thou.\textsuperscript{19} Consequently, in the measure in which a judgment in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 66.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 158.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 156-157.
\end{itemize}
second person is informative, it remains in the register of the third person. But in so far as it is a movement of love, its objective content is of little importance.20

In the preceding chapter we said that the spiritual personality was truly constituted in the free act of faith in God, and also indicated the interdependence of faith and love. Love also, then, will have a function similar to faith in the creation of the spiritual person. In order to affirm myself as a person, I must have present to me a Thou which is an absolute value in itself, that is to say, an end in itself, which can only be a person. I affirm myself as I, therefore, only in renouncing myself, in affirming the value of others-than-myself. The creation of the self as a person and the creation of absolute values is thus a simultaneous double creation of love. Reflection discovers the harmony between two absolute and, at first sight, mutually exclusive affirmations. Of itself, love creates. When it stops creating in order to reflect on itself, it ceases to be love, ceases to be the highest approximation of being, for to create is to go beyond the plane of objectivation in order to enter into the sphere of being. Not to recognize that love is distinct from and beyond knowledge is to deny it as love. When first reflection discovers that there is nothing objectively

there where love has created a Thou and Me, an Us, it is tempted to condemn this creation as something false and devoid of ontological value. But in reality there is an Us when love creates it, and second reflection, denying the objective reductions of the first, will recognize the properly ontological value of love, creator of the personalities of the Thou and Me, because creator of the Us. Once the limits of first reflection are passed, second reflection allows room for liberty and creative love. 21

In creating the very thing that it knows, love dispenses its own privileged knowledge, 22 which, while not an adequate knowledge in the objective sense, is a knowledge of itself as acting. This is to say that love cannot be truly known as love apart from the act of loving, for I can only correctly think of an act as an act if I refuse to objectify and immobilize it. It is in this sense that a personality must be considered posterior to the act which constitutes it. "L'amour crée l'amant en tant qu'amant." 23

21 Troisfontaines, Existentialisme Chrétien, 242-243; Cf. n. 1. This paragraph is taken from a Resume given by Père Troisfontaines of a very long and abstract dialectic included in an unedited notebook of Marcel's, which bears the title, Notes philosophiques personnelles, 1913-1914.

22 Journal Méthaphysique, 216.

23 Troisfontaines, Existentialisme Chrétien, 245-246. From another unedited notebook entitled Notes de 1912-1913: "Pour la thèse."
Raising a metaphysical question, Marcel asks: If love does not bear on an object, on an It, can we conclude that it bears on what we can call the non-It? While it might be agreed that the transvaluation which is at the base of love corresponds to a real transformation in the lover, is there necessarily a correlative modification in the beloved? Metaphysically, the problem can be broken down as follows: (1) Does love bear on being and not simply the idea of being? (2) Can it bear on the being without affecting the being? Having advanced to a position of realism by this time (these notes were made in December, 1919), Marcel dismisses the first question as one about which doubt is no longer possible. However, later, and in another context, Marcel again poses the question, although in a slightly different form:

When I treat another as a Thou and no longer as a He does this difference of treatment qualify me alone and my attitude to this other, or can I say that by treating him as a Thou I pierce more deeply into him and apprehend his being or his essence more directly?

To answer the question thus posed, Marcel first notes that essence may be understood either as a nature or as a freedom. As nature the other appears to be identical with what I am qua nature, and in so apprehending him I treat him as a He and enclose him in a


25 *Being and Having*, 106.
circle within myself where the other becomes the idea of the other. The idea of the other is no longer the other qua other, but the other as identical with myself. The other remains truly other in his essence qua freedom, and it is thus that I apprehend him when I treat him as a Thou.26 Further, it is to be noted that it is in his essence qua freedom that the other can be affirmed as existing, for it is in this that he is other:

Not only do we have a right to assert that others exist, but I should be inclined to contend that existence can be attributed only to others, and in virtue of their otherness, and that I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others; and so as other than them. I would go so far as to say that it is of the essence of the Other that he exists. I cannot think of him as other without thinking of him as existing. Doubt only arises when his otherness is, so to say, expunged from my mind.27

Regarding Marcel's second question, a preliminary consideration makes clear that the beloved is certainly not empirically modified by the love he inspires, and that included in the total reality of each of us are the sentiments we inspire in others. Now, I can certainly think of my own love as not attaining the being I love, but this is to treat us as distinct, as separated, by treating myself in some way as a third person between us. But this is a love which excludes faith. Actually my love can exercise an action on the beloved only in so far as

26 Ibid., 106-107.
27 Ibid., 104.
this love is not desire. In desire I tend to subordinate the beloved to my own ends, and losing sight of his absolute value, I relegate him to the place of an object. Consequently, in considering another as a He or a Thou, it is not simply a distinction based on different mental attitudes. There is, on the contrary, a metaphysical validity to the distinction, since it is only as Thou that the other truly exists for me and his freedom in relation to me respected and assured. Perhaps, therefore, only completely disinterested love, love free from all traces of desire, is able to affect the Thou; "et cette remarque projetterait quelque lumière sur la fonction pratique de la sainteté."30

