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Realism of Garbriel Marcel

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THE REALISM OF GABRIEL MARCEL

by

John R. Crocker, S.J.

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

June

1959
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INTRODUCTION

The task of this thesis is laid out definitely and unequivocally. Even though Gabriel Marcel began his philosophizing within the ranks of idealism, this thesis hopes to point out that the ultimate conclusions of M. Marcel's philosophy are free from their idealist beginnings.

The best method by which to demonstrate this is an historical progression. In the first chapter of the thesis the idealism inherent in the themes of Marcel's earlier works is accented. The following chapters discuss realist themes as they appear more and more frequently in his writings. In this way the gradual development of realism in Marcel's doctrine will appear. External influences which helped to shape his thought, such as the circumstances and various crises in his life, will be added as an aid to understand better his later realism.

This historical progression and development of fundamental themes has been chosen not only for its aptness to illustrate the fundamental points of this thesis, but also because it is essentially the same method employed by Marcel. From a given starting point he rises by dialectic and reflection to a higher vantage ground where the initial point of departure is further enriched. Taking this enriched starting point the ascent begins again. This starting point is concrete participation, the concreteness of
individual existence; the progression is through intentionality, that phenomenon of consciousness which led him to the reality of the "other," as revealed in a dialectic of experience.¹

The procedure followed in this thesis is essentially the same. From a concrete time in history, about 1910, Marcel's doctrine progresses historically until a certain definite doctrinal foundation is achieved. Starting from this, another historical progression, or dialectical ascent, begins. Finally, when the primary doctrines eventually have been evolved, the progression stops and the doctrines are considered and judged in themselves.

However, a work of this kind cannot but be replete with difficulties, not the least of which is Marcel's lack of systematic reflection. This anti-systematization is not something which happened to Marcel either by chance or by the lack of system and order in his own mind, but rather by design. As he tells us of himself: "But it is evident that in that I automatically renounce setting up what until now has been called a system; for no systematization is possible without constant recourse to the notion of

¹A word of justification may be demanded here for this use of spatial metaphors to describe Marcel's evolution of thought. Marcel himself employs such spatial terms. He conceives of his evolving doctrine as a rising out of the confines of idealism into the freedom of realism. His doctrine itself is concerned with the individual person's rising from the piecemeal of existential experience into the unity of being. Thus two of the fundamental realist doctrines are termed "immersed participation" and "emerged participation."

For Marcel's use of the term "dialectic" please see Chapter II, pp. 19-20.
This anti-systematization reveals itself in a diary narration and a collection of reflections which is uniquely Gabriel Marcel's. Consequently, it is difficult, first, to separate different elements in his doctrine, and second, to find how various elements combine and interrelate. This task, however, is not impossible. Kurt Reinhardt has pointed out the possibility of finding here an inherent continuity. "The strictly philosophic works of Gabriel Marcel are few in number. The presentation of his ideas is informal and unsystematic. Although outwardly these books seem little more than collections of diary fragments and philosophic essays, there is found in them a coherence and continuity of thought which add up to a consistently integrated philosophy of life."  

Since Marcel wrote in his native French, translations into English must be employed in this thesis. Consequently, the following procedure will be used. Where the published standard English translation appears adequate it will be used and so noted in the footnote. However, when for one reason or another, this author finds the standard translation unsatisfactory, or when English translations of the particular work are, or were not available at the time of this writing, the translations will be supplied by

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The purpose of this thesis is to establish that the doctrine of Gabriel Marcel is realist in intention and content. If this much can be successfully achieved, the task will have been worthwhile, and perhaps a propaedeutic will have been presented for a future study of Marcel's metaphysics.
CHAPTER I

EARLY SOURCES FOR THE THOUGHT OF GABRIEL MARCEL

Gabriel Marcel has termed his doctrine a philosophy of the spirit. What is a philosophy of the spirit in the sense in which Marcel uses the term? First of all philosophy for Marcel is the re-creation of man. He is not concerned with man in general, the Man or the Man of Heidegger, but with the individual, personal, subjective je - I- l'homme authentique. Marcel asks himself: "Que suis-je?" "What am I? Why am I here?" A well known Jesuit writer says of him: "Of Marcel's philosophical writing one can say that a great part of it is devoted to revealing to man what he is and what his spiritual activities, his truly human activities, imply." This, then, is the meaning of Marcel's philosophy of the spirit, the philosophy of the individual man--living, daring, free.

1Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, trans. G. S. Fraser (London, 1951), II, 156.

2It should be noted from the outset that Marcel considers his philosophizing as a personal ordeal. To find truth, each individual man must undertake the ordeal, as Marcel himself did. Consequently, he very often makes use of the first personal pronoun. In order to keep as close to Marcel's thought and expression as possible, except when ambiguity or confusion would arise, the same use of this personal pronoun will be retained in this thesis.

Marcel's philosophy, with its emphasis on the real man, has special worth for our own modern world. It is the individual choice of each man to realize his own authenticity, his own destiny. He must think his own thoughts and live his own ideas in opposition to the depersonalizing world as Marcel describes it in a later article. "Now the function, incredibly baneful, of the press radio and cinema, is just that of a steam roller, crushing this original reality [the authentic man] flat and leaving in its place a collection of ideas and images, superimposed one upon another and bereft of all roots in the actual being of the subject."4

Over and above the full life that Marcel points out for every man, his thought has a special worth for Catholics. Born in an age of agnosticism in no way inferior to our own, he rose through a long and painful ascès into the light of Catholicism. It is in this very rise to the faith that M. Bernard sees his greatest worth. "And in that journey, that slow but sure ascent toward the faith (the Catholic faith) we find, without a doubt, in the entire contemporary existentialist movement, the uniqueness of Marcellian metaphysics."5

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5 Michel Bernard, La philosophie religieuse de Gabriel Marcel (Radz, 1952), p. 9: "Et dans cette marche, cette montée lente, mais sûr vers la foi (à la foi catholique), nous trouvons.
In the early years of his philosophical speculation Marcel's philosophy of the spirit was dominated by a fear of reality, of the world itself; and thus his first thought is determinedly idealistic. However, an active instinct for realism left him ill at ease in the idealists' camp. His acquaintances from the realists' bastions not only led him to the Catholic faith but also gave him the answers to many of his philosophical queries.

LIFE AND EDUCATION

The first question that must be answered is: Why Marcel's early attraction for idealism? The answer appears in his early life and education. Gabriel Marcel was born on December 7, 1889. His father was a baptized Catholic. Under the influence of such writers as Taine, Spencer, and Renan, he stood forth as a militant agnostic in an age of agnosticism. His life was one of strict intellectual and aesthetic discipline.

Gabriel's mother died when he was very young, but he credits her with a strong influence on himself. "But it must be remembered that my whole childhood and probably my whole life have been overshadowed by the death of my mother, a death which was completely sudden and which shook the existence of all of us. I have few visual memories of her; but she has remained present and mysteri-
ously with me throughout my life." May not Marcel's sense of presence, of the silent communication between beings, maybe even his interest in the metapsychical be attributed to this presence of his mother?

In place of the mother he lost so young, Gabriel was reared by an aunt. This admirable lady, though of Jewish stock, was educated as a Protestant. In contradistinction to the aesthetic agnosticism of his father, hers was an ethical agnosticism. She was a pessimist at heart and "had an acute and implacable sense of the absurdity of existence."7

Since Gabriel was an only child, without a mother, his childhood was anything but carefree. He was solicitously shielded and bound in by the strictest rigidity. It was, perhaps, as he tells us, in this atmosphere of confinement that his attraction for the abstractions of idealism first took root.

When I recall my childhood, so carefully watched over and in some way so confined, with its atmosphere of moral scruples and of hygienic precautions, I can see the reason why abstraction was the keynote of my early philosophical thoughts and why I was almost contemptuously hostile towards empiricism. This attitude seems to me the direct reflection of that horror of dirt and germs which had been bred in me from my earliest years upwards. Experience, as it is mostly conceived by philosophers, was to me impure and profoundly suspect. True, there was something in this also of the need to hit back at the practical world which at every step proved to me my ineptitude and my awkwardness: on the plane of Ideas


7Ibid., p. 81.
alone was I able to create a shelter from these wounding contacts of everyday life. Thus to philosophize meant for me at first to transcend.\footnote{Ibid., p. 77.}

Not too many years later, however, a contrary repugnance for abstraction arose in Marcel. He attributes his growing dislike for the spirit of abstraction to the aloofness of his early professors at the lycée. He speaks of this remoteness in harsh terms.

I think my aversion to it must have been at the root of my growing horror of the spirit of abstraction, of which the school was a kind of absurd palladium. What, indeed, could have been more abstract than our relationship with our masters or even with one another, not to speak of the notions which were inculcated in our minds? There was hardly anything in all this that could touch our sensibility or fulfill our most pressing inward needs. For my own part, if my taste for letters was not destroyed in spite of the encouragement of my father's prodigious culture, it was no thanks to the school, which disgusted me for years with almost every one of the writers whom we studied in class.\footnote{Ibid., p. 84.}

Further influence on Marcel was exerted by his love for music which he knew and understood. Musical analogies abound in his writings. He feels that the insolubilia which he experienced in his own family life might conceivably be solved on some higher plane where harmony between divergencies, as exemplified in music, is possible.

It was, however, in the dialogue of the drama that Marcel found his most apt means of expression. Unlike other philosopher-dramatists who for the most part consider their plays as vehicles for their philosophy, Marcel wrote his plays before he wrote any-
thing strictly philosophical. In his plays he also found an outlet for his emotions and suppressed agitations of soul.

