1957

The Notion of Personal Communication in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel

Martha Ethelyn Williams
Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
Williams, Martha Ethelyn, "The Notion of Personal Communication in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel" (1957). Master's Theses. 1450.
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/1450

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.
Creative Commons License
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1957 Martha Ethelyn Williams
THE NOTION OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF
GABRIEL MARCEL

by
Martha Ethelyn Williams

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

JANUARY
1957
LIFE

Martha Ethelyn Williams was born in Chicago, Illinois, September 21, 1934. She was graduated from the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Lake Forest, Illinois, June, 1951, and from Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois, June 1955, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

She began her graduate studies and work as a graduate assistant in the department of philosophy in September, 1955.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. PERSONAL COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY IN RELATION TO COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** 74
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among Christian existentialists the name Gabriel Marcel is foremost. Marcel would not brand himself an existentialist but because he deals with the existentialistic problems he has been classified with the contemporary existentialists. Marcel is a Frenchman who, though brought up outside the Christian faith was baptised into the Roman Catholic communion in 1929. He is a philosopher, dramatist, musician and critic whose thought was influenced by, among others, Saint Augustine, Pascal, Schelling and Bergson. Although he has read extensively Marcel's philosophy is original, in fact he had developed his existentialism before becoming familiar with the works of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. Marcel's philosophy is a concrete philosophy of being which concentrates on problems of human existence. He analyses human experience and relegates to the human person a higher position than that which is given him by the present-day technocracy.

Gabriel Marcel was born in Paris in 1889 and four years later his mother died. Marcel was deeply moved by the death of his mother as is evident from what he has said. "Not only my childhood but my entire life, were dominated by the event of the sudden death of my mother. ... In a mysterious way she has
always remained present to me." Of his father Marcel has said that he was brought up in the Catholic Church "but he had detached himself from it at an early age. His intellectual attitude was that of so many agnostics of the end of the nineteenth century whose minds had been imbued with the ideas of Taine, Spencer and Renan. Catholic thought appeared to him antiquated and infected with absurd superstitions." 

Marcel wrote his first play at the age of eight and from that time on his interest in drama continued so that he is now known for some of his plays such as Ariadne, Le Coeur des Autres and Le Dard. Marcel has said. "In the drama and by means of the drama metaphysical thought seizes itself and determines itself in the concrete." 

Marcel was an excellent student though in referring to his education he has said, "this kind of education produced in my mind a state of revolt." In 1908 he wrote a thesis on The Metaphysical Ideas of Coleridge and their Relationship to the Philosophy of Schelling. Between 1912 and 1941 he taught philosophy in such schools as Vendôme, Paris, Sens, and Montpellier. In 1949 and 1950 he delivered the "Gifford Lectures" in Scotland.

Early in his philosophical career Marcel set out to form his own system of Idealism but "he moved away from that to concentrate on problems of personal

1 Kurt F. Reinhardt, The Existentialist Revolt (Milwaukee, 1952), p. 204.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 203.
4 Ibid., 204.
He abandoned the abstract thinking of Idealism for a concrete approach to reality. His trend of philosophizing led him to the consideration of religious belief and in 1929 he became a Catholic. Marcel has a concrete philosophy of being wherein he explores and tries to elevate the vital experiences of man in the world. This is evidenced in Marcel's saying:

But this 

__tardium vitae__ encouraged by inhuman conditions ... is only made possible by the rupture, or more exactly the loosening of the ontological bond which unites each particular being to Being in its fulness. It seems to me that psychiatry or psychoanalysis will not get beyond the most superficial stratification of human reality and human ills, so long as they are not able to diagnose this functional lesion, or if you like, this ontological traumatisation however hard it may be to formulate.6

It is my purpose to explain the origin and nature of the problem which is the loneliness of man, to show that the solution to the problem can be found in personal communication, and to explicate the notion of personal communication as it is found in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel. I will substantiate this work by texts and references to the principal works of Marcel and certain secondary sources.

In the eyes of Gabriel Marcel the abstract thinking of Idealism and the arithmetic approach towards man of collectivization are two factors that are responsible for the ontological dissolution of the human person and the relative failure of communication. In place of the abstract thinking of Idealism he gives us his concrete approach to philosophy making use of human experience and

---


personal relationships, and to counteract collectivization he restores to the human person his proper dignity which belongs to him as the image of his creator. I will first deal with collectivization and then with the notion of the human person.

Collectivization is opposed to community; it degrades community life and it is this degradation that is emphasized by Sartre. The truth of the matter is ... in the more and more collectivized world that we are now living in, the idea of any real community becomes more and more inconceivable. Modern life is governed by technocracy; the machine is its concern, and because of this it is indifferent to religious belief thereby dehumanizing man and ... reducing him to a collection of functions which have no power of intercommunication. Man is reduced to an "object," a unit within the multitude, or a part of a

7"This social situation will remain one of dire necessity and mistrust, approximating his attitude toward things. It is this degeneration of community life which Sartre regards as its highest flowering." --James Collins, The Existentialists (Chicago, 1952), pp. 214-215.


10"Modern existentialism may be regarded as partly a reaction against the superficiality of the bourgeois mind, against comfortable self-satisfaction and the refusal to face the facts of the human situation and of human existence, against the reduction of the individual to an 'object' and against the mechanization of life." --Frederick Copleston, Existentialism and Modern Man (Oxford, 1948), p. 27.

11"An ethics of the lie is in the process of being elaborated which commands the individual to make himself as nothing in the face of that multitude of which he is only an insignificant and ephemeral unit." --Gabriel Marcel, Men Against Humanity, trans., G.S. Fraser (London, 1952), p. 167.
machine. Collectivisation destroys communication, it sacrifices certain or-
organic groups wherein common life should flourish such as the family or village
as opposed to the mass state.

Collectivisation diminishes the worth of the individual; "we are con-
frented everywhere with enormous agglomerations which are increasingly mechan-
ised, so that the individuals are linked in much the same way as parts of a
machine." 12 There is a difference between a certain type of society such as
the mechanised mass state and a community like the church or the family, and
the difference lies in the fact that they treat people in different ways.
Marcel's existentialism reacts against the treatment of people as mere objects.
"Human beings could ... set themselves on the path of living as if they were
really human; subjects not objects; persons not machines; distributively not
collectively; for if the watchword of organized society is 'each for all (the
whole)' that of a free community is 'all (everyone) for each.'" 13 The world in
which man is treated as an object and ruled by technology is evil. 14 Man should
not allow himself to be ruled by this world but he should govern it. 15

13 George Seaver, Nicholas Berdyaev (New York, 1950), p. 90.
14 "A scientifically 'objectivated' universe, ruled by technology, set a-
part from man and regarded as a thing in and by itself, became a strange mon-
ster-incomprehensible, evil, and destructive." --Reinhardt, p. 219.
15 "Marcel's judgements on the social order issue from his sense of being;
unless man returns to being he cannot recapture that fidelity to his own exist-
ence and to the world which is the source of honor and the sister of hope. Un-
less man breaks through the world of abstract thought fashioned for the sake of
mastering experience, he remains withdrawn from the springs of piety and the
roots of reality." --F.D. Wilhelmson, "Preoccupations of a Christian Philoso-
Marcel, as well as other existentialists condemn the depersonalization of man:

All interest in concentrated upon controlling objective forces and manipulating things. When attention is finally paid to the human person it is regarded as but one object among the rest and hence as presenting another problem to be solved by technical methods alone.

Marcel recognized the value of the scientific and pragmatic intelligence, even in dealing with man. For there is a definite sense in which man is included with all other things that are subject to technical control and measurement. But the further claim that this is the only way in which man and other beings can be treated runs far beyond the evidence.\textsuperscript{16}

The world in which all is considered to be the subject of scientific investigation is a world without God, without communication and without personal relationships; it is an empty\textsuperscript{17} mechanized world. But the growth of our souls depends on the responses they make which responses are not governed by technics but by personal relations.\textsuperscript{18} In this world the "feeling for personal or inter-subjective relationships is becoming increasingly obscured."\textsuperscript{19} Marcel sees that the breakdown of human relations\textsuperscript{20} is a real problem and that there is a pressing need for communication with the world, other people and with God, and

\textsuperscript{16}Collins, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{17}\textquoteleft Life in a world centered of function is liable to despair because this world is empty.	extquoteright --Gabriel Marcel, \textit{Philosophy of Existence}, trans., Manya Harari (London, 1949), p. 3.
\textsuperscript{18}Collins, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{19}Marcel, \textit{Men Against Humanity}, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{20}\textquoteleft The French thinker also joins his fellow 'existentialists' in condemning the increasing degeneration of human relations and the virtual impossibility of genuine communication in a society which in growing measure is losing the understanding for speech and language—the means of communication—and the respect for the individual—the subject of communication.	extquoteright --Reinhardt, p. 224.
this communication cannot be the subject of scientific investigation. Existentialism is interested in the individual and his relations with other individuals, not with a numerical unit which when added to another unit gives a numerical sum. "Existentialism in its modern and particularly its contemporary form concentrates this critical reflection on the individual human self. It confronts this individual human existence with those collective claims and forces which threaten to submerge or pulverize individuality and personality in abstract ideal essences or in such pseudo-absolutes as 'the nation', the fatherland, or the race.'"\(^\text{22}\)

Having considered collectivization and the evils that are concomitant with it and that follow therefrom; the degradation of the human person and the prevention of communication, I will now deal with the individual human being and personality. Mounier tells us that "there is a close similarity between the preoccupation of Existentialists and Personalists. We find the common ground, not only in Gabriel Marcel, but also in Berdyaev. 'Existential philosophy is a personal philosophy; the subject of enquiry is the human person.' The existent is presented in the terms of a being in collision with the inertia or impersonality of the thing. Existentialists are unanimous on this point. They have sounded the call to a revival of Personalism in contemporary thought."\(^\text{23}\)

\(^\text{21}\)"And my linkage with the world, with 'the others' and with God has the same mysterious character as my being incarnate in my body. In neither case can this mysterious bond be made the subject of scientific investigation or the object of scientific knowledge." --Reinhardt, pp. 218-219.

\(^\text{22}\)Ibid., p. 14.

The idealist and materialist philosophies were definitely not personalist philosophies. They lowered the worth of the human person and led to the isolation of "the individual in the solitude of his impasioned quest." Marcel sees the problem and tries to restore to man his proper dignity and relieve the isolation by personal communication.

Personality is that within each man which is entirely his; it can be compared to nothing else; it is unique in itself and in its destiny; it is unique and incommunicable because of its uniqueness. Personality is subjective; for each person it is that which is his alone with God; personality is something you cannot "put your finger on" and which cannot be scientifically and objectively studied. Marcel understands the nature of personality. "It seems to me that in no given case can we be objectively certain that we are in the presence of a definite personality; such certainty must always be subjective and incommunicable. The idea of an objective certainty in a field like this is absurd and is excluded by the very nature of the facts. Objective knowledge perforce endows either the medium or the consultant or both with mysterious potentialities in indefinite number."25

Persons cannot be scientifically and objectively studied because they are not to be treated as mere objects or aspects of nature. Each person is a

---

24 Ibid.

subject and there is a spiritual communion between subjects. Men do not just function but they live humanly and are capable of communication and intercommunication. 