B. Having and Being

We have said that love affects being in the measure in which this movement is not desire. As opposed to love, desire remains on the plane of having, which is identical with the realm of the problematic.31 What is the significance of this new distinction or opposition? Let us follow Marcel in his analysis of

28 Journal Métaphysique, 218.
29 Being and Having, 106-107.
30 Journal Métaphysique, 218.
31 Being and Having, 166, 172.
the notion of having,\textsuperscript{32} which seems to carry with it two references, having-as-possessing and having-as-implication. In the former reference there is a certain quid relating to a certain qui who is treated as a center of inherence or apprehension.\textsuperscript{33} The qui, however, is always implicitly recognized as being on a higher level than the quid. The movement of having takes place within the qui although it is externalized in the actual possession of the quid. Thus,

We can only express ourselves in terms of having when we are moving on a level where, in whatever manner and whatever degree of transposition, the contrast between within and without retains a meaning.\textsuperscript{34}

Now, when we consider the reference to having-as-implication, as when we say that a certain body has a certain property, the movement of having takes place and remains within the qui, but even in this case the quid characterizes the qui while remaining wholly other than it.

And now we see the transition take place from the first formula to the second one: we can only express ourselves in terms of having, when we are moving on a level implying reference to another taken as another. . . . The statement

\textsuperscript{32} The development of this notion is taken chiefly from a paper delivered to the Lyons Philosophical Society in November, 1933, entitled "Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having," included in \textit{Being and Having}, 154-175.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Being and Having}, 158.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid.}, 160.
"I have" can only be made over against another which is felt to be other. 35

A characteristic note of all possession is its being able to be shown or displayed. Thus, a secret that is possessed is only a secret as long as it is kept, but at the same time it is a secret only because it can be revealed. 36 As knowledge is something that is essentially communicable it, too, is a mode of having. 37

At the basis of every form of having there is a tension between the self and the other, a tension caused by the very fact that the other remains wholly other no matter how interiorized the possession is. As separate from the self, the other, the quid, has its own proper permanency and power which the self tries desperately to suppress for its own ends. But, paradoxically, the more one is concerned with the mastery over others or things, the more he becomes enslaved to them. 38 This is particularly clear in the case of my possession of my body. In fact, when I consider my body solely as an instrument over which I have complete control, I am expressing the archetype of all forms of

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35 Ibid., 161.
36 Ibid., 160-161.
37 Ibid., 145.
38 Ibid., 162-164.
having. The more, then, I treat my body as something distinct from myself but at the same time as a possession to which I am attached, the more it tyrannizes over me and destroys me by submerging me in this body to which I cling.

So that in the last analysis—and this is a new point of view—having as such seems to have a tendency to destroy and lose itself in the very thing it began by possessing, but which now absorbs the master who thought he controlled it. It seems that it is of the very nature of my body, or of my instruments in so far as I treat them as possessions, that they should tend to blot me out, although it is I who possess them.

However, in the measure in which our possessions serve as the immediate subject matter of a personal creative act, as in the cases of the musician's instrument, the gardener's tool, or the philosopher's thoughts, having tends to be sublimated and transformed into being.

We may now be in a better position to understand the difference in the directions taken by desire and by love. Remaining on the level of having, desire is centered either on oneself or on another as other. While appearing to be heterocentric, it is really autocentric in that it seeks to center its object in itself. As Jacques Maritain says in describing the movement of desire:

39 Cf. Mystery of Being, 97.
40 Being and Having, 164-165.
41 Ibid., 167.
I have a tendency or affective overflow towards that object which I will because it is good for me, and I produce in myself, as it were, a spiritual weight which draws me towards it that I may incorporate it into myself, that it may be mine.\(^{42}\)

But in love, on the other hand:

I have a tendency or affective overflow, towards this object to which I will good because it is good, and I produce in myself a spiritual weight, or impulse, by which I draw all things and myself to this other being which for me becomes an ego, a subject, and to which I wish to be in some way or other really united, as to myself.\(^{43}\)

Love, then, is the life which is \textit{decentered}, which changes center.\(^{44}\)

Love moves on a ground which is neither that of the self, nor that of the other \textit{qua} other; I call it the Thou.

Love, in so far as distinct from desire or as opposed to desire, love treated as the subordination of the self to a superior reality, a reality at my deepest level more truly me than I am myself--love as the breaking of the tension between the self and the other, appears to me to be what one might call the essential ontological datum.\(^{45}\)

The world of having is that of the other as other, while the world of being is that where the tension between the self and the other as other is abolished in a single living reality.

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43 Ibid.