Perhaps all this will be clearer if I say that from my earliest years I was haunted by the theatre, which attracted me less as a spectacle than as a privileged form of expression. Naturally, my predilection for dialogue was not clear to me at the time, but I was less fond of stories or descriptions than of that form of art which conceals itself, as it were, behind the subjects whom it confronts. As I have said elsewhere, I experienced very early a kind of intoxication, not only in conceiving characters distinct from myself but in identifying myself with them sufficiently to become their mouthpiece. It is difficult to say how I came to have this bent; one reason was doubtless my father's innate sense of the theatre and his incomparable way of reading plays. But I have always thought that the imaginary characters with whom I held silent conversations replaced for me the brothers and sisters whom I so cruelly missed in real life.10

But most important, from his drama Marcel further enlarged his sense of the concrete, of the real. Collins sees Marcel's preoccupation with detail and human situation as a direct outgrowth of his drama. "And as for Gabriel Marcel, his long apprenticeship as a practising playwright has taught him the value of building up one's total conception of a situation from the closely observed details of human life and action."11

This preoccupation with the concrete was magnified by the profound joy he felt in travel. At one time Marcel's father was Minister Plenipotentiary at Stockholm; later Marcel travelled to Italy, Bavaria, and Belgium. Even as a child, then, he felt a

10Ibid., pp. 78-79.

strong desire to discover and explore new trails.

Marcel's first experience with higher education occurred at the Sorbonne where his first teacher was Léon Brunschvicg, the idealist. Also, at that time, Bergson was teaching at the College de France. The doctrinal influence of these two men will be discussed below. Sufficient to note now, that due to the influence of these two philosophers, Marcel first realized the possibility of a synthesis between idealism and the concrete.

In August, 1914, he became head of the Information Service of the Red Cross during the Great War. His ill health prevented him from engaging in active duty. It was while in this position that he recognized the dissimilarity between the concrete misery of the individuals with whom his often sad duty brought him in contact, and the abstract manner in which, on record file cards, this individuality lost all significance. Perhaps this experience started him on the road to existential thinking.

But probably one of the most profound experiences of his life occurred on his conversion to Catholicism, March 23, 1929. A few days after attending a lecture at which he met François Mauriac, the noted author called him and asked the penetrating question: "Why are you not one of us?" This was the invitation to act which Marcel had been seeking. Through the insights of his own thinking he had long been tending toward Catholicism. He now began his arduous road to the faith. Doubts and difficulties beset him. His entire early life revolted against such a step. Finally, on
March 23, the struggle was brought to a close. Marcel records the event simply in his diary without adornment calculated to obscure the significance of the event for himself. "March 23 - I was baptized this morning with an innermost affection for which I hardly dared hope: not a feeling of elation, but rather of peace, contentment, of hope, of faith."  

It is clear, then, that Marcel's sheltered and rigorous childhood instilled in him an attraction for abstraction which would eventuate in his acceptance, partial at least, of the tenets of idealism. But his gradual contact with reality and his revolt against the abstractions of his early childhood, his school life, his predisposition for the drama, his delight in discovery, would instill in him both an attraction for the concrete situation of the individual, as well as a desire to develop and attempt to solve what appeared to him at first as insolubilia.

INFLUENCE OF IDEALISTS

With the experiences of Marcel's life as a background, attention must now be turned to those particular philosophers, whose works came to his notice and did so much to shape the direction of his thought. The list of only the idealists reads like a cata-

12Information from a personal interview of the author with Rev. Roger Troisfontaines, S.J.

Consequently, these will be mentioned only briefly and will be alluded to again as particular parallels present themselves in the body of the thesis.

René Descartes (1596-1650) is most frequently mentioned in refutation in the writings of Marcel. Perhaps, though probably without Marcel being aware of the fact, it was Descartes who set the "problem" for him, the first necessary step in philosophizing. This problem was the relationship between body and mind. The body-mind problem was Marcel's persistent dilemma.

In Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) he found the problem stated as the duality of the abstract and the concrete. Through a successor of Kant's, Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), Marcel first saw an opportunity to make use of his own maturing doctrine. In the teachings of his professor at the Sorbonne, Léon Brunschvicg (1869-1944), Marcel discovered the possibility of objectivizing thought and thus distinguishing it from the thinker. The possibility of synthesizing the apparently irreducible elements of the abstract and the concrete, the subject and the object in thought, came to him on reading Georg Hegel (1770-1831). Thus through Hegel he saw the dichotomy of mind and matter somehow resolved. One of Hegel's followers, Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924), to whom Marcel often acknowledges a great debt, divided experience into appearance and reality, and therefore the subject-object problem took on another aspect. The possibility of communication between beings in the world of reality was possibly suggested to him by William
Ernest Hocking (1873- ), with whose works Marcel was well acquainted. This communication would become the world of intersubjectivity in a later stage of Marcel's doctrine.

But perhaps the greatest influence on Marcel came from the writings of the American idealist, Josiah Royce (1855-1916). In 1917 and 1918 Marcel wrote a series of articles for the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale which were published in 1945 in book form as La métaphysique de Royce. Many parallels can be found in the doctrines of the two men, and it was in great part due to his dissatisfaction with Royce that Marcel would finally arrive at realism. Although frequent reference will be made later to the doctrines of Royce, a general understanding of his system is necessary here if these references are to have meaning.

Royce was primarily a religious thinker, and his first problem was, "How is error possible? How can evil be?" as stated in his first book, The Religious Aspects of Philosophy, published in 1885. The response to this question would lead him into absolute idealism.

Royce next came to the problem of the relationship between the Absolute and the individual in his Absolute World of Ideas. His final solution appeared in a book published in 1913 entitled, The Problem of Christianity. Here he looks upon all reality as an absolute community of interpretation. The individual makes himself and his own world by choice, but in and through the Absolute. The question naturally arises: What is the rule by which this choice must be made? Royce first answers, love; but pushing this notion
further, he finally holds it to be what is best for the community. Consequently, the individual has an obligation to interpret himself and his world since without this interpretation there would be no community. Therefore, the community becomes one of interpretation, since the community requires an Absolute Interpreter, it is a community of Absolute Interpretation. Ultimately reality is explained by the Absolute eternally interpreting Himself to Himself through individuals. This individual creating himself in the actuality of the Absolute is the individual moral self. Social consciousness is the individual's moral concern. This "will-to-interpret," in the sense of being loyal to the community, saves Royce from solipsism, and his whole system takes on a social significance.

Some of Royce's ideas find a fulfilment in Marcel's mature doctrine which Royce himself had not conceived. Many of these notions will be mentioned as they fit into Marcel's development.

INFLUENCE OF REALISTS

Many influences, then, were leading Marcel from idealism to realism: the problem of the abstract and the concrete, of body and mind, his own innate realist sense, and his realist acquaintances and their writings. One of these realists was Henri Bergson (1859-1941), who was teaching in Paris in Marcel's time. Bernard even maintains that Marcel remained somewhat faithful to the spirit of Bergson. Such an interpretation of Marcel's works could possibly be verified. Bergson no doubt did give Marcel much help in satis-
fying the need of the concrete he felt in himself. This is especially clear from Bergson's mistrust of abstraction, his notions of body and materialization, and the nature of presence.

MARCEL AND EXISTENTIALISM

The primacy of experience in Marcel's doctrine, and his absorption with the concrete, occasioned the placing of his doctrine among that of contemporary existentialists. The specific reasons for this position among the existentialists will appear if the general formulation of existentialism, as outlined by Father Roger Troisfontaines, S.J., is considered. Troisfontaines points out that, in general, there are three fundamental doctrines in all of the existentialists. First, they are philosophers of the subjective; that is, they are concerned, not with man in general, the on in French, but with the je, the personal, subjective man. A distinction must be made between subjective and subjectivist. One concerned with the personal experience of an individual man is subjective. He is not, however, necessarily a subjectivist, that is, one entirely involved in his own thought and, at least by reduction, a solipsist. The second note common to the existentialists is freedom. Man must be free to create his own being, to create in some way his own existence. Reality demands from the individual a personal commitment dependent upon this freedom. The third charac-

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14 Bernard, p. 42.
teristic is that of descriptive phenomenology after the method of Husserl. Consequently, truth for the existentialists is not a universal scientific truth. Such truth would necessarily be found in a universal judgment which would apply only to man-in-general. Consequently, existentialists do not concern themselves with a universal metaphysics. Rather they attempt to describe, phenomenologically, the individual situation of an individual person--ie--in the world. From this situation in the world they induce not only the freedom of the individual, but also his own individual duties.

Marcel fits into this general picture. His own doctrine begins with a description of individual experience. This experience is twofold: of existence and of being. This existence and being, in which the subject is engaged, demands a personal commitment and self-creativity. Throughout the writings of Marcel the notions of existence and being are confused and tend to overlap. Father Troisfontaines, in his book *De l'existence à l'être*, the most extensive work done on Marcel's doctrine, has attempted to express Marcel's mind regarding the relationship of existence and being rather than what the actual use of the terms, in a specific passage, might seem to imply. When Marcel saw the book, he was very pleased and felt that Father Troisfontaines had been justified in interpreting man's life as a rising freely and creatively out of existence into being. Thus we can be sure that Marcel conceived the distinct--

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15 Information from a lecture given by Rev. Roger Troisfontaines, S.J., at Loyola University, Chicago, July 12, 1957.
I11E1 as Father Troisfontaines has expressed it. This distinction will be considered at length in Chapters III and V.

Marcel's existentialism has further been called "Christian existentialism," since it emphasizes essentially Christian themes: man's freedom, consecration, hope, fidelity, faith, love. This is to distinguish Marcel's from the atheistic existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre (1905-). Sartre bases his doctrine on the frustration of the individual's attempting to project his être pour soi into the être en soi. Since this can never be accomplished, and yet man continues to so strive, life is a meaningless desperation. Since, at the time Marcel began writing, Sartre could not even read, it is clear that Sartre could have had little positive influence on Marcel.