"Gabriel Marcel never calls for a rectification of reality, which is what it is, but only for a restoration of man to the high dignity and mission his position necessarily delivers to him. Doubtless when man is off center, so the whole of reality follows suit. The mystery of reality is centered in man; hence it must catch the reflection of man's errors and deviations, and the correction of reality can only begin by reasserting human experience in its integrity." Marcel and other existentialists, for the most part, are concerned with human experience and the human person; "a person is a reality terrifyingly different from, and richer than, any other thing in existence." Man's integrity has been threatened by collectivization and Idealism. "In view of this danger, man passionately reasserts himself as an in-dividuum, as an indivisible unity or substance, conscious of the fact that no substitution can ever be made for a human personality. Existentialism has risen in modern Europe because the steadily increasing pressures of collectivism and abstract

26 "For men like Scheler, Buber, or Gabriel Marcel, Existentialism introduces into the concept of spiritual communion between subjects, the notion of exchange of ideas and of authentic encounter, following which I do not treat another person as an aspect of nature, but as an aspect of freedom, and by which, in addition, I contribute towards his freedom in the same way as he contributes toward mine." --Mounier, p. 87.


28 Ibid.
Idealism have forced the individual to a resolute and radical self-affirmation."  

Man's self-affirmation and restoration to his rightful position are necessary because "man - more specifically human personality - is the key to an authentic ontological understanding of the world; he alone can correct the rage worked by a distorting knowledge." Man, in the world that we know, has been reduced to an object: he has "defaced his divine image, and forgotten his divine origin and his divine destiny." Marcel sees this and tells how man should reassert himself:

What is asked of all of us, such as we are - and here truly is what one might call our existent secret - is that we should discover what that sphere is, however restricted it may be, in which our own activity can be vitally connected with that universal purpose, which is the purpose of love and truth in the world. Our error or our fault invariably consists in our wanting to persuade ourselves that no such sphere exists and that our contribution to the task has to be accomplished in the world cannot amount to anything. An even more serious error consists in denying the existence or the imperative-ness of this task and shutting ourselves up in the awareness of a sterile liberty.

Each person must reassert himself by finding his place in the world united with the universal purpose of "love and truth." There is only one place for

---

30 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXX, 297.
31 "But man has defaced his divine image, and forgotten his divine origin and his divine destiny. Withdrawn into the shell of his ego he stands over against the world which seems to confront him as an antagonistic alter. Spirit in man is thwarted by the recalcitrance of soul and sense." --Seaver, p. 21.
each individual creature of God. Each man is unique as a subject of communication.

Man must reassert himself by finding his place in the world and developing his soul, which development depends on relations between personal beings. These personal relations are communications between persons; between men and between man and God, in whose image he is created. "The soul which is open to the invasion of spirit thus experiences an extension of its personality, interpenetrating and interpenetrated by the personality of its fellows; this is the natural activity of the spirit, and is called love. It is the inner bond which unites spirit to spirit, like to like; but it comes to pass through reverent recognition of the unlikeness of soul to soul; their differentiation, that is, as separate and distinct manifestations of the same spirit."36

We all manifest the same spirit, that is, all are created in the image and likeness of God. It is the denial of this fact that allows for the degrad-

33"There are grounds for seeing an important signpost for the solution in the fact that individuality only is when it depends from an act of creation, a freedom distinct from it - the absolute negation of solipsism is the preliminary condition of all spiritual life." --Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 61.

34Reinhardt, p. 224.

35"Our souls are made or unmade by the quality of our response to being and the trials of bodily life. This response is not governed by the laws of technics but by the relations which hold between personal beings." --Collins, p. 144.

36Seaver, p. 22.
atation of man. 37 "Ought we not admit that if the notion of the human person is still capable of inspiring respect it is only to the degree in which that notion profits from the aura which surrounds the notion of a creature formed in the image of his creator." 38 For Marcel it is the relationship between human and divine personalities that is of fundamental significance for philosophy. 39 Man depends on God for his personality, according to Marcel. "Personality, for that matter, has existence only on condition of transcending itself, or of supporting itself on something that transcends it." 40 For him the relationship between man and the personal transcendent God is of utmost importance in life. "To live humanly means to live in such material conditions that the human being is not crushed under the weight of care, and that his consciousness is able to develop an awareness of both self and other -- and also of a reality which transcends the opposition between the two." 41

Marcel says that faith in the transcendent personal God is necessary for the most successful, stable communal life and that hope in the eternal is

37 "It seems to me obvious that the technique of degradation could only have come into being on the basis of a situation which implied the radical thought not always the explicit denial of that character of sacredness which Christianity has always attributed to the human being." --Marcel, Men Against Humanity, pp. 176-177.

38 Ibid., p. 174.

39 Reinhardt, p. 208.

40 Marcel, Men Against Humanity, p. 153.

41 Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 34.
necessary for reliable human social bonds. Thus we see an analogy between our approach to God as a person and our approach to other men as persons.42 In Men Against Humanity Marcel points out the necessity of the relationship between men and God. "Human beings can be linked to each other by a real bond only because, in another dimension, they are linked to something which transcends them and comprehends them in itself. Now, the men who reject have broken with that superior principle, and it is in vain that they attempt to replace it by a fiction wholly lacking in ontological attributes and in any case projected into the future."43 Not only is real communication between people possible because of the transcendent God but also human personality and freedom are saved by the divine existence and love.44 "In the act of religious faith the individual constitutes himself as a person by affirming the infinite personality of God. Faith is thus a union of two freedoms: The free appeal of God and the free response and homage of man. In the act of faith man is restored to that unity of which he was deprived by rationalism and Idealism."45

42 Marcel sees an analogy between approaching God as a person and approaching other men as persons, since in both cases the basic social virtues of fidelity and hope are the animating principles of the social mode of existing. Without the strength of these virtues, the individual will be fearful of opening himself by way of just dealings and love for others."—Collins, pp. 214-215.

43 Marcel, Men Against Humanity, p. 194.

44 "The Kierkegaard-Nietzsche and the Marcel-Sartre antithesis illustrate perhaps best this parting of the ways: on the one side the preservation and salvation of human personality and human freedom in the supereminent Reality of Divine Existence and Divine Love; on the other side the self destroying nihilistic frenzy and the final perdition of the man without God."—Reinhardt, p. 226.

We have been concerned with person and personality so it is now fitting to consider that since personality is unique it is communicable and a consequence of the incommunicability of personality is that man is lonely. The existential insularity of man's personality is real and inevitable. Man is alone in that his personality is unique and therefore incommunicable. This is the basis in fact for the loneliness of man. Man is alone in his personality and so is lonely. Each man's personality is his alone with God. C. S. Lewis puts it concisely in saying: "One soul in the whole creation do you know; and it is the only one whose fate is placed in your hands. If there is a God you are in a sense alone with him." 46

Atheistic existentialists such as Sartre or Camus over-emphasize man's loneliness to the point of its being unbearable. For them man is completely alone and incapable of any successful communication. He is alone in an empty world 47 aware of his existence and unable to communicate it. If God is left out of the existential world there is no alternative left to man but to succumb to a desperate loneliness. Without God man can be forced into a situation of "spiritual abandonment and utter loneliness so that even the worth of his own existence is questionable." 48 Man is faced with the fact of his own existence and the inevitability of death. Aside from these he is indifferent; all else is other or separated from him. An atheistic existentialist, Albert Camus,

47 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 3.
48 Reinhardt, p. 121.
brings the point out in his novel, The Stranger:

Actually I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he; sure of my present life and the death that was coming. That, no doubt, was all I had; but at least that certainty was something I could get my teeth into - just as it had got its teeth into me. I'd been right, I was always right. I'd passed my life in a certain way, and I might have passed it in a different way, if I'd felt like it. I'd acted this and I hadn't acted otherwise; I hadn't done X, whereas I had done Y or Z. And what did that mean? That all the time, I'd been waiting for this present moment, for that dawn, tomorrow's or another days which was to justify me. Nothing, nothing had the least importance, and I know quite well why.

Marcel is aware that the loneliness of man is a problem, but not an insoluble problem because man is able to communicate with God. Man can communicate with God and with others; he can enter into personal relationships with God and with other people. This is not the case of the atheistic existentialist. "Moreover, one can say, I think that M. Sartre throws into relief the loneliness of the individual. Man endeavors to enter into relations with others, to become another while remaining himself; but this is impossible and all human relationships suffer shipwreck." For such philosophers man is alone and becomes indifferent to others since he cannot communicate with them. Marcel sees the

50 Copleston, p. 15.
51 "What difference could they make to me, the death of others, or a mother's love, or his God; or the way a man decides to live, the fate he thinks he chooses since one and the same fate was bound to 'choose' not only me but thousands of millions of privileged people, who, like him, called themselves my brothers. ... All alike would be condemned to die one day; his turn too would come like the others." --Camus, p. 152.
possibility of falling into a state of nihilism if man is without God and says:

Each of us can quite easily imagine some actual situation in which he might suddenly find himself as a result of passing events, and where he would be in danger of sinking into absolute nihilism. We can go further; that other beings not even personally known to us, should be plunged into inescapable despair is enough for the question inevitably to arise in our minds as to the meaning or absurdity of life. But the problem is always the same, and I maintain that it is not and cannot be a problem of truths. Is there really a superior kind of ethics which forbids us to seek a refuge beyond the shimmering lagoon which perpetually sends us back the reflection of our own derelection? 52

In Men Against Humanity he notes the same problem. "Very simply, I will say that if we felt ourselves alone in the world, without God, the task would appear impracticable: for my own part, I fully believe that I should be tempted to abandon it and that at certain moments the temptation to kill myself might perhaps become irresistible." 53 But this is not the case because God is dead 54 as Nietzsche would have us think.

In Marcel's philosophy man does not express a "benign indifference to the universe;" 55 he communicates with the world by a living communication. Each one

52 Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 208.

53 "However, we must come back to what I was saying earlier. Taken literally, Nietzsche's formula, 'God is dead' is not only blasphemous, it is false. And the same must be said of contemporary caricatures of that formula, particularly of course, of the blasphemies of Sartre and his school. The freedom which we have to defend in its extremity, is not the freedom of Prometheus defying Jupiter; it is not the freedom of a being who could exist or would claim to exist by himself." —Marcel, Men Against Humanity, p. 186.

54 Friedrich Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra (Leipzig, 1923), p. 12.

55 "I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. To feel it so like myself, indeed so brotherly, made me realize that I'd been happy, and that I was happy still. For all to be accomplished, for me to feel less lonely all that remained to hope was that on the day of my execution there should be a huge crowd of spectators and that they should greet me with howls of execration." —Camus, p. 154.
has his place in the world; he is not an isolated object indifferent to all else. "What is really important in fact, is the destiny of that living link, and not that of an entity which is isolated and closed in on itself. That is what we more or less explicitly mean when we assert our faith in personal immortality." 56 This is not an estranged world wherein communication and communion are destroyed and man is condemned to the solitude of his individuality causing him to be hopelessly lonely. It is a world requiring the reciprocity of communication, hope, and faith in the infinite God. "For in the face of despair or dissolution (always possible), the person expresses an absolute hope or belief which evidently cannot come from the infinite being to which he owes everything he is; through recollection the person is aware of his participation in his communion, which confirms his nonindependence." 58

Thus we see that a problem exists. As a result of the abstract thinking of Idealism and of the arithmetical approach towards man of collectivisation, man's dignity and integrity have been threatened; he has been treated as an object or a mathematical unit; he has been cut off from community life and is faced with loneliness or, in extreme cases, with nihilism and despair. In addition to the isolation that is a result of collectivisation and Idealism, man is also isolated or alone in that he is unique; each man's personality is a unique creature of God and is different from anything else. Man's personality is

56 Marcel, The Mystery of Being, II, 155.
57 Helmut Kuhn, Encounters With Nothingness (Hinsdale, 1949), p. 36.
unique and therefore incommunicable but, as a person, man is able to communicate with men and God, that is, man is capable of the communication and communion of love, fidelity and hope in addition to other types of personal communication. It is in this ability to communicate that man finds the answer to the problem of loneliness. Loneliness is alleviated by personal communication and above all by the communion of love with God.