45 \textit{Being and Having}, 167. And Marcel adds: "I think and will say so by the way, that the science of ontology will not get out of the scholastic rut until it takes full cognisance of the fact that love comes first."
We think of our possessions as things of which we have the right to dispose. But if we consider the notion of disposability from the point of view of the subject, we see that having is essentially bound up with the self, it is an anxious self-preoccupation. Thus, when I am with someone who is a non-disposable person, I am aware that I am with someone for whom I do not exist.46 On the other hand, charity and love admit of absolute disposibility.47 The person who loves totally commits his whole being to the care of another. A complete commitment is only possible before God, however, who alone has the right of absolute disposal. In the measure in which a person commits himself, that is to say, sacrifices his own being, so far does being assert its transcendency over having. "There lies the deepest significance of martyrdom considered as witness: it is witness."48

While self-love regarded as non-disposable is a denial of being, self-love may also be regarded as disposable, that is, the love of what God may make of me.49 Thus, the creature

46 Ibid., 72-73.
47 Ibid., 69.
48 Ibid., 84; cf. Ibid., 127: "... the soul most essentially dedicated is ipso facto the most disposable. Such a soul wills itself to be an instrument; but suicide is the act of denying one's-self as an instrument."
49 Ibid., 69.
knowing that whatever is positive within him is derived from God, knows that in disregarding himself he is disparaging God's gift. Not to acknowledge one's value as derived from God is a radical perversion resulting from the creature's appropriating rights to himself which in fact belong only to God. True charity towards oneself consists in regarding oneself, not as self-sufficient, but as a seed or a channel for spiritual and divine goods to flow into the world.

In detaching itself more and more from having, the spirit makes itself disposable for being. It is the same dialectical movement that turns the spirit from problem to mystery, from He to Thou, from objective knowledge to Love.

C. Summary

We have attempted in these last two chapters to present the philosophical views of Gabriel Marcel, dwelling particularly on those aspects of his thought which would lead to an understanding of the rôle played by love in a Christian philosophy of existing. We regret the necessity of completely passing over or merely alluding to many other facets of Marcel's philosophy which offer profound and beautiful insights into the nature of human

50 Ibid., 88-91 n.
51 Du Refus, 65-66.
experience. However, accepting the limitations imposed by our purpose, we will restrict our summary even more to those points which will elucidate the more properly metaphysical value of Marcel's thought.

While Marcel on several occasions concerns himself with questions pertaining to the order of being as such, this is not the natural habitat of his own original speculations. Remaining true to his inspiration, Marcel returns immediately to the realm of the concrete existent. However, the conclusions arrived at on this level do have their metaphysical significance: "... plus nous saurons reconnaître l'être individuel en tant que tel, plus nous serons orientés et comme acheminés vers une saisie de l'être en tant qu'être."52

Now, a fundamental problem for Marcel, and one to which he returns time and time again, is to show the ontological bearing of the several experiences which he describes and analyzes. Annexed to this problem is his desire to avoid subjectivism while denying the position of pure objectivity. Rejecting the validity of the latter dilemma, Marcel attests the primacy and transcendency of being and establishes it in the order of the meta-problematic or mystery, which is not merely a denial of objectivity but is rather a positive affirmation of its intelligibility in itself. There is no fundamental obscurity in the world. The

52 Ibid., 193.
apparent obscurity is due to the mysterious nature of the link uniting the self to the body, through which we have immediate contact with other things.

But in a concrete philosophy based on experience, the attestation of being cannot be justified by a simple description of the psychological states conditioning the affirmation. It is necessary to justify it in terms of a deeper and ontologically valid démarche bearing on the specific intentionality of the affirmation itself. The global experience of existence which is given in the awareness of the self's existence affords the basis for this affirmation, which is made explicit in reflection. But the authentic affirmation, the true attestation of being, can only be made at the level where the antinomy between the subject and the object is transcended, which is to say that the antinomy is dissolved in a real participation in being.

This is the sphere of love, where alone presence and participation, fidelity and invocation, have meaning. Man in his situation in the world is constantly threatened by despair, isolation and betrayal. It is the philosopher's task to open the way for man to recognize his situation and to engage his whole being in constantly renewed efforts to bridge the rupture between himself and others, "... a way which is undiscoverable except through love, to which alone it is visible."53

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53 Philosophy of Existence, 29.
The polarity of the self and the other, which is proper to the sphere of having, is synthesized in the community of persons instituted by the power of love. But the human community is itself a participation in the caritative communion we seek to establish with God, the Absolute Thou, whom we invoke in faith and prayer.54

L'amour, éprouvé comme subordination du soi à une réalité supérieure, constitue de la sorte la donnée ontologique essentielle. Seul il s'avère capable d'affronter l'être sans que celui-ci se volatilise en avoir, car seul il est apte à transcender la position d'une pensée placée en face de l'autre pour le saisir et, du même coup, la rétroversion mortelle par quoi l'autre saisit la pensée et la dissout. Une dialectique ascendante de l'amour, portant à la fois sur la réalité et sur l'être qui l'appréhende, reconnaît à tout effort pour caractériser le réel, mais transformant et surélevant la substance de notre être accédant'ace réel, sera le ressort d'une ontologie susceptible d'entrer humblement dans le mystère du métaproblématique et, en définitive, de notre existence.55