Furthermore, Marcel was the first of the existentialists to publish with the exception of Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). In 1923 Marcel's Existence et objectivité appeared and has been considered the charter of existentialism. It should be noted that this book was published before the comprehensive study of Martin Heidegger (1889-), Sein und Zeit. However, Marcel's book Man Against Mass Society (L'homme contre l'humain, 1952), did develop what is essentially Heidegger's theme of Das Man. At the time of Existence et objectivité Marcel had read neither Karl Jaspers (1883- ) nor Kierkegaard, but in later books Marcel frequently

16 From a personal interview of the author with Fr. Troisfontaines.
refers to these two men. In Marcel's own opinion, of the existentialists it was Jaspers who has most influenced his own thought. He makes explicit reference to this in the preface to the Philosophy of Existence, and again at length in Du refus à l'invocation. It is only in later works that Marcel comments on the youngest of the existentialist troupe, the Algerian, Albert Camus (1913- ). Marcel feels that Camus' theory of the absurd is not sufficiently developed, and reproaches him for an extremely simple attitude.17

Today Marcel does not wish to be known as an existentialist. In 1945 he accepted the name of Christian existentialist. Three years later, however, due to the opprobrium attached to the name because of Sartre, Marcel repudiated it. He felt his doctrine could be better termed neo-Socratism. "One of my pupils once asked me whether my philosophy could not be considered to be a kind of neo-Socratism. The expression struck me very much, and on reflection I wonder whether the description would not be the least inexact that could be applied to me. The term existentialism brought with it the worst of misunderstandings, and now I consider I have repudiated it once and for all."18

Consequently, though many of Marcel's themes are those of existentialism and particularly Christian existentialism, he him-

18Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. xiii.
self prefers not to be numbered among this group. Moreover, he is more than justified in this demand if Jacques Maritain's definition of existentialism as implying "destruction of the intellect," "liquidation of the basic realities and radical claims of the person and subjectivity"¹⁹ be generally accepted as true.

MARCEL AND THOMISM

One last consideration must be presented before beginning the direct study of Marcel's doctrine if this thesis is to be intelligible. In spite of the fact that Marcel uses terms similar to or the same as those employed by Thomists, Marcel does not attach the same meanings to these terms as the Thomists. As a result of his conversion Marcel attempted to think within the confines of Thomistic thought, but without success,²⁰ possibly because of the brand of Thomistic authors he read, such as the Rev. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., and Jacques Maritain. Marcel's terminology, then, should not be interpreted Thomistically. He admits, however, a desire to express true doctrines—Thomistic particularly—in newer and fresher terms. "But I believe that there is also a danger in thinking that philosophical-theological ideas such as we find in St. Thomas Aquinas, for instance (not doctrine, for that is another


²⁰From a personal interview of the author with Fr. Roger Troisfontaines, S.J.
story), are suitable for everybody in our day, just as they stand. I am inclined to say that they are suited to some minds but not to all; and the profoundly true intuitions expressed in the Thomist formulae would gain greatly in force and intelligibility if they could be presented in fresh terms; in words that were newer, simpler, more moving, and more closely in tune with our own experience and (if you will forgive the word) our own ordeal."21 Many explicit parallels with Thomism will appear in the thesis. It is possible to conclude that Marcel often enough does express a Thomistic doctrine in new terms.

Some of those terms, however, may be ambiguous. Such terms are existence, being, essence, body, soul, and freedom. Existence for Marcel means a personal experience of himself and the reality around him through body, as indicated by feeling and sensation. Being is the experience of fullness, an upsurge of joy, a compelling desire to rise above one's mere existence, and to share in the plenitude of what is. A person is when he is most himself. Essence takes on a double meaning. One is the notion of abstracted essence, disjoined from reality, merely a product of thought. The other pertains to nature or freedom. In this sense Marcel refers to an individual's power by which he chooses to be, as he understands the term, or to deny his being. Thus the essence of man is

Another term is body. For Marcel body is not so much that part of man distinct from his soul, but rather the body as informed by the principle of life, the soul, and therefore part of the self. Later he will see this body as objectifiable for thought and consequently not the self. The last notion is that of soul. By this Marcel means the elementary and unrealized sharing of a person in being. Thus one's soul is his being, and consequently by free creativity he can increase his being, that is, his soul.

However, if one expects deductive reasoning, absolute universal conclusions, syllogisms in Marcel, he will be disappointed. We must take what he has—the description of facts of experience. If these are to be verified, they must be verified in the conscience and mind of each individual man. In spite of this essentially non-Thomistic approach, Marcel is worth our attention; for as Etienne Gilson has said: "In his writing man speaks directly to man; it will always have readers because he will never cease to make new friends." 23

22 Marcel, Etre et avoir, p. 150. The term freedom also demands clarification. However, since its meaning can only be grasped in the light of his mature doctrine, the meaning of freedom will be discussed in Chapter V, pp. 136-37 of this thesis.

23 Etienne Gilson, Existentialisme Chrétien: Gabriel Marcel, (Paris, 1947), p. 2: "En son œuvre, l'homme parle directement à l'homme; elle aura toujours des lecteurs parce qu'il ne cessera jamais de se faire de nouveaux amis."
CHAPTER II

IDEALISTS AND EARLY IDEALISM

DIALECTICAL METHOD

If the works of Gabriel Marcel are to be understood, the reader must first consider his method of procedure. This might be called the dialectical method, which Marcel developed simultaneously with his doctrines. The fundamental meaning of dialectic is the resolution of opposites. Marcel conceives his doctrine as the resolution of the opposites presented to an individual in his disconnected and disunified existential experiences. These experiences are analyzed as they are revealed to consciousness. Marcel insists he is concerned not with the states of consciousness but rather with the implicit content of thought, as found in a certain number of type-situations, similar to the "being-in-the-world" of Heidegger and the "being-in-a-situation" of Jaspers.¹ As a person gradually resolves these experiences in his life, he comes into the unified experience of being. In like manner, as Marcel resolves the apparent opposites he finds in his early acquaintance with

idealism, he comes into a unifying realist conception of existence and being.

His earliest notion of dialectic is redolent of Kant. Kant begins by asking himself under what conditions knowledge is possible. Marcel starts with the hypothesis that a certain phenomenon is real. He then analyzes the conditions presupposed for that situation to be real. By a phenomenological dialectic he ascends to the meaning of the content in that experience. Once having grasped the meaning of this content he descends again to the original experience which, having been enriched by thought, is now more meaningful. It is the contention of this thesis that by systematically analyzing this pattern of dialectic as it historically developed, conclusions will gradually emerge. The pattern is one of beginning, analysis or breakup, and return to the original data, now further enriched and unified or resolved as a result of the dialectical progression.

BEING AS THOUGHT-THINKING

Marcel's first dialectical ascent progressed from 1912 to 1911. In this period Marcel will deny the realist intuition of being, and affirm that thought is the only valid starting point for thought itself. Finally, he will identify being and thought and define

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being as thought in its deepest intimacy; not thought-as-thought, but thought-as-thinking.

The first article to be considered is one entitled: "Les conditions dialectiques de la philosophie de l'intuition," which he wrote in 1912 in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale. At this early period the first problem he faces is the relationship between being and the idea of being. He first rejects a negative dialectic which denies everything but the first intuition of being and which pretends to begin philosophy from what is left as the initial datum. This process of denial would be similar to "Ockham's razor." Marcel maintains that such a negative dialectic presupposes, first, that there is a distinction between being and the idea of being. This distinction, he maintains, has not been demonstrated as valid. Second, such a negative dialectic also presupposes a limited intellect which cannot attain being itself but only some primary intuition of it. Marcel then shows that even this intuition itself must be rejected since such an intuition presupposes some pure thought by which the intuition can be established or at least judged. But pure thought cannot begin until first the intuition has been established. As long, therefore, as an intuition presupposes some thought, it is not an intuition, and a realist system founded on it begins in a contradiction. He then concludes that, since all realism depends on some such type of intuition, realism is impossible.

Therefore, if philosophy is to be established, some other means must be used by which being becomes an object or an end and
not a "given." This means is a positive dialectic whose "given" must not be an intuition of being but thought itself, the only a priori fact possible for thought. He concludes, then, that if being is to be attained by thought, it must somehow be included in thought since thought can only know itself.

Therefore, thought is the only possible a priori fact for thought itself. This conclusion becomes the starting point for Marcel's second dialectic. He now asks himself whether there is a distinction between being and the idea of being. The argument is based on a disjunction: either there is a distinction between the idea of being and being, or there is not a distinction.

Presuppose that there is no distinction. Discursive thought, as well as an intuition of thought, are uncontroversial realities which seek to discover an object. This object is being. If there is no distinction between being and the idea of being, discursive thought and intuition have no object. The reality of these modes of knowing would have to be denied. There must, then, be some distinction between being and the idea of being.

However, since thought is the only reality, this distinction can only be for thought itself. Furthermore, any criterion by which an attempt could be made to distinguish between being and the idea of being is impossible. Such a criterion could only apply to the idea of being, not being itself. Therefore, being and the idea of being are distinct but cannot be distinguished from thought itself. Being must in some way be identical with the act of thought which posits it.
This act of faith is preceded by a practical dialectic which ultimately denies itself as object—an idea—in order to affirm being.

This summarizes Marcel's thought at the end of the first period. He began with the facts of experience as given in thought, and rose by analysis until thought denied itself and accepted being in an act of faith. This act of faith is similar to the "leap" of Kierkegaard. Marcel recognized, even at this early date, some type of participation in being, and his dialectical method began to take shape around a nucleus of phenomenology. However, being and thought were identified. Thus in this early period Marcel was an idealist.

In 1914 Marcel may be said to have started on the second stage of his dialectical ascent. He comments as follows on his early observations in the first part of the Journal métaphysique, a number of years after the Journal itself was published:

[W]henever I again plunge, as I have just done, into those writings preparatory to the first part of the Metaphysical Journal, I feel sick at heart. This feeling is essentially connected with the poverty and insufficiency of my vocabulary. I was then, in effect, a prisoner of certain expressions wavering between neo-criticism and neo-hegelianism. It seems to me today that, fettered with such inadequate tools, I was feebly attempting to cut a path for myself toward a certain emergence, a certain light, of which I had only an unformulated presentiment.5

This, then, is Marcel's personal estimate of the work done in

5 Information in a letter to the author from Gabriel Marcel, December 4, 1954: "[L]orsque je me replonge, comme je viens de le faire, dans ces écrits qui sont tous la préparation de la Première Partie du Journal Métaphysique, j'éprouve comme une sensation d'écoeurément. Ceci est lié essentiellement à la pauvreté et à l'insuffisance de la terminologie. Je restais alors en effet prison-
this period. The conclusions he then reached will now be analyzed. Of primary importance in this period will be Marcel's first real encounter with the problem that will lead him out of idealism into realism: the relationship between mind and body, subject and object. Most of his later important notions will first be introduced in this early period.