Having seen that the problem of loneliness exists for man and that it can be solved through communication and communion it is my purpose, from here on in, to explain communication and communion as they are seen in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel.
CHAPTER II

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS

The consideration of communication might well begin with the highest form of communication, communication with God, which is seen in prayer, love, fidelity, and hope. It is possible to establish a real communication with the personal transcendent God. God, as Marcel sees Him, is not only personal and transcendent; He is knowable; He is Being and is related to men as the absolute Thou. Marcel says "that every relation of being to being is personal and that the relation between God and me is nothing if it is not a relation of being

---

1"'Participation' denotes the actuality of human rapports as revealed in the reality of 'myself', of the 'Thou,' of 'the other,' and of the 'Absolute Thou' (le Toi absolu) of God. This means that God is not 'somebody' who entertains objectively determinable rapports with myself and with the world. The real God is a supremely personal God, who can never become for me a 'he' (lui.)" -- Reinhardt, p. 219.

2"Car Marcel ne refuse pas de parler comme tout le monde d l'existence de Dieu. Pour éviter toute évoque, il ajoute cependant volontiers: 'l'existence et la transcendance de Dieu' c'est à l' 'objectivation' qu'il s'oppose parce qu'elle supprimerait à la fois et la transcendance de Dieu et notre communion avec Lui." --Roger Troisfontaines, De L'Existence a l' Être (Louvain, 1953), II, 211.

3 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 33-36.

4"Any relation to God, like my relation to my friend, is not in the third person. God is not he but thou, the absolute Thou. The absolute Thou cannot be thought; the believer is wholly present in his own invocation and strives to live in the presence of this wholly Other in a unique relationship which cannot be communicated." --Harold John Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers (London, 1952), p. 79.

19
with being, or, strictly, of being with itself. The bizarre expression that comes to my mind for stating this is that, while an empirical 'thou' can be converted into a 'him', God is the absolute 'thou' who can never become a 'him.'\(^5\)

Within the consideration of communication with God or the absolute Thou I will first take up prayer and then love, faith and hope. By prayer we establish a communication or unite ourselves with a community. "Even if I pray alone in my room, we can and should maintain that I am uniting myself by or in this prayer to a community which does not belong exclusively, or even primarily, to the visible world."\(^6\) By prayer we establish a communication with God and with the person for whom we are praying. Marcel brings out the notion of prayer as communication with God and with God and someone else in several of his books.

In his Metaphysical Journal he tells how we are "with" the person for whom we are praying. "From the religious standpoint God appears as the sole mediator who can permit me to be really "with" the person I am praying for. It is only by positing the necessity of that mediator that we can dissipate the dangers of confusion between the metaphysical order and the order that is strictly religious."\(^7\) In Faith and Reality he says that prayer is not merely a request or

---

\(^5\) Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 137.

\(^6\) "But this bears little relation to the claims of an objective sociology which concentrates on institutional aspect of religious life." --Marcel, Mystery of Being, trans., R. Hague (Chicago, 1961), II, 95.

\(^7\) Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 170-171.
recitation of formulae but a "way of uniting oneself with." He says that "we are in a position to distinguish what authentic prayer can be. It can be neither the request which we discussed before, nor a mechanical recitation of formulae. We could add that it is nothing if not a certain very humble and fervent way of uniting oneself with . . . ." Marcel again brings out this notion in *Being and Having*. "When I think of a finite being, I restore, in a manner, between him and myself, a community, an intimacy, a with (to put it crudely) which might seem to have been broken . . . . to ask myself how I can think of God is to enquire in what sense I can be with Him."  

To really be "with" someone is to have an intersubjective relationship with him and this intersubjectivity is necessary for prayer. "In particular we saw that it seems possible to recognize prayer as real only when intersubjectivity is found in it." Marcel explains this in the following: "Prayer is possible only when intersubjectivity is recognized, where it is operative. We must, it is true, keep well in mind that intersubjectivity can never be looked upon as a mode of structure which can be stated or verified in any way; that would be to make it into a spurious sort of objectivity." Prayer is intersubjective; it is being "with" God, it is to think God as God. "To pray is actually to refuse to think God as order, it is to think Him as really God, as

---

9 Marcel, *Being and Having*, p. 31-32.
11 Ibid., p. 106-107.
12 as pure Thou." To pray is to think God as the absolute Thou and to establish an intersubjective relationship with Him, and all are capable of this.

Prayer is always heard regardless of the purity of intention on the part of the one praying. "My prayer cannot be thought of as not interesting God, not attaining God; to that extent my prayer is certainly efficacious." The fact that prayer may be selfish does not give us ground for saying that God does not exist nor does it mean that the prayer is not prayer.

This situation is complicated by a mixture of elements; what I mean is, that as I am in a way carnally attached to the being for whom I am praying, my prayer could always be looked upon as somewhat selfish. But I do not think that I have the right to give way to a sort of excessive purism, and argue from the relative impurity of my prayer that I have no right to pray for the safety of the person who is in danger. It may well be understood that the idea of God implied in that case is nevertheless already much more pure than that implied in the purely selfish request; what we now presuppose is the active recognition, in God and through God, of the bond which constitutes all real love.

Having seen what Marcel had to say about prayer we shall now treat fidelity, hope and love. The first consideration is of charity or intersubjectivity which is required for prayer. Marcel says that it is most important to assert "philosophically, (that is to say, short of any theological specification)

13 Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 107.
15 "This detour, then has shown us quite clearly wherein lies the legitimacy of judging to be inauthentic a prayer which pivots on me, and on me alone. But does it give us any ground for saying that the God to whom the prayer is addressed does not exist?" --Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 100.
16 Ibid., p. 97.
the indissolubility of hope, faith and charity. But we cannot fail to see that
intersubjectivity, which is increasingly more evident is the cornerstone of a
concrete ontology, is after all nothing but charity itself." [Italics mine]

Fidelity, hope, love, communication, and intersubjectivity are all related
and inter-related to one another and so cannot be considered apart from one an-
other. Nor can these be considered apart from the human person who is the sub-
ject of communication, and God, his creator, without whom the most real commu-
ication is impossible. Man is related to his friends and to God, not in a re-
lationship of the self to the third person (him), but in a relationship of self
to thou, which in the case of God is the absolute Thou. The relationship is
necessarily of a personal nature. Man has faith in God and strives to live in
the presence of God in a "unique relationship which cannot be communicated." 18
This faith creates the Christian quality of the personality of the believer. 19
From the standpoint of faith "God is that which thoughts communicate, the real
foundation of the communication between individualities." 20 However this is
spiritual or personal communication and does not apply to purely mechanical
communication. 21

17 Ibid., p. 170.
18 Blackham, p. 79.
19 Ibid.
21 "And if this by its nature is known to seem fundamentally ambiguous, it
is because apart from the spiritual communication of love, there is another
kind of purely mechanical communication." --Ibid.
"Each man's personality is itself intersubjective," and intersubjectivity which is love, cannot be separated from faith. "And so, side by side with faith we posit love. I have said elsewhere that love is the condition of faith, and in a sense this is true. But it is only one aspect. I believe that in reality love and faith cannot be dissociated. When faith ceases to be love it congeals into objective belief in a power that is conceived more or less physically. And love which is not faith (which does not posit the transcendence of the God that is loved) is only a sort of abstract game."

In the act of faith the "individual constitutes himself as a person by affirming the infinite personality of God," he becomes aware that he is related to the creative will of God, and he posits between God and self a relation that completely eludes the categories of his thought. The relation of faith and love between God and man is subjective as is the grace which comes from it.

22 Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 161.

23 "These words can attain their full significance only in the light of intersubjectivity, that is, of love." ---Ibid., p. 156.

24 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 58.

25 Reinhardt, p. 208.

26 "Grace indeed remains the postulate that is transcendent and incapable of being objectivized -- of the act of faith. I would express this in another way saying that by the act of faith I posit between God and myself a relation that completely eludes the categories of my thought." ---Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 59.

27 "When I speak of grace, I am not using the word in any abstract or secularized sense. I am thinking of the grace of the living God." ---Marcel, Men Against Humanity, p. 187.
Faith cannot be separated from love and love, which bears on the infinite, is something that man cannot escape because each man is loved by God, the creator of his unique personality. "Man can never place himself outside God, not even in hell. Neither time nor space, nor even sin, can separate the prodigal son from the Father's love however far he strays."  

Love bears on the infinite, in fact Marcel says that "human love itself is nothing; it lies to itself, if it is not charged with infinite possibilities," and by this he means that if human love is self-centered and does not bear on the infinite "it sinks into a mutually shared narcissism, it turns into idolatry and pronounces its own death sentence." Human love should be related to love of God. "I may add too, from the point of view of intersubjectivity there can be no apparent reason at all for setting an exclusive value on the relation which is built up by man and woman and united in the bond of marriage. A friendship, or a fortiori, a filial relationship, may also be the road which leads beyond the earthly horizon." Love bears on the infinite, that is, participation in divine life can be understood as participation in the infinite. When love is considered in the realm of human love it still bears on the infinite, that is to say, "to love someone is to love him in  

28 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 158.  
30 Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 156-157.  
31 Ibid., p. 157.  
32 Ibid.  
33 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 158.
What the lover offers the beloved is a creature of God. "In any case the believer seems to confer a kind of consecration on God. Metaphysically, and departing a long way from the rigorous language I have been using, it could be said that God expects each believer to confer his (God's) dignity on him." Marcel explains this consecration as follows; "Doubtless I give to God, but what I give already belongs to him. The consecration ... is at the same time a restitution, ... I belong to God, but I ought to give myself to him. Here there is a mystery, but it is involved in the very thing that unites me to God." This notion of giving to God what is his is well brought out by C.S. Lewis in *Beyond Personality*:

Keep nothing back. Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours. Nothing you have that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.

Love, faith and hope are all related to God or to the infinite; they seek something more than the merely human; they seek God. Man expresses "absolute hope or belief which evidently cannot come from himself or his situation." This absolute response from the creature can only come subsequent to the appeal

---

34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., p. 159.
35a Ibid.
37 "Hope is essentially ... the availability of a soul which has centered intimately enough into the experience of communion to accomplish in the teeth of will and knowledge, the transcendent act—the act of establishing the vital regeneration of which this experience affords both the pledge and the first fruits." --Marcel, *Homo Viator*, p. 10.
from the infinite being to which he owes everything he is; through recollection the person is aware of his participation, his communion, which confirms his non independence." **38** This is a dialectic of affirmation, affirmation of God by hope and faith. Man participates in God by hope and faith, he has a tendency towards the beyond. "Reflection on the 'I believe' or 'I hope' locates the full meaning of the affirmation in the proposition, 'Je crois en Toi, qui es mon recours unique.' **39** Man tends towards the infinite, there is a need to transcend the self and communicate with the divine by faith, hope, and love.