54 Collins, "Gabriel Marcel and the Mystery of Being," Thought, XVIII, 681-682.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In the whole of Marcel's philosophical writings only a comparatively few pages are devoted specifically to what might be called the metaphysical structure of love. Nevertheless, Aimé Forest is of the opinion that these represent an important contribution to the recent speculation on the problem of love:

Le propre de l'amour est dans sa pénétration. Son objet n'est pas seulement une idée, une essence, il veut aller jusqu'à l'être, et dans cette exigence il va se distinguer du désir. Il devient spirituel et désintéressé dans son réalisme même lorsqu'il dépasse ce qui est extérieur, accidentel pour chercher l'accès de la plus grande intimité. Des remarques de ce genre sont aujourd'hui comme les données initiales de toute philosophie de l'amour. Il faut sans doute chercher leur première expression chez Gabriel Marcel; les analyses subtiles du Journal métaphysique gardent pour la pensée d'aujourd'hui la valeur précieuse d'une découverte et d'une orientation.

While it would be interesting to ascertain the exact influence of Marcel in this field, such a study would be beyond the capabilities of this writer. We would like to consider, however, one or two instances of parallel lines of thought among

contemporary scholastic writers and indicate where Marcel is in agreement or disagreement.

Father Martin C. D'Arcy, S. J., has recently published a notable and erudite work on the historic problem of love of self and love of others. Literature, philosophy, art, and experience of all times attest the presence of the two directions of love in man, the love of the self and the love of other persons and God without regard for self. Both philosophy and theology have been concerned to show the difference or identity between them, and if they recognized the presence of a problem due to their difference, they attempted to offer a solution of one kind or another. Father D'Arcy reviews some of the positions taken, and while he himself arrives at the same conclusion as many of his predecessors, he presents the problem and its solution in somewhat different terms.

Man, D'Arcy tells us, is moved by a desire to take and to possess everything for himself, but at the same time he is also inclined to give himself completely, to sacrifice all of his own interests and even his life for another. These two loves in man are represented by Father D'Arcy as the animus and the anima. The animus is masculine, domineering, possessive and


3 Ibid., 316.
egocentric. As looking to man's essence, it is represented on the spiritual level by the mind, and it seeks the fulfillment of man's nature as man in drawing everything to itself, just as in knowledge the spirit becomes enriched in its possession of new forms. The anima, on the other hand, is feminine. Its movement is one of passivity, subjection and surrender. Anima is the self exclusive of reason, but having a special reference to the self's spiritual aspect, reaching beyond its own existence to Another who gave it existence.

Man as the subject of both movements experiences the tension between the two, between the desire to take and the desire to give. If one of the elements dominates to the complete exclusion of the other, man is correspondingly false either to himself or to his Creator. The animus itself turns the spirit inward and considers everything external as a means to its own end. In its extreme manifestations we see the epitome of selfishness, vanity and pride. But if the anima is left unfettered it, too, carries the soul along to destruction. In the soul's desire to give itself without regard to reason it tends to plunge itself into romanticism and false mysticism. It seems clear,

4 Ibid., 182.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 259.
then, that just as the two loves are present in man they must be brought in the proper relation to each other.

Everything is directed according to its nature to conserve itself and to realize its proper form as perfectly as possible. Now, in man reason, which is essentially self-regarding, is the differentiating activity. It is difficult to see then how the other love, the anima, can enter.

The only answer, the only true harmony . . . must be sought in religion—in the communion of the anima with its divine lover. But even this will fail unless, as in the Christian religion, the divine lover befriends animus as well, and gives power to the unavailing soul to be led to the altar with God. 7

As Gabriel Marcel and others have pointed out, love can only be between persons. A human being can never be a means. It is this that is signified when we call him a person:

When we use the word "person" we do think of something which makes a human being his very self in his independence and singularity; and at the same time the word "person" seems to imply a relation. In other words, a person is one who owns himself and is very much an "I", and at the same time, instead of being turned inward in deadly introspection, like an idiot, he takes up a position in the world of reality and is aware of positive relations of equality or dependence or love with one or more other living beings. He has both a self-regarding love and a disinterested love. As an essence he is proud, as an existence he is dependent. He is an absolute on a finite scale, a solitary who feels "angst" and is full of grandeur and misère. This is the nemesis of a finite personality. 8