**PLANES OF INTELLIGIBILITY**

He begins with a discussion of the planes of intelligibility. The first of these is the plane of immediate existence, which is unintelligible and fortuitous in itself. On the second plane, by the mediation of thought, experience and existence, first encountered on the first plane, are made intelligible. The third plane is that on which the subject is empirically constituted by pure reflection. On this plane thought distinguishes between the thinker and the object thought. By a gradual process of denying exteriority thought affirms itself—what is left—as the subject thinking. Dialectic, at this point, "is the progression of reflection which transends its original starting point." In other words, dialectic d'un certain langage d'ailleurs vacillant [sic] entre le néocriticisme et le néo-hegelianisme. Et il me paraît aujourd'hui que, muni de ce mauvais équipement, je tentais péniblement de me frayer un chemin vers une certain issue, une certaine lumière dont je n'avais que le pressentiment comme informulable."

6Marcel, *Journal métaphysique*, p. 12: "c'est le progrès d'une réflexion qui transcende ses propres positions."
tic on the second plane transcends existence and immediate experience. On the third plane thought transcends the objects thought and affirms itself as subject. Marcel disclaims any valid ontological weight for this dialectic as it ascends to higher planes of intelligibility. The process depends entirely on the mind which proposes it and has in it nothing of the concrete. The relation of the subject to the object appears differently as the subject conceives the object. The difference between appearance and reality is conceived differently as the mind itself determines that it should be. Consequently, the subject is constructed by thought, and the object is what the subject determines it should be. 7

THOUGHT AND ITS OBJECT

This subject-object dichotomy will preoccupy Marcel for many years, as he tries to reconcile his felt need for the concrete with the notion of object and its construction as he knew it from Royce and Kant. His problem arises from the presupposition in the Kantian line, between subject and object as already rooted in immediate experience. Furthermore, due to a possible influence from Royce, this object is bound up with the knowing subject and dependent on it. It is apropos to discuss here Royce's notion of object.

For Royce an idea has a twofold structure: the external reference to an object beyond itself and its internal purpose which is the expression of an interest, a desire, or a volition. The object

7Ibid., pp. 11 and 12.
is that to which the idea tends in its internal purpose to conform. The object is not distinct from the idea but is an internal purpose already embodied in the idea. Every idea represents some object external to itself but somehow indeterminate in the idea itself, plus an internal purpose of the idea urging it to further determine its own object. Thus an object is the more definite form of the purpose or intention of the idea itself. In the following words of Marcel we can see the influence of the idealism of Royce as well as of Kant: "The solution consists evidently in holding that the object is constructed as an object, that is—by very definition—as independent of the thinking subject; that constructive act neither follows the initial act of experience as a contradictory species of empiricism holds, nor precedes it, but is identical with and coextensive with the act of experience itself." Marcel here expresses essentially Roycian and Kantian notions when he insists that in immediate consciousness both the act of positing the object as independent of the subject and the object itself are identical. Furthermore, and just as immediately, the knowing subject ascribes existence to that object experienced.


9 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, p. 15: "La solution consiste évidemment à poser que l'objet est construit comme objet, c'est-à-dire—et par définition même—comme indépendant du sujet percevant; cette construction n'est ni postérieure à l'expérience comme le voudrait un empiricisme contradictoire, ni antérieure à elle, mais elle lui est identique, elle lui est coextensive."
Marcel then makes a few observations on the nature of consciousness, for which he admits a debt to Bergson. Somehow Marcel sees that existence is bound up with body as an object in space. Consequently, consciousness is also bound somehow to body. I can only be conscious of myself as existing, as well as of others as existing, as I am a "given" in space—a body. Thus existence is bound to body. Consciousness, however, is not limited to body, since it can transcend itself by thinking of an intelligible content which is not body and does not participate in existence. This content will be merely ideal and not sensible or existential. 10

At the end of this first period of his second dialectical ascent Marcel has discovered that immediate consciousness, existence and corporeity are somehow mutually dependent. Furthermore, he sees how thought [consciousness] may transcend this datum. However, at this point, object, existence, and corporeity are still psychic phenomena. Corporeal existence and thought are incompatible.

True to the enriched starting point noted as essential to his dialectic, he begins the second stage in this period with the conclusions of the first. He turns attention, first, to thought itself. Thought must begin as an immediate correlation to an immediate object. It is not a datum as such nor definable outside an order which discovers things. However, it can suppress this exter-
ority and rise above the immediate experience. Thus it has a mediating function. It mediates between the given external and itself, thus giving some content to itself. He further identifies this content of thought as mind. Thus he has separated the "given" from thought itself and the immediacy of experience from the intelligible content developed in the planes of thought.

The first action of the mind is to recognize the physical interaction of the body as necessary although insufficient for knowledge. Body is necessarily given as anterior to the act of knowing by which mind constitutes itself. But the mind does not recognize body in the immediate experience until mediated by thought. After acknowledging this debt to body, the mind further sees that body is necessary for the external world. In fact, this construction of body is bound up with the construction of the external world.

THOUGHT AND INDIVIDUALITY

Turning consequently from body and the external world, mind focuses attention upon itself and creates its own individuality. This individuality has two notes. First, it depends on the empirical content given it as an existing body; second, there must be present some interiorized consciousness of individuality. This means, then, that the self must think itself dependent, that is, as created, since an individual can conceive himself as one of many only if he is dependent upon some act of creation, a free act by one distinct from himself and others. In this light of creation
the communication between many created individuals is possible.\textsuperscript{11} Marcel then concludes that there must be some consciousness of individuality. Further, thought, through mind, is somehow necessary for this consciousness. He also recognizes the part of body in the construction of individuality, as well as a primary datum for communication with the external world. However, as is clear from his words, this body, not to mention the self, is still bound in and by thought.

The fact is, that, to explain the communication between these individualities, Marcel has recourse, as did Royce, to a God. For such communication presupposes some interior individuality distinct from that of body. Royce maintains, that, since ideas contain an implicit finality for a more and more complete determination and fulfilment, there must be one object-idea, or final end-idea, which is complete—an Absolute Idea. This alone can explain the possibility of many incomplete thoughts, or for that matter, many imperfect created individuals. Royce then identifies the self containing the unfulfilled idea with the self which possesses the complete idea. It is clear, then, that the world of Royce must be an ideal world of thought in which the thinker is the thought. Furthermore, this must be a world in which an Absolute Thought, embracing in itself all reality, is a complete thought and is necessary to explain incomplete thoughts as a referential axis. And so the world of Royce

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., pp. 22, 124, 62.
is also an ideal world of one Absolute Idea. 12

Marcel takes up the notion of communication, the conclusion of his previous dialectic. He will now proceed from the meaning of communication to the meaning of intelligibility.

SOUL AS NECESSARY SUBSTRATUM FOR MIND

Communication is impossible without intelligibility. Moreover, what thought qualifies as intelligible, cannot be regarded as really distinct from thought itself. Intelligibility cannot be defined from outside thought, but must be a relationship between thought and the totality of ideas. He concludes that there must be a mind which recognizes itself in the whole of its ideas. Only this makes intelligibility possible. Therefore, the mind is somehow progressing by creating itself through thought. Marcel recognizes that something stable is needed to explain the subject for mind and its movement of thought. He calls this stable substratum soul.

The soul, then, is seen by the mind as a necessary condition for its own reality. Soul appears to mind as that, which in mind itself, is unactivated or unrealized. 13 This conclusion goes back to his earlier notion that being is the irreducible of thought, and logically, in later years he will identify being as soul, being which demands fulfilment.


13 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, pp. 110, 122.
Therefore, intelligibility is mind recognizing itself; and soul is the necessary condition for that mind. He then turns his attention to soul as substratum.

**RELATIONSHIP OF SOUL AND BODY**

The first question he asks is how to relate soul to body. Body, it will be remembered, was the first necessary datum for thought. If the body is non-extended, it is identical with soul; if extended, it is the extended aspect of the soul. He sees that both possibilities present an unintelligible dichotomy on the plane of mere existence. Further, he feels that the resolution of the antimony might be possible on a higher plane, in an ontological value superior to the notion of body. But he has already seen that an absolute ontological value is impossible. Marcel consequently feels that it is impossible for him to make a metaphysical judgment about the relations of soul and body at this time.

At the end of the second dialectical ascent Marcel recognizes the starting point for a dialectic to be immediate consciousness. In the early stages of the ascent there is always a problem of duality: thought and matter; reality and appearance; thought and ideas; subject and object; body and soul. But further, it is the mediating function of thought to resolve this dualism by suppressing exteriority. Exteriority is bound to body. By suppressing body thought evolves as mind, and mind develops into an individual. The individual appears as a soul, a necessary substratum for the
activities of the individual mind.

Thus as early as 1914 Marcel's later doctrine of body and existence and the relationship of the soul and body was embryonically formulated. Further, his notion of individuality was clearly defined. He recognized the need for some interiorized consciousness of the self as a necessary prerequisite for communication. This is achieved by negating exteriority. Individuality cannot be formed by externals because it is the self which mediates those externals. But, as Marcel noted, at the same time one is dependent upon the externals to define his own content. But since all these notions were seen to depend on one's own thought, Marcel remained definitely an idealist. In 1914, then, Marcel has established some connection between bodily existence, the external world, and thought, but by a nexus still dependent on thought and making indefensible any realism separating them.\textsuperscript{14}

The third dialectical ascent takes place between the years 1915 and 1925. As late as 1925 Marcel's doctrine will still be interpreted in a Kantian context. However, a change of tone in his Journal will be noted at this point. Realist themes of existence, body, and sensation will become more numerous. He explains this change: "The shock administered by the war explains the change of tone and of key which is noticeable in the second part of my Journal."\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 117-118.