Marcel says that we cannot just think grace or God because the act of thinking is associated with the idea of an objective content. "But in the measure in which the I think is capable of transcending itself, and of becoming faith, at least a distinct communication seems possible." **40** We do not think God; He is not just the objective content of thought; He is personal and concrete; "a living God -- not merely the logical God required by some perfectionist moralities." **41** The I think can transcend itself and become faith, faith in God, that is, a participation in the infinite. Besides the participation by

---

**38** Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 304.

**39** Ibid.

**40** Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 57.

**41** "To identify divine perfection with the good is an ambiguous step, because either we are only being tautologous or else we are claiming to base love on a previous (ethical) content and are vitiating profoundly what is essential in the act of love." --Ibid., p. 65.
faith and hope there is participation by love which allows the beloved to transcend all judgement and be conceived as absolute value. 42

Within each man there is the self that participates with God, the self of love and prayer, which is, in a way distinct from the captive self in that it can transcend the captive self and reach out towards the divine. I am not reducible to the captive self; there is also the self that goes beyond the isolation of the activity and extends to the divine. That self is the self of love and prayer which can become an eschatological consciousness. 43 The self of love and prayer can be called the intersubjective self; it is that which is concerned with the destiny of self. There is an intersubjective unity which is formed by "beings who love one another and who live in and by one another. What is really important ... is the destiny of that living link, and not that of an entity which is isolated and closed in on itself. That is what we more or less explicitly mean when we assert our faith in personal immortality." 44

---

42In other words, in so far as the beloved is thought as participating in God he is situated in the order that transcends all judgement and is conceived as absolute value. Or rather (to exclude all psychologistic interpretations) the justification of the act which affirms the transcendency of the creature consists in that which postulates his divine filiation." --Ibid., p. 66.

43"However, something happens here which is of decisive importance: it is that this self of mine which is a prisoner cannot declare in all sincerity that it is I. I have an awareness of not being reducible to this captive self. The self of love and prayer proclaims itself as something distinct, even though between the self of love and prayer and the captive self there is something more than a mere cohabitation. And it is only this self of love and prayer that can become an eschatological consciousness ... That task that does belong to it is that of preparation of this event." --Marcel, Men Against Humanity, p. 170.

44Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 155.
An example of intersubjective love can be seen breaking through even when one is asking directions of a stranger and receiving a cordial answer. "This is nothing more than a spark of spirituality, out as soon as it is in; the stranger and I part almost certainly never to see each other again, yet for a few minutes, as I trudge homewards, this man's unexpected cordiality makes one feel as if he had stepped out of a wintry day into a warm room."  

Intersubjectivity, charity or love is not something objective and one-sided, rather it is subjective and reciprocal. Love is interior, that is, interiority is involved in every act of love. Love is not possible without interiority of individualities. Interiority is requisite for communication of individualities.

It is only from the moment at which individuality has an interior that it can think itself as really distinct from another individuality (and that love becomes possible.) Now such an interior has itself to constitute itself or rather (as individuality is not really a form), individuality is the very act by which the empirical content becomes interior.

What I have elsewhere called real interiority is thus involved in every act of love -- and, inversely real individuality is essentially defined through love (or, strictly speaking, in aesthetic creation which makes possible the communication of individualities). Hence the meaning of my statement that love creates its object can be seen more clearly.

We have seen, to some extent, what faith and love are and how they are ways

---

45 Ibid., I, 179.

46 "Et par là s'établit aussitôt une communication entre moi et celui qui se déclare tout simplement incroyant - communication dans une lumière de vérité qui est aussi une lumière de charité; - cette communication peut même aller jusqu' à une sorte d'intervention, non pas objective certes-..." --Marcel, Du Rufus à l'Invocation, 8th (Paris, 1940), p. 234.

47 "La présence de cet amour réciproque, de cette communion, suffit à transformer profondément la nature du lien que m'unit à moi-même." --Troisfontaines, II, 199.

48 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 62.
in which we communicate with God. Not only faith and love tend towards God, but Marcel is particularly interested in hope as it seeks the divine. Though hope is an inner activity it is not self-centered, it extends to others and primarily to God. Hope is not separable from a sense of communion and a good communal life requires hope in God.

Just as love is interior, hope is also interior; it is intersubjective and extends to others. Marcel explains the interiority or intersubjectivity and gives an example of it in his volume, *Faith and Reality*:

The being who hopes is putting forth a sort of interior activity, even though it may not be easy to define the nature of that activity. Once again intersubjectivity will be found to supply the key to the riddle. It is well to bear in mind the ordeals of those whose country was for a time enslaved and who yet persisted in their hope of liberation. Hope, was not simply a hope for one's self; it meant spreading one's hope, keeping its flame a radiancy of hope burning around one.

Hope is an interior activity; it is an activity of the intersubjective self (the self of love and prayer) that strives towards the infinite and can become an eschatological consciousness. The ability to hope is interior and it is common to all, even to those who find themselves thrust into nihilism. Hope

49 "Si le désespoir est péché (et peut-être le péché même), c'est parce qu'il est, en fin de compte, l'acte d'une âme qui se centre sur 'soi', qui ne croit pas à l'amour et se refuse à l'universelle communion. L'espérance, au contraire, se centre d'une part sur l'affirmation d'une puissance bénéfique (dont on ne sait précisément pas nécessairement la nature, mais à la munificence de laquelle on ne juge pas pouvoir assigner de limites), et d'autre part, sur l'affirmation d'un tout ensemble." --Troisfontaines, II, 198.


51 "We are left with no other resources but to wonder tirelessly about our courage, our pride, and our stubbornness in denying God and the being full of weakness and hope which in spite of everything and forever—we are." --Marcel, *Homo Viator*, p. 212.
cannot be separated from a sense of communion or from God who insures the communion. Marcel puts it in this way:

I said that hope cannot be separated either from a sense of communion or from a more or less conscious and explicit dependence on a power which guarantees this communion itself. "I hope in Thee, for us," such is the formula for hope. But the more this "for us" tends to confine itself to what concerns the self instead of opening onto the infinite, the more hope shrivels and deteriorates, and, in the domain of the family, the more it tends to degenerate into a short-sighted ambition to fix its attention on ways of safeguarding and increasing a certain having which actually need not take a grossly material form. 52

Successful communion cannot be had without God. Hope must tend toward the infinite. Good communal life, even within the family, depends on hope in the divine. 53 The most successful communal life requires communication with the divine, which communication can be the relation between God and the intersubjective self, of hope, faith or love. An example of this would be the Church.

"L'Eglise est la famille de Dieu, constituée par la communication aux hommes de la vie trinitaire dans la grâce, la foi, et la charité; elle est une comme Dieu est un."54 Within the Church there is communication "de l'Esprit du Christ."55

That which is stressed when considering man's communication with God is intersubjectivity because it is the intersubjective self that communicates with

52 Ibid., p. 93.
53 "The pledge of one's self for the future, so essential for constituting reliable human social bonds, rests in the final analysis upon our hope in the eternal and its powerful presence in time." --Collins, p. 214.
54 Marcel, Du Refus a l'Invocation, p. 253.
55 Ibid., p. 255.
God. Intersubjectivity is important, not only in the context, but in the whole of Marcel's philosophy. "But we cannot fail to see that intersubjectivity, which it is increasingly more evident is the cornerstone of a concrete ontology, is after all nothing but charity itself." 56 [italics mine] In Faith and Reality Marcel says that he has stressed intersubjectivity because "I wish to emphasize the presence of an underlying reality that is felt, of a community which is deeply rooted in ontology; without this human relations, in any real sense, would be unintelligible, or, to put it more accurately this would have to be looked upon as extremely mythical." 57

Communication with the absolute other is the most important and highest form of communication, but of more immediate concern to men in general is communication with other men and with self. All communication is with something other than the self as self. There is communication with the absolute other, with other men, and with self. Communication with self is only an aspect of communication with others, because it is only in so far as we consider the self as other that we are able to communicate with it.

Under communication and communion with others I will take up the notions of presence, giving and receiving, participation, the meaning of the we-subject, the meaning of the preposition "with", and openness. All these notions are a part of my relationship with the world and with others which is the matter of Marcel's philosophising. "Philosophy which proceeds by way of proving affirmations or demonstrating logical sequences he disregards in favor of the personal

56 Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 170.
57 Ibid., p. 17.
relationships and in favor of the elucidation of what he calls 'ontological communion,' such as my relationship with the world and with others." 58

Marcel does not intimate that this communication in the form of personal relationships is a clear notion; in fact he says, in referring to communication, that "what we commonly mean by that word is after all only an abstract reckoning up of what in this context should be recognized as living communication. The context of the words 'living communication' is still somewhat indistinct." 59

For Marcel Communication with self, others, and with God is necessary in order to live humanly. He says "to live humanly means to live in such material conditions that the human being is not crushed under the weight of care, and that his consciousness is able to develop an awareness of both self and other - and also of a reality which transcends the opposition between the two." 60

These personal relationships are internal 61 and answer the question, how am I related to those things that exist in the world outside of myself? Marcel as a Christian existentialist, gives a very different answer from the one given by Sartre, "For Sartre the human situation - threatened, hemmed in, and potentially frustrated and annihilated by the pressures and projects of 'the others' - begets la nausée, for Marcel the free acceptance of the same situation becomes

58 Copleston, p. 20.
59 Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 15.
60 Marcel, Decline of Wisdom, p. 34.

61 "Relationships between things are external, relationships between people are internal." --Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 181.
the source of religious humility." For Sartre the human situation is impossible but for Marcel "what a man is called upon to do is to maintain personal communication with others and a relation of prayer with God precisely under the conditions that specify our mode of being." And the conditions that specify our mode of being, are, among others, space, time, other people, and the inevitability of death. It is these conditions to which the atheistic existentialist becomes benignly indifferent and which are necessary for the Christian existentialist in order that he may integrate himself properly in the world of conscious individualities. In order to explain how I am related to the things in the outside world Marcel says that I am incarnate in my body, the world is incarnate in me, and God is incarnate in the world.

Before delving further into the notions of communication and communion, I

62 Reinhardt, p. 209.
63 Collins, p. 144.
64 "Very early in the development of a human being this consciousness of existing, which we surely have no reason to doubt is common also to animals is linked up with the urge to make ourselves recognized by some other person, some witness, helper, rival or adversary who, whatever may be said, is needed to integrate the self, but whose place in the field of consciousness can vary almost indefinitely." —Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 15.
65 "But how am I related to those things which exist in the world outside myself? Marcel conceives of this relationship in an analogy to the way in which I am related to my body. To explain this relationship, Marcel makes use of the terms 'incarnation': as I am incarnate in my body, so the world is incarnate in me, and God is incarnate in the world, manifesting himself by means of signs, symbols and vestiges ... . In other words, to conceive of God 'objectively,' that is, as a separate, objective entity, apart from myself and apart from the world, is an impossibility. Such a concept of God, Marcel claims would amount to a denial of his very essence, for the 'living God (le Dieu vivant) is an 'incarnate' God, who is present per essentiam in myself and in all things." —Reinhardt, p. 209.
will consider generally what is communicated, what communicates, by what means communication takes place, and what hindrances there are to communication. In Reflection and Mystery Marcel tells us that it is minds that communicate and that they communicate with each other and in a way with themselves. This communication is possible because of existence. "The authentic reality of anything is accessible only through existence; existence is the reality of a thing which places us in true communion with it." Existence precedes communication that is, a thing must be before we can have it and communicate it to another.

Love and knowledge can be communicated in fact "common sense does not admit that the person I love can be effectively reached by my love, unless my love be communicated (by signs)." And regarding knowledge he says that "knowledge as a mode of having is essentially communicable." Now communication takes place through signs and symbols and an example of this would be a name. Even God can communicate (or make common) with us through signs.