Now, in the light of these notions about person we can understand

7 Ibid., 316-317.
8 Ibid., 320-321.
the self's reaching out to others and to God, not to exploit them as he can things, but to attend to them for what they are in themselves, other persons, ends in themselves, at the depths of whose being there is a region closed to all save God. Thus, it is because of the eminent dignity of the beloved, its own intrinsic worth, that it is even capable of being so loved. The will of the lover reaches its term and finds its appeasement, its joy, in the good of the beloved. Recognizing that in the relation of persons there is a return of love, unequal though it may be, man can no longer even ask whether he is ultimately loving himself, for it is only in the measure in which he gives his love freely and without thought for self that he and his love are perfected. 9 But the self has his own dignity as a person which he is charged to watch over and safeguard. For this reason self-love must act as a check on the other love with its tendency to trust itself independently of reason. Both loves have to be kept straight by truth, the conformity of the self with its essential nature and the order of being to which it belongs. Only in the case of the divine love may the self drop all its self-regard, and this is so only because it knows that from Him came its being and existence and in Him is all life. 10

The essential self is not, indeed, dead—that could not be

9 Ibid., 321-322.
10 Ibid., 323-325.
so long as a person remains a person—but it is the existential self, the anima, which goes forth to greet the divine lover.\textsuperscript{11}

It would seem that the tension which Father D'Arcy describes between the animus and the anima is the same as that disclosed by Marcel in his analysis of having and being. In either case, knowledge and reason are on the side of the animus or having. Neither D'Arcy nor Marcel, of course, is simply equating reason to this possessive drive in man and setting up an absolute opposition between knowledge and love. No, both are concerned here with what is recognized as a movement of desire in man as opposed to a pure, disinterested love, but because of the similar direction of reason considered by itself and its proper activity of assimilating its object to its own spiritual mode of being, knowledge and desire exhibit like characteristics. While for Father D'Arcy this leads to the problem of the relation between love and knowledge, he is able to avoid the position of the voluntarists who unhesitatingly assign to love and its faculty, the will, an absolute superiority over knowledge and the intellect. D'Arcy does not concern himself with the problem to any great extent, but in an appendix\textsuperscript{12} he quotes a number of texts from St.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 325.

Thomas showing that a simple unqualified choice between love and knowledge as the superior activity is not possible. A full understanding of St. Thomas' teaching on the nature of the intellect in itself and in man and of his theory of knowledge enables Father D'Aroy to indicate wherein the solution to the problem lies without completely subjugating either man's intellect or his will.

Gabriel Marcel, on the other hand, takes what appears to be the voluntarist position on the question, although, as has been indicated, he scrupulously avoids and condemns any recognized tendency in the direction of irrationalism or agnosticism. Without desiring to oversimplify Marcel's profound thought, we believe it can be stated that while he seems to perceive the bearing of knowledge and attempts to express it, he is restricted by preconceived notions on the nature of knowledge and reality.

Marcel recognizes that both knowledge and love are directed to the other, although with different intentions. In knowledge, and in its volitional counterpart, desire, the subject apprehends the object as other than itself and in a possessive movement seeks to break down this otherness by transforming it in some way into a likeness of itself by bringing it within the subject's own circle. This, however, is to disparage the

13 Cf. Aimé Forest, La Structure métaphysique du concret selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Paris, 1931, 301: "Le problème de l'amour, comme celui de la connaissance, est d'une certaine façon le problème de l'autre."
existential nature of the other, to rob it of its rightful autonomy, and to deny its being. Love, on the other hand, bears on the other as existing and autonomous. In its movement of penetration and participation love soars above the subject-object opposition and finds its fulfillment in communion with the other, where both lover and beloved retain, or more correctly, realize their true freedom in the recognition of the unique and sacred individuality of the other.

Now, as Aimé Forest points out, love and knowledge have an inverse orientation. Through knowledge things become interior to the soul and are made present to it in their similitude, which is not simply an image of these things, but is rather the means by which the soul possesses them. Thus, knowledge is truly an experience of possession, of having in some way. But the direction of love is quite different. Love seeks to unite us to others, not in making them ours but in giving ourselves over into the reality of the other. Love, then, is more akin to an abandonment of the self than to a possession. In love the subject tends primarily to perfect the other, whereas in knowledge, and in desire, he tends to perfect himself.


Thus far there seems to be no disagreement with Marcel. But can Marcel add with Forest that at the term of its effort the intelligence by itself places us in the presence of the ontological mystery or that knowledge of itself can reveal to us the meaning of existence and mystery? It would not seem that Marcel would subscribe to these statements without at least considerable qualifications. While he has a deep conviction that the intellect seeks more than a knowledge of abstract essences, he does not seem to be able to situate knowledge fully and stably in the transcendent order of analogical being.