\textsuperscript{15} Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 90.
TRIADIC DIALECTIC

He begins with a further analysis of the nature of dialectic, putting together many of the observations he had previously made. He now sees thought as mediating, resolving, the opposites presented to the subject in his existential experience. This mediation of thought Marcel conceives as a dialogue. Since I am attached to a certain moment of time and definite point in space, I cannot go, as it were, outside myself. My experience requires mediation by means of question and answer. There are three terms in this dialogue. The first is the subject who questions. He may be considered in two ways, either according to what he has and, therefore, a tabulation of answers for somebody else; or according to what he is, a permanent state, and, therefore, as one appealing for an answer. The second term is the one who answers. This must be either somebody else, or myself as one apart, who is capable of answering questions. He is the one who interprets for the subject. The third and last term, the object, is that which is interpreted by the interpreter for the subject. It is indifferent to the thought that thinks it, the predicate of a judgment.16

Royce came to this same triad after reading Peirce, and after his own reflection on the nature of knowing and the possibility of error. Royce maintains that in knowledge there is the object as it is in itself and my own image of it. Now it is impossible to be in

16 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, p. 139.
error about my own image of the object. However, if a strict duality between subject and object is kept, it is equally impossible for me to have knowledge of the object in itself since in no way can it enter into me. Therefore, in order for there to be any knowledge at all there must be some interpretation between the object and my image of it. Since I am the knower, only I can be the second person, the interpreter.

BODY AS MEDIATOR IN KNOWING

Progressing further with the idea of communication, Marcel sees, as did Royce, that a pure thought cannot communicate by itself. The difficulty arises for Royce when he tries to interpret his past. Since one must always interpret in the present, he cannot interpret his past. Therefore, if any interpretation is possible, it must be by one to whom there is neither past nor present. This notion of a timeless interpreter evolves into Royce's 'Absolute Community of Interpretation.'

Marcel, however, does not take the alternative of the absolute, but goes back to his notion of body and sees it as a necessary condition for the interpretation of the object by the subject. Body now becomes, in a certain sense, as thought, a mediator in cognition. With this conclusion Marcel has at last found the key which will open the door to realism for him. Thought is conscious

of itself and converts itself into material signs. The body then comes in as the agent of transmission. On being grasped by the body of the other, with whom the subject is in communication, the material signs are reconverted into thought and the thought is then revealed to the other's consciousness. Marcel then takes a long step in the direction of realism. He says that the ego must not be treated as a content, as that species of idealism does which considers the body to be part of the mind. For the body is no more in the mind than the piano keyboard is in the music which it plays. He understands the body as distinct from the mind and the mind as incarnate, lending itself to the discipline of the body in order to learn. This conclusion, however, can still be interpreted in a Kantian context. But it is indicative of Marcel's developing realist inclinations and his increasing dissatisfaction with idealism.

COMMUNICATION THROUGH SENSATION

Marcel then further develops the notion of body as mediator. This is an important part of Marcel's realist doctrine and will be treated in greater detail in Chapter V. It is sufficient to discuss it here only in so far as the notion points up his realist progression.

The movement we feel in the body is sensation. It is not natural, he says, for us spontaneously to posit the object we sense as distinct from the "signs" by which it affects us. Sensation is

18 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, p. 175.
spontaneously considered as an affection, not an information. Nor is it a message, nor a translation of something else, but it is strictly immediate. In this conclusion his doctrine of concrete participation is born.

Furthermore, the feelings arising from sensation depend somehow on the body's fluctuating action. This feeling cannot be explained by words, nor can an idea express it. As a matter of fact, reflection may destroy it. Feeling must somehow ignore itself and refuse to be treated as an "it." Marcel sees now the real conjunction between body, feeling, and sensation which cannot be actualized or, as he will express it later, "objectivized." Neither is sensation a constant, absolutely speaking, but a manner of being which can be enriched by further experience.

INCARNATION

Sensation, then, is presupposed for all communication between individuals. It is somehow an immediate participation in a certain concreteness, a participation which is neither static, since it can be enriched, nor definable as an object. Marcel now gives this corporeal participation a name. He calls it incarnation. Therefore, the primary immediate sense experience is that of incarnation. This must be the starting point for any dialectic. This incarnation looks to body as the fulcrum for all other existents; and he sees that "every existent appears to me as a prolongation of my body in a certain direction—my body in so far as it is mine, that
is, non-objective. My body is in a sense the archetype of other existents and in a more profound sense the point of reference for all existents. The world exists for me, in the strictest sense of the word exist, in so far as I maintain with it relations of the same kind as those I have with my own body—that is, in so far as I am incarnate." This body is necessary for my knowledge of the real world.

At this point in Marcel's development the immediacy of bodily participation is clear. A certain progression is also obvious. The essential starting point of which he spoke earlier was merely the diversified experiences of life. By the return inherent in his dialectic he now comes back to an enriched starting point. These experiences are now no longer merely "experience" but the experience of an incarnate being bound to other existents by the immediacy of his own body. It is the immediacy of this incarnation that will establish his realism. Marcel now goes on to develop further the notion of participation.

This participation of incarnation is not an object as the third term in Royce's triadic relation. It somehow depends on me. The object answers only in so far as I ask questions of it. Conse-

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19 Ibid., p. 261: "tout existent m'apparaît comme prolongeant mon corps dans une direction quelconque—mon corps en tant qu'il est mien, c'est-à-dire, non-objectif; mon corps est en ce sens à la fois l'existen-type et plus profondément encore le repère des existents. Le monde existe pour moi, au sens fort de mot exister, dans la mesure où j'entretiens avec lui des relations du type de celle que j'entretiens avec mon propre corps—c'est-à-dire pour autant que je suis incarné."
quently, in spite of his grip on the realist theme of incarnation, Marcel remains within idealism since he feels that the object known still must be projected by the mind which confronts it. However, the tendency of idealists to minimize the "given" aspect of the object and to stress the subjective appeal to it, eventually identifying the two, becomes increasingly difficult for Marcel to reconcile with his own observations on the object's relationship to man's condition of incarnation. 20

INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Next Marcel tries to piece together the notions of incarnation and communication. He says that we must conceive others as a mental-physical system like ourselves. If, on the one hand, I know P's mental system, I must then make his body ideally my own. If, on the other hand, I do not know his mental system, but I do know his body as "other," his thought is closed to me. Consequently, somehow I would have to minimize the objectivity of his body so that I could penetrate his mental system. However, since his existence is given to me through body I cannot deny that I must first know him as body. Consequently, I must minimize the objectivity of his body if I am to penetrate his thought. The only way I can do this is to reflect on myself and thus render myself similar to him. In this way I put myself in sympathy with him, a sympathy of soul.

20Ibid., pp. 316-317.
and am able to open his mental system to myself. This is the passage from the "it" relationship to the "thou" relationship. For this notion of intersubjectivity, Marcel is indebted to Hocking. The conclusions of this philosopher on intersubjectivity greatly helped to free Marcel from idealism, in so far as it proved monadism insufficient.

TWO MOVEMENTS IN THOUGHT

In the following analysis two more later doctrines of Marcel come to light. First of all he recognizes the realm of intersubjectivity as necessary for true communication. Secondly, besides objective knowledge which tends to divide and separate, he recognizes another mode of knowing. This second mode of knowing, which has as its purpose to unite and make one, will later emerge as secondary reflection. Through secondary reflection Marcel will be able to recognize real participation. He now has the means to close the gap between idealism and realism or, more precisely, between the subject-object dichotomy in idealism and the oneness in realism. Therefore, "the role of reflection—whether it is brought to bear upon the act of sensation or of external operation—consists not in sundering, in dissecting, but, on the contrary, in re-establishing in its continuity the living tissue which an injudicious analysis had disjoined." 21 Henceforth he will attempt to penetrate beyond

21 Ibid., p. 324: "le rôle de la réflexion—qu'elle s'exerce sur le sentir ou sur l'agir—consiste non point à morceler, à dé-
the gap between subject and object, and to find the moment when the separation of subject and object is no longer strictly meaningful. This properly concludes the dialectical ascent between 1912 and 1925. Most of the realist themes which will be developed subsequently have already been introduced. Marcel began this dialectic in 1912 under the supposition that being and thought are distinct. His dialectical ascent began completely independent of reality and progressed, through his essential process of return, to a starting point in experience. This differentiated experience, which he later saw to depend on body and sensation, became the indispensable condition for a dialectic. He further saw that this experience was not objectified but was, in some way, immediate. Nor was it a given static datum, but was, rather, the whole of our experience which enriches and increases us as we communicate with our universe. Consequently, he ended on the note of intersubjective appreciation.

DOUBLE REALM OF THOUGHT

The most important step made in this period was the discovery of concrete participation. He saw body as a mediator for communication through sensation. He further saw secondary reflection as turning inwardly on oneself and finding the unity of experience. As a result, he discovered that there were two realms in which

membrier, mais, tout au contraire, à rétablir dans sa continuité le tissu vivant qu'une analyse imprudent avait disjoint."
thought may work: that of object, and that of mystery. It would be inaccurate to say that the distinction between the realms of object and mystery was entirely original with Marcel, since his teacher, Léon Brunschvicg, had much the same idea in his dilemma of faith and verification. Either this dilemma must be denied outright or a subjective domain which is not open to objective thought must be affirmed. Marcel took the second possibility. The realm of subjectivity is that of mystery, and the realm of objectivity he will later characterize as the realm of the problematic.

One last note arises in his first reflections on being and having. "Basically, it all comes down to the distinction between that which one has and that which one is."22 More will be said of this distinction in Chapters III and V.

In Marcel, then, can be seen, in sum, the dividing of two realms, and his preoccupation with being: a mystery, somehow revealed by reflection in inwardness, something that can be enriched through experience. On the other hand, his repugnance for objectivization becomes evident. Objectivization tends to distort reality, to separate the subject more and more from the object, and to surround the object in an impenetrable insularity. But he still has far to ascend before these doctrines become clear and cogent.