---

66 "And it is certainly very necessary that I should be able to consider my body in this detached way; the necessity has a connection with what I said ... about truth, about the intelligible background, against which minds are able to communicate with each other and ... with themselves. [italics mine]" --Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 103-104.


68 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 222.

69 Ibid., p. 145.

70 "I can only communicate with someone else through signs or symbols." --Ibid., p. 189.

71 "But this hypothesis is self-contradictory because a name is a means of communication." --Ibid., p. 308.

72 Ibid.
symbols and vestiges." This sort of communication that is accomplished by means of signs is dialectical communication between people. "All information implies signs;" whatever "is communicated by signs strictly emanates from a source" and that source is the self, that is, "I can function as a source of information in that I am a someone, a him, who has a history, a certain aggregate of experiences at his disposal each of which can be liberated from its context" by dialectical communication. This sort of communication is not really different from the way in which we communicate with ourselves.

Besides dialectical communication Marcel holds that it is possible "to conceive of a mode of communication which is not made by means of questions and answers and hence is not accomplished by means of signs. As a communication of this kind has no reference to any cypher or any code, it must necessarily have the appearance of being fortuitous. I would be tempted to give this kind of communication the name of revelation." For Marcel there are two kinds of communication, dialectical communication and revelation. Dialectical communication is that communication wherein information is relayed by questions and answers, using signs and symbols as its means while revelation is communication

73 Reinhardt, p. 209.
74 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 175.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. 176.
77 "I note here that the means by which we communicate with ourselves are not really different from the means by which we communicate with others." -- Ibid.
78 Ibid., p. 138.
that is not dialectical and which does not use signs and symbols as its means.

There are certain hindrances to personal communication such as pride, self-centeredness, a certain drawing away from God, language, and, in a certain sense, "having". "There is a constant tension between being and having: the actual human condition often invites the subordination of having to being. Having can serve as a high wall against other people and as a personal barrier to communication." Pride is a barrier to personal communication in that the proud man draws his strength from himself thereby cutting himself off from a kind of communication with other men. Self-centeredness hinders communication because self-centered people, even while communicating, are interested in themselves and the agreement of their views with others rather than in the truth that is being communicated. In drawing away from God man hinders communication because he sets himself apart from the universal communion and

79 Collins, p. 141.

80 "As for pride, it consists in drawing one's strength solely from oneself. The proud man is cut off from a certain form of communion with his fellow men, which pride, acting as a principle of destruction, tends to break down. Indeed, this destructiveness can be equally well directed against the self." --Marcel, The Philosophy of Existence, p. 60.

81 "The very soul of such discussions is the joy of communicating, not necessarily the joy of finding that one's own views agree with another's; and this distinction between communication and agreement has great importance. It is just as if two climbers were tackling the same hill, up different approaches; allowing that the climbers can communicate directly with each other at any moment through portable radio or television sets. ... Truth is at once what the two conversationalists, or the two climbers, are aware of striving towards." --Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 74.
becomes in a limited sense, antisocial.\textsuperscript{82}

Language can also be a danger to communication in the sense that an illumination which is to be communicated must become language and when it is put into a sentence it runs the risk of being repeated mechanically and losing the original meaning. \textsuperscript{83} "Let us observe, moreover, that this danger is not only one which attends a communication from myself to another person, but that it also attends a communication, if I may be allowed to put it in this way, a communication from me to myself."\textsuperscript{84} The danger of communication which is afforded by language can be stated simply as follows: When I discover a certain intelligible relation and want to communicate it to someone else or to myself, I must express it in language but in doing so I may find that after I have expressed it I no longer recognize it as the original illumination. It has lost its

\textsuperscript{82} "But from my own point of view, it will be understood that the question is not really one of proclaiming the immoral or anti-social character of any action or conduct. I have rather to discuss the symptoms in such action or conduct of a disaffection of beings from Being which, to tell the truth, does not imply the denial of an explicitly formulated promise, but the drawing back by which a spiritual organism dwindles, shrivels, cuts itself off from the universal communion in which it found the nourishing principles of life and growth." --Marcel, \textit{Homo Viator}, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{83} "To form a habit is really to take, or seize, or grasp something, for it is an acquisition; but to discover an intelligible relation whose eternal validity one suddenly recognizes, that is not in any sense to grasp something; it is to be illuminated, or rather to have a sudden access to some reality's revelation of itself to us. What we should notice here, however, is the impossibility of making a radical distinction between acquisition and illumination; for if illumination is to be communicated it must inevitably become language, and from the moment it has passed into a sentence it runs, in some degree, the risk of blinding itself and in sharing in the sad destiny of the sentence itself, which in the end will be repeated mechanically without the person who repeats it any longer recognizing its meaning." --Marcel, \textit{Mystery of Being}, I, 53.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
meaning through the language I have used to express it.

Undoubtedly there are other barriers to personal communication in addition to any implied in those mentioned but these: pride, self-centeredness, drawing away from God, language and having, are the ones that Marcel has explicitly stated in his major works.

Within personal communication it is necessary to consider the following notions: presence, giving and receiving, openness, participation, the meaning of the preposition "with", and the we-subject. Presence is, in a sense, a "genuine communication of myself." 85 Presence is a communication of self to another person, a giving of self to another. And from the other side of the relationship I can say that a being is not really a being for me unless it is a presence to me, that is, unless it is a presence. R. Ostermann expresses it in this way: "The authentic reality of anything is accessible only through existence; existence is the reality of a thing which places us in true communion with it. In this way being has a hold on us. This 'hold' is presence." 86

What is present to us is not a mere object, presence goes beyond any subject-object relationships. 87 Ostermann sees that existence and presence are two aspects of the same reality and that between them there is not a real distinction but a distinction of reason. "Existence does for the thing itself what presence does for us in our encounter with it; without existence there is an

---

85 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 75.
86 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 113.
87 Ibid.
object, the reality gone from it, and without presence there is 'communication without communion.'" 88

Presence is seen in the communication wherein one person gives a present to another. Apart from the neutral object, the material thing that is called the present, the giver gives of himself and is in communion with the one who receives the gift. 89 It is not just that an object is transmitted from one person to another, but the giving of a "genuine communication of myself" and even the present "takes on a new quality, a being-for-another, not for everybody in general but for this particular person." 90 The particular person "receives from me a genuine communication of myself, an expression of the manner in which he is present to me. Such a communication is existential in the sense that it is quite different from the mere transmission of a thing which is meant to reach its destination unaltered." 91

When I am in communication with another person, a thou, I do not gain objective knowledge of him but I know his "personal existence, his presence in what he gives himself to, and his presence with me." 92 When I communicate with another person "it is his presence or absence, his power to give or withhold himself, that I experience, and this is his personal being which cannot be

88 Ibid.
89 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 75.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Blackham, p. 79.
known objectively. In so far as I am open to him, present with him (that is, treat him as a thou), I help him to be free, to give himself and to be present." 93 If the communion is communion of love then the more love approaches charity the more it is filled with "an unconditional quality which is the very sign of presence." 94

Presence and the absence of presence are experienced in many situations, for instance, if we are in pain or in need to confide in someone, there are some people "who reveal themselves as 'present' -- that is to say, at our disposal" 95 while there are other people who do not convey the feeling even though they be of good will. One who makes himself present to me makes room for me in himself. 96 "Presence is something which reveals itself immediately and unmistakably in a look, a smile, an intonation, or a handshake." 97 The person who is present to me or at my disposal "is capable of being with me with the whole of himself when I am in need; while the one who is not at my disposal seems merely to offer me a temporary loan raised on his resources." 98 I am a presence

93 Ibid., p. 80.
94 "The more egotistical love is, the more the alluringly prophetic declarations it inspires it should be regarded with caution as likely to be literally contradicted by experience; on the other hand, the nearer it approaches to true charity, the more the meaning of its declaration is inflicted and tends to become full of unconditioned quality which is the very sign of presence." -- Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 66.
95 Marcel, Philosophy of Experience, p. 25.
96 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
for the person who puts himself at my disposal while I am an object for the one who is not present to me but who, out of good will, lends himself to me. There is reciprocity in the first relationship that is absent in the second. 99

We can conceive of another situation wherein we are sitting in the same room with someone who is not present to us and though we are close enough to him to see, hear, or even touch him he seems farther away than some loved one who is many miles away or even dead. 100

We could say that the man sitting beside us was in the same room as ourselves, but that he was not really present there, that his presence did not make itself felt. But what do I mean by presence here? It is not that we could not communicate with this man; we are supposing him neither deaf, blind, or idiotic. Between ourselves and him a kind of physical, but merely physical communication is possible; the image of the passing of messages between a reception point and an emission point ... is in fact quite applicable here. Yet something essential is missing. One might say that what we have with this person, who is in the room, but somehow not really present to us, is communication, in a word. He understands what I say to him but he does not understand me. 101

With the man who is not really present to me I am not able to be myself; I am not at ease with him; he somehow comes between me and myself. On the other hand when I am with someone who makes his presence felt I am better able to be myself. "When somebody's presence does really make itself felt, it can refresh my inner being; it reveals me to myself, it makes me more fully myself than I

---

99 "For the one I am a presence; for the other I am an object. Presence involves a reciprocity which is excluded from any relation of subject to object or of subject to subject-object." --Ibid.

100 Marcel, Mystery of Being, p. 205.

101 Ibid.
should be if I were not exposed to its impact."102

Very closely allied to the notion of presence are those of giving and receiving, openness, and the we-subject. The fact that these notions are closely tied together can be seen in an example Gabriel Marcel gives in *The Philosophy of Existence*. An attentive conscientious listener who is not present does not give of himself. "There is a way of listening which is a way of giving, and another way of listening which is a way of refusing, of refusing oneself."105

Giving and receiving involve more than the giving or receiving of a material object, they involve the giving of self even if it only be that whatever I give must be mine before I can give it. And a gift is more than a material thing that is received. "The gift is a call to which we have to make a response."104 Giving and receiving are looked upon very differently by Sartre than by Marcel. Sartre neither understands the significance of receiving nor the nature of the gift. For Sartre giving is a form of appropriation and destruction. "'To give is to appropriate by means of destroying and to use this act of destruction as a means of enslaving others.' Gift is a means of enslaving others through the destruction of a certain object; not that this

102Ibid.
104"It must however be added that a gift, whatever it may be, is never purely and simply received by a subject who has nothing to do but make a place for it in himself. The truth is much rather that the gift is a call to which we have to make a response; it is as though a harvest of possibilities had to be gathered from us, among which we have to choose, or more exactly it is as though we had to actualize those which accorded best with the urging interiorly felt which is, in reality, only mediation between us and ourselves."--Marcel, *Homo Viator*, pp. 62-63.
object is broken, but that it is destroyed in so far as it ceases to be mine." For Marcel to give is to give more than the object, it is also to give of self. "To give oneself is to denote or consecrate oneself with another, and no doubt simply to consecrate oneself." Receptivity and giving are ways of communicating oneself to another, but this is only one of the ways in which receptivity can be understood.

Receptivity covers a wide scale of gradations; at one end of it is suffering, in the sense in which wax suffers the imprint of a seal; at the other end is giving -- and even self-giving -- as when we speak of a hospitable host "receiving" his friends. This kind of "reception" is entirely different from that of a vessel which is filled with an alien substance; it is a participation in a reality, in a plentitude, and a communication of oneself.