Perhaps much of what has been said in the preceding chapters would seem to belie this, but as M. de Corte points out, while Marcel certainly manifests a thorough epistemological realism, it is not quite so clear that he has arrived at a full metaphysical realism. Marcel himself recognizes his faltering steps: "Thought turns towards the Other, it is the pursuit of the Other. The whole riddle is to discover whether this Other is Being." Now, after thus correctly posing the problem to himself, Marcel seeks an answer in distinguishing between thinking and thinking of. In recognizing that actual thought is always

18 Being and Having, 30.
thought of something other than itself, he affirms the immanence of thought in being, and then in a lengthy analysis\(^19\) to which he returns from time to time he returns the question to the epistemological level. Instead of considering the ontological formality of being as the object of knowledge, he limits the object of knowledge to the modality of being. When a philosopher's line of thought is limited to the way in which being exists as an object for the mind and fails to note the ontological structure of being, or what it is in itself, epistemology takes precedence over and remains apart from metaphysics. There thus may result a gap similar to what we find in Marcel between epistemological and metaphysical realism.

This, we say, is the conclusion to which Marcel is led, but let us note the more fundamental reasons for his position. It will be remembered that Marcel received his philosophic training in the idealism and rationalism of the nineteenth century. Now, idealism postulates the irreducible distinction between subject and object in both the order of knowledge and the order of being (in fact, if not in intention). Accepting the etymological definition of the term object, i.e., objectum, something thrown before or placed in the face of, idealism denies any penetrability of the object by the mind which would dissolve the antinomy by

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
an abstractive process of assimilation. In allocating absolute autonomy to the mind and its ideas, this philosophy tends at the same time to an ultra-objectivism and to complete rationalism. And it can conclude that "connaitre, c'est construire le concret en vertu d'un acte de foi dans la stabilité et dans la véracité de l'esprit." While Marcel was successful in ridding himself of most of the chains forged by idealism, he rebelled also against any form of objectivisation, which he considered to be the logical issue of idealism. In effect, this was simply to accept the fundamental postulate of idealism, i.e., the radical opposition between subject and object on the plane of knowledge. As Etienne Gilson has shown so well, this is the fate of so many philosophers who revolt against a system, but who, in their criticisms as well as in their own positive constructions, unconsciously accept either the principles or the method of the philosophy they reject.

To deny to the spirit any possibility of real access to other existents is to shut it up irremediably within itself. Hence, Marcel affirms the necessity to reduce or transcend the

20 de Corte, La Philosophie de G. M., 47-50.
21 Ibid., 50.
22 Ibid., 47.
opposition between subject and object, but he is unable to effect the reduction on the plane of theoretic knowledge. It can only be accomplished for him through some kind of concrete knowledge by participation or connaturality. 24

To say with Marcel that knowledge bears on essences is, of course, true. But it is neither necessary nor correct to stop there. At least two important considerations must follow. First, although in the order of human intelligence conceptual knowledge is imperfect, this is not to say that it is a falsification of reality. If it is true that the proper object of the human intellect is the quiddity or the essence of sensible things, it follows that our knowledge bears on essences as they are embodied in concrete, particular things, that is, as they are in reality. As Maritain says, 25 if it is a question of experimental knowledge by which we experience the thing in the singular and concrete reality of its presence, then it is very clear that notional or conceptual knowledge is not real in this sense. (And, he asks, who has ever pretended that it is?) But if it is a question of a knowledge which enables us to know and understand intelligible being truly, that is, in a manner conforming to what is—intelligible being, which is at the heart of the real and which is

24 de Corte, La Philosophie de G. M., 51.

capable of an inexhaustible certitude of itself—in this sense, and it is this which is important, notional knowledge is real knowledge.

Obviously, what Marcel is trying to arrive at is an explanation of truly existential knowledge. He sees the inadequacies of the pure concept for a concrete metaphysics, and he sees that the act of existence is beyond the order of form and essence. What he seems to fail to see is how the order of concepts and the order of the judgement, which, epistemologically, is the order of the act of existence, can be united in a truly scientific and philosophical discipline. "Intelligibility appears in two orders, that of form or essence and that of esse, the act of existence." A true metaphysics ignores neither but explores the deepest intelligibility of what is given in the concept in the light of the intelligibility of existence which is grasped in the judgement. It is thus both concrete and realistic, and

... its position at the peak of philosophical science is clearly validated for it deals not merely with quiddative or formal intelligibilities but with the intelligibility of that most intimate and ultimate acts, esse, in the light of which it alone considers all things.27

Our second consideration is closely connected with the first. As imperfect as its mode of knowledge is, human


27 Ibid., 58.
intelligence can in a limited way go beyond its proper object and arrive at a knowledge of being in itself. Texts we have cited from Marcel clearly indicate that he is aware of this. But here the full development of his thought is stifled for two reasons. As we have already discussed, he is first of all handicapped by his preconceived notions of the nature of knowledge in relation to the known object. Secondly, he seems completely unaware of what we may call the world of analogy. It is in truth an analogical knowledge of being in general which we derive from the knowledge of particular beings, not simply, as Marcel holds, a negative knowledge. Strictly speaking, according to this formality of knowledge the object of intellection is not known in itself. Rather, it is reflected to the mind through its lesser analogues. The world of analogy, which is properly the sphere of metaphysics where the highest causes of reality are attained by the power of abstraction, may indeed be called trans-intelligible, since it is not intelligible to us by experimental knowledge, that is, it is not connatural to our mode of knowing.28

Nevertheless, Marcel does insist that knowledge of being can be and, in fact, is attained. If the foregoing analysis is correct, it would seem that Marcel's understanding of knowledge in general prevents him from arriving at a satisfactory

explanation of how it is possible. But now let us see what conclusions can be drawn from what he tells us specifically about intuition.