At this point it is well to emphasize Marcel's dissatisfaction with idealism. He became aware of much of this dissatisfaction in

22Ibid., p. 307: "Au fond tout se ramène à la distinction entre ce qu'on a et ce qu'on est."
retrospect, but some comments were entered in the diary of those days. Looking back, he later considered this period as that time in which his early dissatisfaction with idealism began. He also saw, however, that he was still bound to some doctrines of idealism which at the same time he mistrusted.

At the beginning, however, my reaction against idealism developed inside a framework of thought which was itself Idealist, or which, at any rate, still owed a good deal to Idealist categories. This accounts for much of what is difficult, irritating and even repellent in the first part of my Journal métaphysique. I was like a man who is irked by a suit of clothes which is too tight for him, and which he is vainly trying to discard. What strikes me as particularly strange about my reactions at that time is the partiality they show for beliefs which, in all good faith, I could not have said that I held.23

In these words we have an argument for the unconscious influence of Marcel's idealistic teachers and acquaintances.

If the criticism of Robert Ostermann is accurate, Marcel never threw off this idealistic "suit of clothes" and never achieved realism: "But from our vantage point surveying the forty years of change, the mind sees nothing in the later productions inconsistent with the formation laid in 1925 in an essay which he himself regards as central [Existence et objectivité, at the end of Journal métaphysique]; nor is there anything in the subsequent deepening or extension which cannot be reduced to these first pronouncements as their principle."24 It is true that Marcel regards this

23 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 88.

essay as central, but it is also true that he regards it as basically Kantian. He says of it at a later date: "I do not believe that I am wrong in saying that on the epistemological plane, even in *Existence et Objectivité*, I was basically holding to a Kantian line of thought." This objection of Ostermann can serve as a springboard for the remainder of the thesis, since it still remains to be shown that Marcel emerged from his Kantianism. Thus in one way the rest of the thesis is a response to the objection raised by many and worded by Ostermann.

PROBLEM WITH EXISTENCE

One of the first problems that Marcel found with idealism was the insight he received regarding the immediacy of existence, body, sensation, and intelligibility, that is, the problems that led him to concrete participation. In fact, this insistence upon the concrete is what at first attracted him to Kant and Hegel. Kant allowed for the concrete in his phenomenon, and Marcel gives his own observations on Hegel concerning the point. "But this distrust of abstractions explains, for instance, the fascination which the Hegelian system exercised for me for such a long time. For, in spite of appearance to the contrary, Hegel did make a very splendid effort to preserve the primacy of the concrete; and no philosopher

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25 Gabriel Marcel, letter to the author, December 4, 1954: "Je ne crois pas me tromper en disant que sur le plan épistémologique, même dans *Existence et Objectivité*, je m'en tenais au fond à une ligne de pensée kantienne."
has protested more strongly against the confusion of the concrete with the immediately given."26 His innate sense of the concrete never allowed Marcel to deny the real world of existential experience and sensation.

The tendency of idealists to overlook this existential experience is what elicited from Marcel a further condemnation: "Thus I rebelled very early against the way in which Idealism overrates the part of construction in sensual perception, to the point of pushing aside to the confines of non-being all such concrete and unforeseeable detail as not only clothes our experience, but gives it its flavour of reality."27 Finally, it was in this insistence on the concrete, which we have labored to bring out, that Collins sees Marcel as adequately refuting Descartes, as well as Kant, even though Marcel owes much to Kant for the original notion of the concrete. It must be remembered, however, that this refutation would become conclusive only at a later date. "Marcel regards the dilemma of sensuous versus intellectual intuition as an artificial predicament, caused by overlooking the properly human way of knowing. Human cognition is a synthesis of intellectual and sense factors, both of which are involved intuitively in the immediate affirmation of existence with which metaphysics begins."28

27 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 8.
Another problem with the idealists which Marcel constantly faced is the relationship between the individual and the Absolute, as outlined in the doctrine of Royce. Royce's Absolute, as has been noted, is a system of ideas and the realization of the finality inherent in ideas. The relationship of the Absolute with individuals is a reciprocal one. The Absolute wills itself in a certain instant by attention. At that same instant, by the same act in which existence is willed by the Absolute, the finite individual sets up his own plan or system of I and not-I. The Absolute and the finite individual are then different, yet mutually dependent, aspects of the same reality. Royce reconciles the finite individual with the infinite Absolute in the same reality by what he calls, after Dedekind, a "self-representative system." This may be likened to a map representing itself. The Absolute is this map. Each element in the Absolute has a relation to another, yet is distinct from it. Each represents another ad infinitum. In this way the finite individuals are as the individual elements, and the Absolute is the embodiment of the whole. 29

This solution never satisfied Marcel. His criticism of Hegel on the same point, can also be applied to Royce. At all costs the needs of the individual and the concrete must be maintained; Marcel

felt that Hegel tended to "immerse the reality and the destiny of the individual into an absolute in which they were in danger of becoming lost." This same criticism is valid against Royce.

Marcel also mistrusted Royce's solution of the problem of time and eternity. All Royce seems to say is that the problem must be recognized and that the whole must be present if it is to be understood. Of course this is explained, in some way, by his Absolute. Time will then be the form of the will as such, the realization of desire. Marcel feels that to resolve past and present in God makes Him composite or in part virtual. It also seems to Marcel that this Absolute must know changing moods. Consequently, he could know outcomes. That is, he would know only the fulfilment of the purposes and not the indefinite representations first felt in the individual mind. Even in the early days of the Journal Marcel was still engrossed with this dilemma; and the explanation of Bradley was inadequate for him, appealing as it did, as well as did Royce, to the unintelligible.

PROBLEM WITH THE REALITY OF THE ABSOLUTE

Marcel's problem with idealists was also their proofs for the reality of the Absolute. Here is how Royce arrives at his final doctrine of the Absolute. The twofold nature of ideas discussed above is presented to man in a problematic situation: what is ver-

30 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 78.
31 Marcel, Royce, pp. 124-126.
sus what ought to be, the experience versus the goal of experience. The problem is solved by interpretation. If there is no interpreter, there is no Community; and if no Community, there is no real world. Royce's original notion of the Absolute has now become the Absolute Community interpreting itself ad infinitum. Unless this Absolute Community is real, nothing is real. Ultimately, for Royce, there would seem to be no personal God but only some vast, ever-moving aggregate contained in the unity of one Absolute Thought. 32 Marcel, however, feels it necessary to consider this Absolute as a Person, not as Royce's cold, impersonal force. He criticizes Royce's doctrine, in criticizing the similar doctrine of Brunschvicg. "That God who is only in spirit and in truth and who is, as it were, outside the pale of existence; who is not a person, and for whom we are nothing, is no more in my eyes than an abstract and useless fabrication." 33

PROBLEM WITH THE SUBJECT AND OBJECT IN THOUGHT

The final problem that Marcel faces is the most important. When he has solved the problem of the relationship between the subject and object in thought, he will have abandoned idealism and be

32Fisch, American Philosophers, p. 234.

33Gabriel Marcel, Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie, (March 24, 1928), 85. Quoted by A. D. Sertillanges, O.P., in Le christianisme et les philosophies (Paris, 1941), p. 32: "Ce Dieu qui n'est qu'en esprit et en vérité, c'est-à-dire en deçà de l'existence, qui n'est personne et pour qui nous ne sommes rien, ce n'est à mes yeux qu'une fiction abstraite et sans vertu."
far along in developing his realism. As has been seen, Marcel's entire quest for realism has been an attempt to suppress this duality. Even at an early date he realized the difficulty in conceiving thought as being in an order separate from things. He says: "[W]e forget how untenable, metaphysically speaking, is the position of a thought which believes that it can place itself over against things in order to grasp them." 34

Father Roger Troisfontainas' summary of the problems that face Marcel at the end of the first period of his idealism serve as a fitting close to this chapter. "Since his youthful writings, if he refuses to identify reality with 'Absolute Knowledge,' Marcel refuses as well to deny that what is real is somehow immanent to consciousness. This would be in effect, either 1) to deny reality outright, or 2) to exclude from thought what is real, which would be the same as to deny reality. . . . On the other hand, if thought is totally external to being, it would be a mere form encompassing in itself nothing substantial." 35 Certainly Marcel did not deny the real. His constant preoccupation with the problems of

34Marcel, Being and Having, p. 168.

35Roger Troisfontainas, S.J. De l'existence à l'être: la philosophie de Gabriel Marcel (Namur, 1952), I, 134: "Dès ses écrits de jeunesse, s'il refuse d'identifier le réel au 'Savoir Absolu,' Marcel se garde également de nier une certaine immanence du réel à la conscience. Ce serait, en effet, 1) ou bien nier absolument qu'il y ait du réel, 2) ou bien l'exclure de la pensée, ce qui serait encore le nier. . . . D'autre part, si la pensée était totalement extérieure à l'être, elle ne serait qu'une forme et ne trouverait en soi rien de substantiel."
duality, concreteness, and the immediacy of experience attest to this, as well as his expressed difficulties with the doctrine of idealists such as Kant, Hegel, and Royce. At this stage of his development his solution to these problems has not yet been completely formulated. There is still a long road to climb before he will find solutions and replies to these idealists. His search will be to discover how thought is somehow both within and outside of being. In the meantime he will be baptized into the Roman Catholic Church, and come into contact with many realists and Thomists. His next book, *Etre et avoir*, appeared three years after the *Journal* and *Existence et objectivité* were completed. It is clear from the opening pages that those three years were important, because he immediately begins to ascend from Kantian contexts into his intersubjective realm of mystery and participation in being.
CHAPTER III

REALIST DOCTRINE AND INFLUENCE

In the foregoing chapter it has been shown that Marcel, early in his philosophical career, felt dissatisfaction with the idealism with which he had begun his philosophical peregrinations. Gradually, by his process of dialectic and reflection, he turned toward realism. The present chapter hopes to develop his gradual emergence into a realist position characterized by his own doctrine of concrete existence.