Receptivity can be communication and exchange; it involves more than one person because when a gift is given it is given to someone. If receptivity is to be a genuine communication there must be some response on the part of the one who receives, and this response is the sign of openness on the part of the receiver. He makes himself open to receive the gift.

Openness is necessary for communication and especially for that communication wherein subjectivity is involved since intersubjectivity presupposes reciprocal openness. Man must open himself to be infinite. "And by opening

105 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 60.
106 Ibid., p. 75.
107 Marcel, Du Réfus à l'Invocation, p. 123.
108 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 299.
109 Marcel, Men Against Humanity, p. 200.
himself to God, ... [he becomes] aware of the only basis upon which men can communicate with each other as personal subjects rather than as indifferent objects and instruments of policy." In so far as I am open to another person and present to him I help him to be present. He can only be present to me in so far as I am open to him and make room for him in myself.

Marcel, as other existentialists, is interested in the individual, but not the individual as he is off by himself; he is interested in the individual as open to other people and to God. Marcel says that when Sartre calls giving a means of enslaving he is revealing an inability to grasp "what is meant by we, or of what govern this reality, that is precisely our capacity to open ourselves to others." In a sense we means that two people are together in that they are open or present to each other. "Presence is incarnated in the 'us' for whom 'I hope in Thee,' that is to say in communion of which I proclaim the indestructibility." We (or us) signifies a community between people, and when Sartre denies the possibility of any successful communion he denies the meaning of we.

---

110 Collins, p. 142.
111 Blackham, p. 80.
112 Copleston, p. 12.
113 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 74.
114 Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 66.

115 "It is clear that the whole of this dialectic, with its undeniable power and agility, rests upon the complete denial of we as subjects, that is to say upon the denial of communication. For Sartre this word has no meaning at any possible level, not to speak of its religious or mystical sense."—Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, pp. 54-55.
We signifies community, even the sort of community that exists between me and myself. "Avowedly, it is conceivable that there is some difficulty in admitting that I form with myself a real community, an us; it is, however, only on this condition that I have an active share as a center of intelligence, of love, and of creation." 116 There are certain relations of being to being that can only be expressed by the word we. It is the experience of community that beings about "the transition from the him to the us." 117 In the experience of community the "hidden me emerges," 118 and joined with the other person becomes us. This can be brought about by certain emotions of the sharing of a common experience. Marcel gives the example of a man who is about to judge a friend for some bad action when he remembers that he had done something similar, and so finds himself not in a position to judge but forming a community between himself and his friend.

At this point a twofold and important realization is forced upon me; on the one hand, I am able to communicate at a broader level with myself, since I have, as it were, introduced the self that committed the dubious act to the self that did not hesitate to set itself up as a harsh judge of such acts in others; and on the other hand ... I am now able to enter into far more intimate communication with my friend, since between us there no longer stands that barrier which separates the judge on the bench from the accused in the dock. 120

The consideration of communication involves two more notions, those of

116 Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 61.
118 Ibid., p. 173.
119 Ibid.
120 Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 80.
participation and that which is signified by the preposition "with." "Participation is that common living correspondence which all things have in virtue of their being carried beyond the borders of objectivity by their existentiality; in objectivity there is always disruption and discontinuity; in existence is merging together, a connivance of things whereby they are linked communally. Participation is a rapport dyadique." Both the word "with" and participation signify community and both are dyadic relations.

In participation there is communication and for Sartre participation is impossible because he denies the possibility of any communication except the mechanical sort of communication that is had when a regiment is marching in step. "The sense of community -- the sense of forming part of a we-subject is only experienced on such occasions as when a regiment is marching in step or a gang of workmen is pulling together, circumstances where the rhythm is in fact produced by myself and happens to coincide with that of the concrete community of which I am a member." Participation, for Marcel, denotes the actuality of human relations as they are revealed in the reality of self, thou, other, and God. I am incarnate in my body. There is participation between myself and my body as there is between myself and the world, others, and God. I participate in the divine life (the infinite) and in the life of

121 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 115.
122 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 55.
123 Ibid., p. 53.
124 Reinhardt, p. 219.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
any being whom I love. The more I love someone, the more I participate in his life. I participate in another person's life in so far as I open myself to receive his existence; in so far as I am present to him. In this relation, the actuality of which is denoted by participation, there is no objectivity just as there is no objectivity in that which is meant by the word "with." "With indicates some kind of community or communication. The word "with" only has meaning where unity is felt." In prayer I am united with God and the person for whom I am praying. Marcel says that prayer is a "very humble and fervent way of uniting oneself with ... ." And it is only God, as mediator, who allows me to be "with" the person for whom I am praying. We are said to be "with" another person or "with" God when we think of him because in thinking of the person we restore "a community, an intimacy, a with (to put it crudely)." When I participate in the lives of others I am linked with them. If a person is present to me he is "capable

127 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 158.
128 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 115.
130 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, II, 103.
131 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 171.
132 Marcel, Being and Having, pp. 31-32.
133 Reinhardt, p. 219.
of being with me with the whole of himself." But the reality that is represented by the word with can also be understood on a lower level such as being with other passengers on a train or enduring an ordeal in common with other people.

Before closing the second chapter I would like to establish the fact that besides communication with others as we have seen it there is also communication with self which is really only an aspect of communication with others, in that it is when we consider the self as other that we can communicate with it. The means, dangers and conditions for communication with self are the same as those for communication with others since we communicate with self as other.

I am able to form with myself a real community, an us. I can communicate with myself, that is, just as my mind can communicate with other minds it can communicate with itself. In his Metaphysical Journal Marcel says "that the means by which we communicate with ourselves are not really different from the means by which we communicate with others." Regarding the danger to

134 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 25.
135 Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 180.
136 Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 61.
137 "And it is certainly very necessary that I should be able to consider my body in this detached way; the necessity has a connection with what I said... about truth, about the intelligible setting or background against which minds are able to communicate with each other and ... with themselves." --Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 103-104.
communication that is afforded by language Marcel says: "Let us observe, moreover that this danger is not only one which attends a communication from myself to another person, but that it also attends, if I may be allowed to put it in this way, a communication from me to myself." And regarding the communication between consciousnesses, he says "that the conditions in which a consciousness can communicate with other consciousnesses are the same as the conditions that permit it to communicate with itself."  

---

139 Marcel, *Mystery of Being*, I, 53.

CHAPTER III

SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY

In this chapter I will consider subjectivity and objectivity as they are related to communication in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel. This is especially important because for Marcel real communication such as the communication of love is between subjects \(^1\) rather than between objects. The subjects concerned in personal communication are the I and the thou \(^1\) rather than two impersonal objects. "My relations with what I have are those between a who and a what; my relations with the personal being of another are between an I and a thou." \(^2\) The person whom I love is a thou \(^3\) and "my relation to God, like my relation to my friend, is not in the third person; God is not he but thou, the absolute Thou." \(^4\)

The I - thou relationship is necessary for successful personal communication and community life. "A human community rests upon the moral resolve to

---

\(^1\) Mounier, p. 87.

\(^1\) The translators of Marcel's works have translated toi as thou. Thou, in this text is intended to be intimate or familiar. This use of thou is archaic but it seems that the translators have used it for lack of an English equivalent for Toi.

\(^2\) Collins, p. 139.

\(^3\) Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 146.

\(^4\) Blackham, p. 79.
treat another man as a person rather than as a thing, as a thou rather than as an it."\(^5\) Another person becomes a thou for me when I exist for him, in fact, if I think myself as existing for him he becomes a thou for me.\(^6\) It must be remembered that a person whom I love or a friend is not only a thou, he is a thou for me in so far as I love him but before I love him, or apart from the consideration of my love for him, he is an object, a him and it is my love or friendship, my existence for him that makes him a thou for me.

We must fully realize that this being whom I love is not only a thou; in the first place he is an object which comes within my view, and towards whom I can effect all the preparations whose possibility is included in my condition of physical agent. He is a that, and it is precisely to that extent that he is a thing; in so far, on the other hand, as he is a thou, he is freed from the nature of things, and nothing I can say about things can concern him, can concern the thou.\(^7\)

The being I love can be considered merely as an object, as a mere thing, and in such a case my communication with the other is just a mechanical or physical type of communication because it does not involve the giving of self or the existing for another.

"Every kind of awareness is essentially awareness of something other than itself."\(^8\) In this way a person whom I may love can be other. I may first be

---

\(^5\) Collins, p. 213.

\(^6\) "But it seems to me very clear that when I think myself as existing for the other the other becomes a thou for me." --Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 161.

\(^7\) Marcel, Mystery of Being, II, 154.

\(^8\) "Every kind of awareness is essentially awareness of something other than itself; so human living, driven in this way to dedicate itself seems also essentially the living of something other than itself." --Ibid., I, 171.
aware of an other person and then come to love him, thus converting the him or
it into the thou for me. I can regard him objectively as a him and come to
love him so that we become us and then there is communication between subjects
rather than objects. Communication between two objects is different from that
between subjects, it is impersonal and there remains a separation between the
two persons who do not think of themselves as us though they may come to do so
in time.

I glimpse a sort of slow transition from pure dialectics to love, in
the measure in which the thou becomes thou more profoundly. For it
begins so to speak, by being essentially a him with the form of a thou.
I meet a stranger in the train. We speak of the heat, of the war news,
etc., but even when I address him he does not cease to be "somebody,"
"that person," in my eyes. He is "somebody" whose biography I get to
know little by little. And in as much as he, for me, is "somebody,"
I appear to myself as "somebody else."9

The stranger, to whom I am speaking, and I may "cease more and more to be 'some-
body' and 'somebody else.' We become simply, 'us.'"10 The man with whom I have
personal communication is not a him but a thou. It has been said that Marcel
divides this "broken world" into two levels the lui (him) and the toi (thou) and

when I speak of someone in the third person I refer him to the order of the lui.

9 "This helps us to a better understanding of the English term 'self-con-
sciousness.'" --Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 146.

10 Ibid.

11 "Again it is a 'broken world' that faces us, only now it is divided into
two levels called by Marcel the lui and the toi. When I speak of someone in the
third person I am referring to the order of the lui; I regard him as though he
were not there; his presence or absence is irrelevant to the discussion I may
be pursuing, whether that be with someone else or myself." --Ostermann, Mod.
Sch., XXXI, 298.
It is the order of the toi that is important with regard to personal relationships.

One's social conduct is thus regulated by a cognitive appreciation of the reality of other personal existents. Yet recognition of the thou-character of another means more than classification of him in a privileged group of objects. It stems from an awareness of that in the other entity which is not objective and which does not coincide with mere thinghood. ... So the personal nature of another is irreducible to an objective component in my field of intentional projects. Far from frustrating the social design, this realistic self-restraint before the inalienable personality of another is the condition for community life. When this recognition animates practical behavior it serves to differentiate the attitude of the friend and lover from that of the technician and conqueror. 12

One must recognize the "thou-character" of another. The loved one is thou for me and he is a third person only in the least possible degree. "Moreover, that being discovers me to myself, since the efficacy of his or her presence is such that I am less and less him for myself." 13 The more I am aware of another person as an object the more I am aware of myself as an object and, on the other hand, the more I exist for him and consider him a subject the more I am a subject. Using Marcel's terminology this might be worded as follows: the more I am aware of another person as "somebody" the more I am aware of myself as "somebody else." 14

In relation to the thou-character of another I might mention that the knowledge I have of a person whom I speak to as thou differs greatly from common

---

12 Collins, p. 213.

13 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 147.