Intuition for Marcel is clearly opposed to any kind of abstraction. Rather it is like an intellectual sympathy with a presence. As has been brought out above, intuition is not capable of reflecting on itself or of being directly reflected in thought. It is on this side of any vision, but as of its nature it tends to what is other than itself, it is immediately broken up in a first reflection which objectivises the term of the intuition. Recognizing that an integral objectivation is not possible, a second reflection attempts to restore the unity of the experience. In a single act reflection denies itself as an object and affirms its transcendence over all knowledge and all objectivity:

C'est sous la forme de la connaissance objective que la réflexion pense sa relation au monde empirique; elle est savoir d'un monde qui est en lui-même savoir réalisé; de plus, l'acte de se penser la pose pour elle-même comme objet de savoir; mais elle, dans cet acte, se nie comme objet et affirme sa transcendance à l'égard de tout savoir et de toute objectivité, repoussant comme inadéquate toute représentation, toute figuration, toute symbolisation d'elle-même.

While it cannot be denied that Marcel has given us a new and

28 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, 131: "Au fond toute réflexion, toute dialectique est invinciblement attirée par cela qui la supprimé--par cela où elle se nie."

29 Jeanne Delhomme, in Existentialisme Chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, ed. Gilson, 140.
perhaps fruitful tool of knowledge in his theory of second reflection, it seems clear that in the function that he assigns to it only a negative knowledge of transcendent reality is possible, which for a positive metaphysics is not enough. To deny to this fundamental intuition the possibility of being reflected in thought, and to deny to thought the possibility of knowing directly the object of the intuition, is to deny the intellectual perception of being. Again Marcel is prevented from taking the final step toward a metaphysical realism that is validly intellectual. Maritain assigns the cause of Marcel's failure on this point to the same difficulty indicated above in the discussion of Marcel's theory of knowledge generally: 30

If a philosopher [Maritain is specifically referring here to Marcel] who is powerfully aware of the ontological mystery nevertheless is convinced that it cannot be an intuition, it is because idealistic prepossessions do not suffer him to address himself to his intellect as such, and trust to it to satisfy his search. We cannot but see in this attitude the effect of an unsurmounted prejudice against the objectivity of the intellect, which is conceived idealistically. In consequence of this prejudice he will seek to make contact with the ontological mystery so to speak by a circuitous route which leads through the subjective domain, therefore specifically by way of the obscure apprehension of love, and thus skirts the object we term

30 Preface to Metaphysics, 60, n; cf Collins, "Gabriel Marcel and the Mystery of Being," Thought, XVIII, 691, n. 40: "What Marcel would dispute is his alleged reduction of intentionality to a pure experience, together with the charge that he conceives the intellect idealistically and returns the discussion to the subjective domain. . . . On the traditional view, the deliverances of Marcel's meditations are true, but do not convey formally ontological truth by reason of an incomplete disengagement of being from its concrete embodiment."
being. This object, however, is not a screen, it is being itself. Therefore love does not really skirt it but enters it after its fashion, as does intellect after its own. On the "other side" of it there is only nothingness.

Now, to add that Marcel enters the domain of being by way of the apprehension of love brings us to a point where it would seem that Marcel can be met by traditional scholastic philosophy.31

In recognizing that it is only through love that a subject can go out from itself and enter into the very subjectivity of another, which is truly to share in the other's existence, Marcel simply affirms from another point of view what contemporary scholastics, following St. Thomas, indicate when they speak of love as being more unitive than knowledge.32 While the intentional union of knowledge is metaphysically a more perfect union, being more spiritual, it is less efficacious and less intimate than the affective union of love, which does not prescind from

31 In view of the exposition of Marcel's philosophy given in this paper, it is perhaps unnecessary to remark that there are many other points on which rapport can be established, for example, on the place of subjectivity as a valid approach to philosophy, or, following the lines sketched by de Corte (La Philosophie de G. M., 68-70), in the field of ethics or of practical knowledge where the judgement takes priority over the concept. De Corte believes that it is here that Marcel offers the greatest positive contribution to philosophy. Cf. L. B. Geiger, O. P., "Existentialisme, essentialisme et ontologie existentielie," Etienne Gilson, Philosophe de Chretienté, ed. J. Maritain, et al., 236-237.

the concrete conditions of material existence. The case is somewhat different when it is a question of union with God in the Beatific Vision. Here where union is the result of direct vision which, absolutely speaking, precedes love, Marcel's thought needs modification.