The realism of Marcel can best be described in a language he himself often uses, that of music. Marcel's gradual development of realist doctrines resembles the movements of a symphony. The early reflections, which we discussed in the previous chapter, may be considered as the overture with partially developed themes. In this and succeeding chapters these themes will develop, vary, and expand in three movements. The principle themes under consideration are those of existence and being and their relation to thought, and the nature of the subject-ego. In Marcel's future development this ego emerges from its concrete existential situation as the individual more deeply commits himself to being by creative response, witness, fidelity, and love. Finally, the communion of individuals with each other and with God, on the plane of spirit or values,
that is, being, comes to light. Since the latter themes are beyond the scope of this thesis, they can only be considered briefly.

The first movement of Marcel's thought is contained principally in his work published in 1935 and covering the periods 1928-1933, *Être et avoir*. The second movement is taken up with a number of articles published from 1933-1950. The third and final development is contained in the two volume work, *Mystère de l'être*, which appeared in 1950. Symphonic variations on themes developed in this work appear in his later books, *Le déclin de la sagesse*, written in 1954, and *L'homme problématique* in 1955.

The first movement began in 1928 and progressed until 1933. The first theme to consider will be that of existence. This may be called, in the language adopted in the preceding chapters, the first dialectical ascent.

**IMMEDIACY OF EXISTENCE**

Existence and body now become inseparably bound by what Marcel calls incarnation. He acknowledges his previous error in accepting a disincarnate "mind." He feels indebted to Bradley for helping him to uncover this error, as well as for pointing out other new ideas to him.\(^1\) For the notion of incarnation he also admits receiving help from Schelling. "I seemed to discern, at the end of the immense journey travelled by Schelling, a light which

\(^1\)Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal*, p. 190.
perhaps one day might help me to discover my own path. Was there not an arduous way which might give access to a higher empiricism and to the satisfaction of that need of the individual and the concrete which I felt in myself?" In this light accepted from Schelling and Bradley Marcel saw that the individual is tied by an insoluble bond with the existing universe. Consequently, the primary experience of a subject is not that of the subject-object duality but of subject-object unity. If he starts from that separated duality, it will be impossible ever to rejoin the two. Incarnation, then, is the indissoluble unity which must be the starting point for all metaphysics, the "given."

This notion of incarnation subsequently develops into the proof for one's own existence. Marcel's purpose at this point is to free existence from the constructiveness of thought. Unless this can be accomplished, he cannot break with idealism. His first conclusion is that thought must in some way be within existence; it must start from it. In some way, however, thought can abstract from existence and consider itself apart. But then it is not within concrete realism. This movement of thought must be intra-existential or it is meaningless for anyone but an idealist. Marcel expresses this as follows:

Thought is unable to abandon existence, though to a degree it can abstract from it. However, thought must hold as a first principle the impossibility of being misled by this abstraction. To fabricate existence is wholly unconceivable,

2Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 78.
a senseless absurdity. Thus what we are here elucidating is a certain intra-existential transformation, only within which can idealism be avoided. We are then compelled to conclude that thought is within existence and somehow a species of existence which for certain strictly determined ends enjoys the privilege of abstracting from itself as existence.³

Troisfontaines recognizes this achievement of the intra-existential aspect of thought as of cardinal importance in Marcel's development. He emphasizes the point that Marcel has recognized both the immediacy of existence as well as the ability of mind to abstract from existence for a determined purpose.⁴

Marcel now turns his attention from the immediacy of the existence of the subject to the existence of others. He sees that as I consider myself as an existent, at the same time I must consider myself as not other existents. But I can only think of others as existing. Therefore, what exists must somehow condition thought; and thought cannot be merely a relation with itself.

IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE OF BEING TO THOUGHT

Still within the theme of existence, Marcel turns to the

³Marcel, Etre et avoir, pp. 34-35: "La pensée ne peut pas sortir de l'existence; elle ne peut qu'en faire abstraction dans une certaine mesure, et il importe au premier chef que de cet acte d'abstraction elle ne soit pas dupe. Le passage à l'existence est quelque chose de radicalement impensable, quelque chose qui n'a même aucun sens.* Ce que nous appelons ainsi est une certaine transformation intra-existentielle. Et c'est seulement par là qu'on peut évader de l'idéalisme. Il faut donc dire que la pensée est intérieure à l'existence, qu'elle est une certaine modalité de l'existence qui jouit de privilège de pouvoir faire abstraction d'elle même en tant qu'existence, cela pour des fins strictement déterminées."

⁴Troisfontaines, S.J., De l'existence, I. 137.
relationship of being and thought. He understands that thought demands being, not analytically, but in a way in which thought refers to being. If this were not true, thought must dissolve itself and consider being as what remains. Marcel conceived thought as doing precisely this in his positive dialectic in 1912. He now sees that such a dissolution is resolved into a contradiction of thought thinking itself. Consequently, many idealists notwithstanding, being cannot be absorbed into thought. Furthermore, the act which grasps being must be beyond discursive thought. Therefore, thought is immanent in being. Marcel develops this conclusion in the following passage. "To assume that thought is immanent in being is to recognize with the realists that thought, once it exists, refers to something which surpasses it and which it cannot pretend to absorb into itself without betraying its own true nature." This problem of thought's natural reference to being will later be called intentionality and is the basis for Marcel's realist epistemology. It will be considered at length in Chapter IV.

If, then, the act which grasps being is beyond discursive thought, how does thought grasp being? Marcel says that it must be by an intuition of consciousness—"reflexive intuition"—beyond discursive thought. The noetic situation is something like this: I am face to face with being. I see it and yet I do not, since I,

5Marcel, Etre et avoir, pp. 49-50: "Poser l'immanence de la pensée à l'être, c'est reconnaître avec les réalistes que la pensée, dès qu'elle est, se réfère à quelque chose qui la dépasse et qu'elle ne peut prétendre resorber en soi sans trahir sa véritable nature."
the subject, am myself involved in being. Consequently, the intuition which grasps being cannot reflect upon itself directly but depends, as will later be seen, on secondary reflection.

Lest he still be confused with idealists, Marcel further explains this intuition. The subject does not posit the reality it affirms. The subject affirms reality because it is. This presupposes some prior reflection, since thought can reflect on being only if in some way being was previously known by thought. Since the intuition already supposes being as given in thought, Marcel notes that this prior recognition of being would regress to infinity unless an act of affirmation intervened. The affirmation, therefore, "I affirm it because it is," is put at the beginning. Being has laid siege to the self, and the subject intervenes between being and thought, but only as the subject is itself being. ⁶

This grasp of being, however, is a mystery and cannot be objectivized but only recognized. Further, Troisfontaines notes that an act of reflection cannot convert this participation in existence into an objective concept without a contradiction. An essential difference must be held between participation and objectivization. ⁷

Marcel then summarizes this very important advance. The sharpness of Marcel's own French brings out better than could a translation the firmness of his conclusion: "Je pense, donc l'être est: car une pensée exige l'être; elle ne l'enveloppe pas analytiquement.

⁶Ibid., pp. 141-142, 203-204, 43.
mais se réfère à lui."

It is now clear that a second type of reflection is necessary to recognize the first intuition. I do not immediately know this first intuition. Only a type of second reflection or, as it is termed earlier, a dialectic of experience, can discover being. Consequently, thought must be looked upon as a double process: spontaneous intuition, and a subsequent reflection grasping this primary intuition.

**NATURE OF THE SUBJECT**

The next theme to be considered is the nature of the subject-ego. Second reflection indicates some fundamental tension in the thinking subject to go beyond itself. This is what Marcel means when he says that reflection of the second power is absorbed into the first intuition of being. This ontological need is also redolent of Schelling, in whose doctrine of the tension between spirit and matter Marcel found a place for this creativity of the self.

If this subject is considered as a means of communication with other subjects, Marcel goes back to his notions in the *Journal*. The subject can only be a person who answers questions. This is possible by the subject's power to make himself "other." This is the fundamental possibility for expression. The subject can stand back from himself and his own ideas and thus make it possible to

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8 Marcel, *Etre et avoir*, p. 52.
pass those ideas to others. However, though the subject can separate himself from his ideas, he cannot abstract from himself as being, since he is besieged by being. Marcel calls this abstraction from self as being a *pretention*. It is important to note at this stage that Marcel maintains that it is possible for me to make an abstraction from myself as existing, as well as from my ideas, but not from myself as being. This abstractive process will later be termed "primary reflection." Attention must now be turned to the realm of the subject as being, the realm of mystery. Creativity, witness, faith, fidelity, and love are the responses evoked from a being who is involved or committed to being.

THE ONTOLOGICAL MYSTERY AND THE PERSONAL RESPONSE

First, an urge to create is evoked by the nature of this ontological participation. This creativity is based upon a fundamental attestation to reality at its foundation, an attestation of the senses and of the whole being. As Marcel puts so clearly, it is not the individual's destiny merely to submit passively to reality, to be committed to existence, but actively to engage in it, to recreate being in himself. In this creative attestation as witness, a person is free and may refuse. Consequently, his obligation is personal and serious and raises his creativity to the realm of value.

It should be noted here that Marcel's doctrine of creative witness is contrary to idealism, which holds that only the mind and not the senses attest to being. Nor can it be identified with the
self-creativity as expressed by Royce. In Royce's doctrine, each individual person ontologically creates himself and other individuals, as well as their personal relationships. The person thus individualizes both himself and others, by freely determining and limiting more and more the universal form of the Absolute. As Marcel expresses it, man is a "unique reality" to whom unity and uniqueness can only come from himself. The world of the individual is a world of his own making, a "fin incarnée." However much indebted Marcel might be to Royce for the notion of individuality creating itself, there is a decided difference. Marcel never identified the individual with the Absolute, as did Royce, nor did he attempt to eliminate the existential experience of the body as mediator in knowing.

The conclusions of this concrete ontology so briefly outlined above cannot be pursued, Marcel notes, in the "pigeon-holes" of logical thought. Rather, certain properly spiritual facts of experience such as fidelity and love must be analyzed. All these facts of experience, as was seen in the comments made on "reflexive intuition," indicate particular types of response to the ontological mystery. These responses evoked by a being actively engaged in reality must now, as Marcel recommends, be analyzed.

The first of these responses to be considered is faith or

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9Ibid., pp. 170-171, 177, 234, 245-246, 139, 168.