14 "My interior differences fall at the same time as the barriers that separate me from somebody else. The being I love comes more and more into the circles in relation to which and outside which there are third parties, third parties who are "the others."" —Ibid.
impersonal knowledge. The knowledge I acquire of a person who is for me only a
him is precise objective knowledge of his common human nature in which he is
like all other people, but the knowledge I acquire in my communion with him as
thou is knowledge of his personal existence and presence. When I know a man
as an object I can have ideals and ideas concerning him but if I know him as a
thou I do not know him objectively because "his personal being cannot be known
objectively." I know him as a thou, I am open to him as a thou, I am open to
him and "insofar as I am truly open to him, it is he that is present to me, not
my idea of him. And insofar as I have my idea or my ideal of him I am not truly
open to him and do not experience him as present." Another person who is a
thou can be a medium through which certain information based on objective fact
that exists independently of communication can be dialectically communicated.
Communication which is between subjects supposes objectivity. For instance

15"This privileged knowledge which I have of a person whom I speak to as
thou, how does it differ from common impersonal knowledge? ... In treating an­
other as an object open to public enquiry I can build up a precise and objective
knowledge of him in which he is one like myself and all others. In my com­
munion with him as a thou I do not add to this kind of knowledge of him, what I
know is not his common human nature but his personal existence, his presence in
what he gives himself to and his presence with me. It is this exercise of his
liberty which makes him not merely another but himself, a personal existence
and not merely a human being. It is his presence or absence, his power to give
or to withhold himself, that I experience, and this is his personal being which
cannot be known objectively." --Blackham, pp. 79-80.

16 Ibid., p. 80

17 Ibid.

18 "Objectivity is bound up with the existence of a system of questions and
answers, but conversely such a system supposes objectivity. And when I say ob­
jectivity I mean the continual strengthening of objectivity." --Marcel,
Metaphysical Journal, p. 140.
I may ask another person for directions to a certain city. "Such a question is given as answered in advance in objective fact (what I call him or it), but as only capable of receiving this answer by way of dialectics, through the medium of a thou; that is to say, by coming into communication with a wider and complementary experience." 19

There are certain things that cannot be known objectively. God, 20 presence, 21 the personal nature of another, 22 and the thou 23 cannot be known objectively; they go beyond any subject-object relationship. Marcel claims that to conceive of God objectively is to deny God's essence. "In other words, to conceive of God 'objectively' that is, as a separate objective entity, apart from myself and apart from the world, is an impossibility. Such a concept of God, Marcel claims would amount to the denial of His very essence, for the 'living God' (le dieu vivant) is an 'incarnate' God, who is present per essentiam in myself and in all things." 24 God is not an object for me, I know God as a

19 Ibid.
20 Reinhardt, p. 209.
21 "Presence involves a reciprocity which is excluded from any relation of subject to object-object. A concrete analysis of unavoidability (indisponsibilité) is no less necessary for our purpose than that of betrayal, denial or despair." --Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 26.
22 "It seems to me that in no given case can we be objectively certain that we are in the presence of a definite and determined personality; such certainty must always be subjective and incommunicable." --Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 254.
23 Blackham, p. 79.
24 Reinhardt, p. 209.
and my relation to him is a personal one; it is unique and incommunicable. Although the relationship itself cannot be communicated to other people it allows of communication and communion between the absolute Thou and me.

Presence and personality cannot be known objectively. "Marcel multiplies descriptions, calling presence an 'influx' to be welcomed or resisted and insisting that it surpasses any subject-object relationship, which would return us to the realm of objectivity." God, presence, personality and the thou belong to the realm of subjectivity and being rather than to the realm of objectivity. "The personal nature of another is irreducible to an objective component in my field of intentionable projects." We cannot know another man's personality the way we know an impersonal objective fact. Certain objective facts can be taught, such as the operation of a typewriter but one cannot be instructed "in the art of making his presence felt."

One cannot consider as an object or gain objective knowledge about any individual person, as person, or relations between persons. A person can be a

25 Blackham, p. 79.
26 Ibid.
27 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 113.
28 Collins, p. 213.
29 "The fact is that the notion of the object, as such, is linked in our minds with a whole set of possible practical operations ('this object is a typewriter, and this, and this, and this, etc., are what you do with it ... ') that can be taught and thus regarded as generally communicable. But these considerations do not apply, in any sense at all, to the notion of presence as such. It would be quite chimerical to hope to instruct someone in the art of making his presence felt." --Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 205-206.
thou who can make his presence felt. God is a thou and not the objective content of an idea I may have of him. I think it would be true to say, while keeping in mind Marcel's metaphysical division of reality into the two orders; that of the him and that of the thou, that whatever is of the order of the thou, precisely as it is in the order of the thou, is beyond objectivity. It is within the order of the thou that personal communication and communion are possible.

Not only is the thou itself beyond objectivity (the order of the him), but also anything that is within the order of the thou. Emotions and human situations are within the order of the thou because they involve human persons and so cannot be completely objectivized. In so far as a thing belongs to the order of the thou it is not an object and in so far as it belongs to the order of the him it is an object. For instance, I am an object for me in so far as my body is part of me and my body can be considered as an object. 30

The more I think of an object and am in communication (not real, personal communication) with it as object the more I become an object. Marcel states this as follows: "And once again I resume with what I have already said about the object. The more I think of it as object the less I need to appear to myself as consubstantial with it. As object it appears to me to be in communication with me. But in that measure I too become an object, or more exactly another receiving and transmitting station." 31 This sort of 'communication'

30 "It is also obvious ... that my body can be an object for me; my situation as an incarnate being implies an ability on my part to consider my body just as if it were any other body whatsoever." --Ibid., p. 105.

31 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 198.
between objects is not really communication since communication is between subjects, it is rather the transmission of messages. For Marcel: it is personal communication that belongs to the order of the thou or the realm of being, and not any sort of mechanical or physical communication. "The communion in which presences become manifest to each other, and the transmission of purely objective messages, do not belong to the same realm of being; or rather ... all transmission of objective messages takes place, if we may so put it, before we have yet reached the threshold of being."32 Emotions and situations are not objects in that, since they involve people, they are of the order of the thou. Regarding emotions, Marcel says, "it is part of the nature and I would almost like to add part of the duty of a feeling that it should to some extent ignore itself. This unknown element in a being which is revealed in emotion and makes his [man's] value can in no way be treated as 'he' or 'it.'"33 When another person communicates with me, using signs and symbols, and arouses a particular emotion what really matters is not the content of the mere words but the "transition from the him to the us, that is, the experience of community... I do not think that this transition can be explained in mechanical terms."34

Situation, as does emotion, belongs to the order of the thou because it concerns persons. In the same way that I can be an object for myself and a

32 Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 207.
33 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 172-175.
34 "Emotion makes me come into the scene, it forces the hidden me to 'emerge - the I which, as long as we were only concerned with classifying or with the revision of a classification, stayed 'behind the curtain.'" -- Ibid., p. 173.
subject or thou, so the unity of situation can, in a sense, be an objective or given datum and also belong to the order of the thou.

I, for myself am a situation that surpasses me and excites my activity. ... And the unconscious is no more the symbol of the transcendence of the situated. It may be objected that, in spite of everything, the situation becomes an object for reflected consciousness: but on deeper reflection it becomes plain that the situation is not capable of being objectivized entirely. Were it entirely objective for me, it would cease to be mine; it is only mine by what, as regards me, is still ... attached.

Man's personality and things that are related to it belong to the order of the thou and as such cannot be known objectively. Impersonal things belong to the order of the him or it and there is a way in which members of the order of the thou can also belong to the order of the him. The same thing may belong to both orders but from different points of view. As I said before I am thou but can also be considered a him in so far as my body, which is a part of me, can be an object in that I consider it as other than me. I can consider anything as other than myself except that which makes me a unique person. I can, in a way, classify within the order of the him anything except the uniqueness of personality which God has created.

The very essence of each personality is unique and therefore incommunicable and so cannot be known objectively. We can know that a personality exists, but we cannot know exactly what it is; I cannot put into words the essence of my own personality; it is something of which I have only subjective knowledge and which is known, in its essence, only by God who created it. In Man the Lonely Van Straelen expresses this as follows:

35 Ibid., p. 137.
Man can indeed detach himself from the external world, from his fellows, and even in a measure from himself. So multiple is his psychical construction, so manifold its activities, that man can step aside to examine and analyze his several parts of consciousness — his intellectual processes, his affective states, his purposeful intentions — but never the shrine of the innermost where his spirit swells in God. This can never be made an object of conceptual thought or of scientific analysis. Man can never place himself outside God, not even in hell. Neither time, nor space, nor even sin, can separate the prodigal son from the Father’s love however far he strays.36

The order of the lui (him) multiplies and the order of the toi (thou) unifies.37 The order of the toi unifies or brings into community. It is in the experience of us that community is felt. The toi is personal while the lui is impersonal. The lui multiplies; it separates things so that they can be known as individual, even numerical, units. I can have a concept of lui but not of toi. I can have personal experience of toi but I cannot have an idea of toi.

"In short, 'le répertoire, c'est le lui' a completely depersonalized object."38 In life we are concerned with living communication, that is, we are concerned with personal communication with toi rather than mechanical communication with lui. We are interested in the responses made by other people. "When 'ce qui est regardé par moi [est] susceptible de me répondre.' Where no response is possible, there can only be lui."39

Questions of scientific investigation do not call for genuine response.40

36 Van Straelen, p. 17.
37 Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI. 299.
38 Ibid., p. 298.
39 Ibid., p. 299.
40 Ibid.
but for objective answers that are verified in objective fact. Response is a sign of openness in another and openness is beyond objectivity. "It is this idea of response, implying as it does a community ('us-ness'), that enables me even to conceive of transcending the category of the lui." When Ostermann says that response implies community he means it in the sense that one could not respond to me if we were not already together in some way. You cannot respond to someone if you are not somehow with him. You are free to respond or not to respond, that is, I can either give or refuse to give myself to another. I am free to join in a community with me but if I am to live humanly I must have personal relationships with other human beings. "I must become toi for the other and he toi for me." In order to attain the best possible human intercourse, wherein man respects and acknowledges the existence of other men "the passage from the lui to the toi and thence to the nous must be made." Marcel finds the answer to this problem in the personal communion of love.