While in the order of purely speculative knowledge one can speak of the role of love only in relation to the love of truth, in the order of practical knowledge it must be said that love itself modifies knowledge. Thus, we see that in loving another we come also to a better knowledge of that other. And this is so because in love the other is present in his totality, so to speak, enabling the one who loves to pass beyond a knowledge by concepts and know the other by a kind of connaturalism:

Non seulement, l'amour pousse le sujet à scruter toujours plus avant les profondeurs de son objet, mais par lui-même, il dit présence mystérieuse et réciproque de l'un à l'autre; par lui-même, il unit l'amé et l'aimé, il les "Connaturalise," de telle sorte que l'un n'a qu'à se regarder vivre et sentir et penser pour connaître, tout autrement que par concepts, les réactions singulières de l'autre.

What exists in the concrete is subsisting things—subjects, not objects—and, as a subject, the concrete existent is inexhaustible to knowledge. In the measure in which we employ conceptual knowledge in the attempt to penetrate another subject,

34 Ibid., 328.
that subject becomes an object, is converted from a Thou to a He, and in that measure is impenetrable to us. 35 As Jacques Maritain as also shown, 36 both the existential subject and the act of existing transcend the concept considered as the terminus of simple apprehension. We cannot, then, know another as subject:

Being the only subject which is a subject for me in the midst of a world of subjects which my sense and my intelligence can know only as objects, I am at the centre of the world... With regard to my subjectivity in act, I am the centre of the world. 37

Marcel has described the transformation of object to subject in the terminology of the He and Thou, where the one is united to the other in the spiritual union of a vital co-esse. In fine,

By love, finally, is shattered the impossibility of knowing another except as object... To say that union in love makes the being we love another subjectivity for us is to say that it makes that being another subjectivity for us, another subjectivity that is ours. To the degree that we truly love (which is to say, not for ourselves but for the beloved; and when—which is not always the case—the intellect within us becomes passive as regards love, and, allowing its concepts to slumber, thereby renders love a formal means of knowledge), to this degree we acquire an obscure knowledge of the being we love, similar to that which we possess of ourselves; we know that being in his very subjectivity (at least in a certain measure) by this experience of union. Then he himself is, in a certain

35 Marcel, Being and Having, 13, n. 3: "The object as such is by definition accessible to me, but not penetrable. It is the Other, or more exactly the Thou, which is penetrable."


37 Ibid., 74-75.
degree, cured of his solitude; he can, though still disquieted, rest for a moment in the rest of the knowledge that we possess of him as subject. 38

In emphasizing the noetic function of love, Marcel recognizes the demands of any philosophy of the concrete. If such a philosophy is to bring us to a knowledge of things of this world as they exist in their singularity and materiality, the rôle of love cannot be neglected. On the contrary, its importance and necessity calls for ever greater consideration and explanation on the part of philosophers. Nevertheless, it must also be noted that while the intelligence cannot do without love, neither can love do without the intelligence. As Marcel himself states:

L'amour n'est plus rien, du moment où il se dissocie sciemment de la connaissance; du moment où il s'en dissocie, il n'est plus (pour lui-même) qu'une connaissance illusoire et volontairement idéalisée. 39

So Marcel affirms the demand of love for knowledge, but it is also true that he minimizes it in relegating knowledge in itself as a means of attaining the real in its several orders of being to an inferior place. It is, after all, not by his will that man is differentiated from lower creation, nor by his will that he shares in his most perfect likeness to God, but rather by his intellect.

38 Ibid., 84.
39 Journal métaphysique, 63.
We have indicated at some length wherein Marcel seems to err in the construction of his particular philosophical views. It is hoped that the line of criticism followed is not too harsh and that it will not be taken as a criticism of the whole of Marcel's expression. Marcel has much of value to contribute to contemporary philosophical speculation, and his shortcomings are not due to the essential nature of his own philosophical inspiration and orientation. It has not been our purpose to give a general evaluation of Marcel's thought, but in conclusion we should like to note, in agreement with de Corte and others, that it would seem that a genuine and valid philosophy of the concrete, a Christian existentialism, if you will, is certainly possible along the lines proposed by Marcel. It may well be that such a philosophy (an onto-phenomenology as de Corte describes it) cannot of itself become a science of metaphysics in the strict sense since it is essentially concerned with concretized being and immediate experience, which presupposes a realistic metaphysics of being. Nevertheless, in the measure in which it frees itself from the last traces of idealism and recognizes the limitations of its data and its method, it can offer a valuable approach to philosophy strictly so-called.

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**B. ARTICLES**


The thesis submitted by Rosemary Fitzpatrick has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Date: 15 Nov., 1951
Signature of Adviser: John D. McKinlay