In human affairs the spiritual commerce in which men engage is most important, and there /italics mine/ is the question of love, nothing else. The toi is the nonobjective. By definition I cannot treat him

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., pp. 299-300.
43 "There could be no response, no exchange or appeal or invocation, if we were not already together in some profound way, difficult to comprehend. We have, discussing participation, come to this idea before, but it is here a question of ratifying this community, as it were, activating its undisclosed potentials; the nous secreted in all our human relationships has to be made explicit. When we fail to accomplish this, when we reject an appeal (soit avec moi), we are at once strangers to ourselves." --Ibid., p. 300.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
as not being there, I cannot abstract from him. The toi is non
circumscribed, is greater than a bundle of determining elements.
Now this is just the reality that love engages; love bears upon
the being, not the idea of the being. The being I love has not,
at least at first, qualities I total and upon whose sum I decide
whether or not to love. Love grasps a whole. The more I love, the
less do such qualifying activities (the very character of the ob-
jective, of the lui) seem adequate to my experience. "Je ne l’aime
pas à cause de ce qu’il est, j’aime ce qu’il est, parce que c’est
lui." We need only recall that when we speak with someone for whom
we have no particular regard, he is automatically a lui, a collection
of answers to pragmatic questions. In a striking phrase Marcel says
that this person is himself a questionnaire rempli. Love brings
with it -- rather is the means to -- a participation in the life of
the loved one, so that the two aspects dissociated by analysis (le
répertoire et le vivant) are joined by an act of love; and the ab-
surdity of such an abstraction is made known. "L’amour, c’est-a-
dire, crée son object."46

The communion of love answers the problem of how to live humanly; it ans-
wers the problem of the existential loneliness of man which is caused by the
incommunicability of his unique personality, by mechanization and by the ab-
stract thinking of Idealism. It is love that converts the object into sub-
ject.47 Love, and especially love of God, the absolute Thou, is the answer to
the loneliness of man. In Homo Viator Marcel says "love reckons not of our sub-
divisions either, it sweeps us trembling into the infinite consciousness of the
All. Lovers do not really draw the elements of their life from the separated
world of here-below: 'God is truly present to them' and 'death has no hold on
them; for they are full of death in that they are full of life.'"48

46 Ibid.
47 "Inasmuch as he loves (that is, inasmuch as he converts the object into
subject) he must absolutely forego judgement." --Marcel, Metaphysical Journal,
p. 64.
48 Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 240.
Love belongs to the realm of subjectivity, to the realm of being. It is "a new birth into subjectivity for me and my loved one."\(^49\) For Marcel love negates essence in the sense that "it implies faith in the perpetual renewal of being itself, the belief that nothing ever is, that nothing ever can be irremediably lost."\(^50\)

\(^{49}\) Ostermann, Mod. Sch., XXXI, 300.

\(^{50}\) Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 64.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It is a fact that man is lonely and that loneliness can be alleviated by personal communication. The loneliness of man is the problem and personal communication is the solution. In the eyes of Marcel the abstract thinking of idealism and the arithmetic approach towards man of collectivization are two factors that are responsible for the ontological dissolution of the human person and the loneliness of man. Marcel notes that one of the evils of this age of mechanization is that individuals are linked together as though they were parts of a machine. There is collectivization instead of communication and this produces a collection of objects rather than a community of human beings. Men are treated as objects collected together to perform a certain task as a part of a larger and vastly more important machine while they should be treated as people in a community capable of personal communication.

Man has lost the dignity which belongs to him as a human person, a creature formed in the image of his Creator. Reality is centered in man, it reflects his errors and so the errors that are seen in reality cannot be corrected unless man is restored to his rightful position. Collectivization, mechanization and technocracy treat man as an individual object set apart and cut off from other objects and because of this man is lonely. The abstract thinking of idealism and collectivization have threatened to submerge the irreplaceable human personality and so existential thinkers of Modern Europe have answered
the threat by reasserting man. The individual has been forced to a "resolute and radical self affirmation." ¹

The existentialist philosophies are individualistic though in different ways. Both Marcel and Sartre are interested in the individual person and his experiences, but Marcel's outlook is quite different from that of Sartre. In the Christian existentialism of Gabriel Marcel the individual can be "open" to other individuals and is able to communicate with them and with God, whereas in the atheistic existentialism of Sartre the individual is a closed off unit completely alone and incapable of any sort of successful communication. As Sartre sees it the individual is for himself all that is, while for Marcel the individual goes out from himself by communicating with other people and with God.

The individualism that is characteristic of existentialism differs in the philosophies of Christian and atheistic existentialists. For the Christian the beginning and end of each individual human personality is found in God while for the atheistic existentialist it is found in the individual himself.

Both Christian and atheistic existentialists are concerned with and analyze the loneliness or self-enclosedness of men but while Sartre emphasizes the loneliness Marcel sees that man can be freed from loneliness by communication and communion. The existential insularity of man's personality is not an insoluble or hopeless problem. It is true that as God has created each man each personality is unique and because it is unique it is incommunicable. The

¹ Reinhardt, p. 14.
incommunicability of personality tends to make man lonely but even though man cannot communicate his unique personality he is still capable of personal communication and it is communication that will relieve the inevitable loneliness of man.

Man is able to communicate with others, that is, with God, other mortal men, and with self. We communicate with God as other, the absolute other, and we can communicate with self in so far as it is the self considered as other with which we communicate. All communication is with something other than the self as self.

Within communication with God I have considered prayer, love, faith and hope. According to Marcel prayer is a way of unifying myself with God and the person for whom I am praying. In prayer I form a community with others, with God and with other men through the mediation of God. Faith, hope and charity or intersubjectivity are all related to one another and so cannot be considered apart from one another. Nor can these be considered apart from the human person who is the subject of communication, and God, his creator, without whom the most real communication is impossible.

Faith creates the Christian quality of the believer's personality, which personality is intersubjective. In the act of faith the "individual constitutes himself as a person by affirming the infinite personality of God."\(^2\) Faith bears on the infinite as does love. Any participation in divine life is participation in the infinite. Even human love bears on the infinite or as Marcel puts it "...to love someone is to love him in God."\(^3\) Man tends towards the in--

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 208.
\(^3\)Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 158.
finite by hope, he expresses hope in that which cannot come from himself or his situation. He expresses hope in God, thereby confirming his dependence. There is a need to transcend the self and communicate with the divine by faith, hope and love.

It is the self of love and prayer that participates in God. The self of love and prayer transcend the captive self and reaches out towards the divine. The self of love and prayer is the intersubjective self. It seeks God and is concerned with the destiny of the individual. Prayer, faith, hope and love extend towards others and are ways in which the intersubjective self can communicate with God. The most successful sort of communal life requires communication with the divine.

Communication with the absolute other is the most important and highest form of communication but of more immediate concern is communication with other men and with self. There are two types of communication, dialectical communication, using signs and symbols as its means and there is revelation which does not require the mediation of signs and symbols. Personal communication takes place between minds. My mind is that which communicates and it communicates with others and with itself. The existence of a thing precedes communication, that is, a thing must exist before it can be communicated and that which is communicated is knowledge and love.

There are certain hindrances to personal communication and in his principal works Marcel mentions explicitly five of these. Pride is a barrier to communication because the proud man draws his strength from himself thereby cutting himself off from a kind of communion with other men. Drawing away from God hinders communication because man thereby cuts himself off from the universal
Self-centeredness hinders communication because self-centered people, even while communicating are interested in themselves and the agreement of their views with others rather than in the truth that is being communicated. Tension between being and having presents a problem in the sense that "... having can serve as a high wall against other people and as a barrier to personal communication." And finally language is a danger to communication in that an illumination that is to be communicated must become language and when it is put into a sentence it runs the risk of being repeated mechanically and losing the original meaning. These five; pride, self-centeredness, drawing away from God, in a particular sense, "having," and language are the barriers to communication that Marcel has mentioned explicitly in his works.

Within communication it is necessary to consider the following notions: presence, giving and receiving, openness, what is meant by the we-subject, and what is meant by the preposition with.

Presence is a communication of self to another person, a giving of self to another. And from the other side of the relationship I can say that a being is not really a being for me unless it is present to me, that is, unless it is a presence. What is present to me is not a mere object, presence goes beyond any subject-object relationships. I do not gain objective knowledge of a person who is present to me. I am in communion with that person and if the communion is communion of love then the more love approaches charity the more it is filled with "...an unconditioned quality which is the very sign of presence." One

4 Collins, p. 141.
5 Blackham, p. 80.
who is present to me makes room for me in himself, he gives himself to me with
the whole of his being. There is reciprocity in the relationship wherein
people are present to each other. Presence is a genuine communication of self
to others.

Very closely allied to the notion of presence is that of giving and receiv-
ing. Just as presence involves the self so giving and receiving are primarily
concerned with the self rather than with the material object that is given.
Giving and receiving involve the self even if it only be that whatever I give
must be mine before I give it. Giving and receiving are ways of communicating
self to others. Receptivity can be communication and exchange; it involves
more than one person because when a gift is given it is given to someone. If
receptivity is to be genuine communication there must be some response on the
part of the one who receives; this response is the sign of openness. The re-
ceiver makes himself open to receive the gift.

Openness is necessary for communication and especially for that communi-
cation wherein intersubjectivity is involved since intersubjectivity presup-
poses reciprocal openness. Man must make himself open to other men and to God.
Another person can only be present to me in so far as I am open to him. When I
am open to another and present to him, I help him to be present to me. Open-
ness is very closely related to the we-subject in the sense that what is meant
by we is "...precisely our capacity to open ourselves to others."6

In a sense we means that two people are together in that they are open or
present to each other. We signifies community whether it be between me and God,
me and another man, or between me and myself. The sharing of a common experi-

6Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 74.
ence can establish a community between me and another and in this way a transition is brought about from the him to the us.

The notion of participation denotes communication and requires openness. According to Marcel there is participation between myself and my body as there is between myself and the world, others, and God. I participate in the divine life, the infinite, and in the life of any person whom I love. The more I love someone the more I participate in his life. "With" also indicates communication. "The word 'with' only has meaning where unity is felt." This is seen in prayer which is uniting oneself with God, and in thinking about another person. When I think of another person I am "with" him. It is also connected with presence because when a person is present to me he is with me with the whole of himself.

Besides communication with others there is communication with self which is really only an aspect of communication with others in that it is when we consider the self as other that we can communicate with it. The means, dangers, and conditions for communicating with others are the same for communicating with self since we communicate with self as other.

It is fitting to consider subjectivity and objectivity as they are related to communication in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel because for Marcel real communication takes place between subjects rather than between objects. The subjects of personal communication are the I and the thou rather than merely two impersonal objects. R. Ostermann has noted that Marcel makes a metaphysical distinction between the order of the lui (him) and the order of the toi (thou)

7 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 170.
and that it is within the order of the toi that personal communication takes place.

There are certain things of which we cannot have objective knowledge and they are personality itself and those things that are related to the person such as personal relations and human situations. One might say that you cannot have objective knowledge about that which is within the order of the toi precisely as it is in the order of the lui. You can gain objective knowledge only about that which is classified within the order of the lui. You can have objective knowledge about objects, not about subjects.

One and the same thing could belong to both orders, that is, it could be both a him and a thou. For instance, I can consider my body which is a part of me as an object yet I can never consider my personality as an object. I belong to the order of the toi yet in so far as I consider my body as apart from myself I belong to the order of the lui.

The order of the lui multiplies and the order of the toi unifies. The lui is impersonal while the toi is personal. The order of the lui separates things so that they can be known as individual numerical units. I can have a concept of the lui and gain objective knowledge about it. The order of the toi unifies or brings into community. I cannot have an idea of toi as I can of lui, but I can have personal experience of the thou. I have personal communication with the thou but not with the him or it.

In order to live humanly and attain the best possible community life "... the passage from the lui to the toi and thence to the nous must be made." Marcel finds the answer to the problem of human living and man's loneliness in communication and especially in the communion of love, and particularly love of God.
the absolute thou. The problem of the insularity of man which is attributable to the incommunicability of his unique personality can best be solved by love of God.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

----. *Du Refus à l'Invocation.* 8th ed. Gallimard. 1940.
----. *Etre et Avoir.* Aubier. 1935.
----. *Journal Météphysique.* Gallimard. 1927.

*English Translations*

Marcel, Gabriel. *Being and Having.* Boston. 1951.
----. *Men Against Humanity.* London. 1952.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES

A. BOOKS


74


Nietzsche, Frederick. Also Sprach Zarathustra. Leipzig. 1923.


B. ARTICLES


APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Martha Ethelyn Williams 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.

Jan 20, 57.  
Date  

Rey. J. F. Streubel, S.J.  
Signature of Adviser