10Marcel, La métaphysique, p. 69.
fidelity. Maritain sees in Marcel's reflections on fidelity a solid proof of his ontological realism. He says: "Therefore, if I rightly understand M. Marcel's thought, if we follow its direction we shall conclude that a philosophy of life which confuses my self with the flux of my life is inconsistent with the experience of fidelity. The experience, the irreducible reality of what I experience and know as fidelity, is pregnant with an ontological realism." This fidelity can issue only from a being who feels himself involved; who feels, with an inward consciousness, that he is within a reality which at once penetrates and enfolds him. That reality, further, must be something which is absolutely given. It demands, therefore, an absolute commitment made with the whole of my being. Nor can fidelity be given to a thing; it must be given to a person, to an absolute person, to being itself, to the totality of what is. Consequently, a subject is involved in a permanent ontological status greater than himself which demands a personal commitment. This commitment is creative witness, or creative fidelity.

Marcel adds one final characteristic to the experience of creative witness. Since this creative witness involves the entire person or being of the subject as well as the being which is outside the subject, a tension arises between the subjective and the objective ontological factors in experience. Marcel found the

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recognition of a similar tension in the writings of Bergson and St. Augustine. 12

When the communication between beings is considered, the second creative response, that of love, comes into focus. With love the triad of questioner, object, responder, changes to a dyadic relation of intercommunication. In this dyadic relation the other may be considered in two ways. First, I can consider him as other qua other. I thus form a circle within myself and place his objectivized idea there. This is treating him as an "it" [lui] and is on the level of problem, as will be shown presently. On the other hand, I can open myself to him and treat him as a Thou [toi], not an "it." This is neither the realm of self or of other, that is objectivity, but of love or intersubjectivity. If it is an Absolute Person I love, I freely subordinate myself to this superior reality. Marcel says that love transcends the self and the other and establishes us in being. He notes that many scholastics find themselves in a rut precisely because the primacy of love is ignored. 13

Thus, by the creative witness to reality shown in faith, a person commits himself to being or the absolute being. By love, a person commits himself to another person, either human or absolute.

12 Marcel, Etre et avoir, pp. 173, 144.

13 Ibid., pp. 308-309, 63, 173-174, 155, 244. By scholastic Marcel means any school of philosophy which considers its own system as integral and closed. Thus the term applies to the Kantian system, the Hegelian system, the Roycian system, and perhaps to the systems of some Thomists.
ONTLOGICAL REALMS OF PROBLEM AND MYSTERY

It must be noted now that Marcel's doctrinal considerations are falling into two categories: one of mystery, which includes existence and being, myself, and intersubjectivity; the other of problem, that is, objectivity, self as abstracted from existence, other as other. Marcel gives the essential distinction between these two categories in the following passage.

In fact, it seems very likely that there is this essential difference between a problem and a mystery. A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I am myself involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity. A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which it is defined: whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique. It is, no doubt, always possible (logically and psychologically) to degrade a mystery so as to turn it into a problem. But this is a fundamentally vicious proceeding, whose springs might perhaps be discovered in a kind of corruption of the intelligence. 14

A problem, then, is the realm of the other qua other. It is in the order of objectivized thought and abstraction, and is susceptible of a definite technique. But most important, wherever a problem is found, the subject working on it is not taken into account but is merely presupposed. Consequently, in a problem the subject-ego is not considered. In a mystery, on the other hand, the "I" is most definitely involved. A mystery is something of which I am a part. Consequently, it is not objectifiable for me.

14 Marcel, Being and Having, p. 117.
In other words, it is a "problem which encroaches upon its own data and invades them, and so is transcended qua problem."\(^{15}\) From the subject-object point of view, Rosemary Fitzpatrick adequately summarizes for the purpose of this thesis, the relation between problem and mystery. "A mystery cannot be reduced to the elements that constitute it nor to prior elements and, consequently, discursive thought is not possible. It transcends the order of subject-object. A problem, on the other hand, is concerned precisely with this subject-object relationship and can be analyzed in terms of its precedent elements, while in the process one term or set of terms can be substituted for another."\(^{16}\)

The roots for Marcel's distinction between problem and mystery can be found, more or less developed, in the doctrines of Brunschvicg and Royce. Brunschvicg had taught Marcel that man by his liberty has the option of reducing thought to the objectifiable. Royce, in *The World and the Individual*, divides nature into the

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\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, p. 171: Marcel realizes that the term mystery might possibly be confusing to Catholics. He distinguishes as follows: "I should like to note that from my own standpoint the distinction between the natural and the supernatural must be rigorously maintained. It will perhaps be objected that there is a danger that the word 'mystery' might confuse the issue. "I would reply that there is no question of confusing those mysteries which are enveloped in human experience as such with those mysteries which are revealed, such as the Incarnation or Redemption and to which no effort of thought bearing on experience can enable us to attain" (*Philosophy of Existence*, pp. 30-31).

world of description and the world of appreciation. The world of description is that of science and nature, situated in space and ordered in a series, the world of concrete experience. The world of appreciation is the world of abstract evaluated thought, the world of metaphysics, spiritual, but not a world of ideas. This is the world of communication of concrete experience. The parallels between these doctrines no doubt started Marcel thinking toward problem and mystery.

BEING AND HAVING

Akin to the distinction between problem and mystery is that between Being and Having. Being has taken up a good part of the development so far and will continue to do so, but the phenomenological analysis of Having must be considered so that subsequent references will have meaning. In general, Having is in the order of "Other qua other" and therefore a Problem. The most characteristic note of Having, however, is the tension between what I am and what I have. This tension is similar to that between the subject as being and being itself. Consequently, Having is neither completely interior nor exterior, but rather is found in a scale where externality and internality can no longer really be separated. Of itself Having tends to destroy what I am. This tension seeks to make the subject an object, what I am, a Mystery, into what I have, a

Problem. Having, however, can be sublimated by creativity and transformed into being. The example he gives is body, the archetype of all Having. In one way I can abstract from my body and then my body is something I have, merely an instrument. But from another point of view I am my body. In this sense body can be used for creativity, fidelity, and witness. This notion of body as part of my creative being will figure prominently in Marcel's doctrine of participation.

We have now reached the important juncture between the early and middle realist period. Since this preceding period is so important, a short summary, a finale to the first movement of the symphony, is in order.

Thought now appears to Marcel as essentially of two movements. The first movement is a nameless primary intuition of being. The second movement is a reflection on the first, rediscovering in the first movement the nature of thought itself, the nature of the subject, the realm of being, and the creative responses evoked from the subject by being: witness, fidelity, love.

Through second reflection thought sees itself as involved in being and tending beyond itself. The subject is revealed as an incarnate being: bound to body in a concrete experience which negates the duality of body-mind, as well as the distinction between what is inside and what is outside the subject. Body thus becomes

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the mediator between thought and being. Further, thought sees itself as involved in the ontological mystery. The creative response demanded of the subject by this revelation of being expresses itself in a commitment to the reality of being. And being is the realm of spirit, of love, of intersubjectivity, of "Absolute fidelity to the personal Absolute," Being Itself.

Two principle doctrines stand out here. One is the need, the tension, the drawing of thought to a beyond or "other" outside the thinking subject, as typified by the tension in Having. The other is the condition of the subject as involved in a concrete existing universe and yet, through the ontological need, striving to rise above it. The first is the foundation of Marcel's epistemology: intentionality of consciousness. The second is the foundation for Marcel's concrete ontology: participation. This ontological order, the order of Being and Mystery, can only be recognized by a conscious person, one who is free to affirm or deny it. His is the obligation to open himself to Being.

The second movement of Marcel's realist symphony, the second dialectical ascent, began in 1935 and progressed to 1950. At this time one book and a series of articles appeared. The book was *Homo Viator: une métaphysique de l'espérance*, in 1944. Some of the articles, however, were often gathered together into collections and published as books. *Du refus à l'invocation* and *The Philosophy of Existence* were two such collections which drew on articles from this period of almost twenty years. One important article, published
three times, was "Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique." This small work first appeared in 1933 and was republished for the last time in 1949. He wrote "Aperçus phénoménologiques sur l'être en situation" in 1936. This was followed by "Ébauche d'une philosophie concrète" in 1938 and "L'être incarné..." [sic] in 1939. After the turn of the decade "Le témoignage comme localisation de l'existential" appeared in 1946, and in 1947 "De l'audace en métaphysique." Within the last few years before the Gifford Lectures in 1950, "The Malady of the Age: A Fanaticized Consciousness" was published. It would be inaccurate to say that these were the only writings produced by Marcel in this prolific period, but they are the articles which give a general trend to his thought and which were available to this author.

The titles of these articles show Marcel's preoccupation with such themes as existence, concreteness, being in a situation, witness, and being itself. All of these themes were introduced in the works of his earlier period, but in his realist period they become of primary importance.

The first theme to be considered in the first movement is that of thought in relation to being and existence. Marcel stresses the notion that thought must be a contemplation, a research by which thought goes beyond itself, as it were, to discover being. Being is irreducible and immanent to thought. It transcends the opposition

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between the being of the subject and the being affirmed by the subject. Cognition is thus enveloped in being, and opens for me my entire subjective being to a reality other than myself, yet still at the heart of myself. Thought, through secondary reflection, now enters the realm of mystery where the "given" is surpassed. In this realm the world is encompassed in the mystery of being. Thus my knowledge of reality must transcend all localized problems.

PENSÉE PENSANTE AND IMMEDIATE EXISTENCE

At this point Marcel coins a new phrase for his doctrine: pensée pensante. The philosophy of the pensée pensante is distinct from the pensée pensée of idealism. In this development Marcel will clearly distinguish his notion of participation. Thus far he has been speaking of participation more with reference to being, the realms of values. He will now discuss, rather, participation in existence. The two, of course, are necessarily connected. It will be seen subsequently, however, that existential participation is basically the foundation, the sine qua non, for participation in being.

DeCorte accurately describes the distinction between pensée pensante and pensée pensée. "Thought as thinking is immersed in immediate experience; it grasps being without the aid of all so-called psychological intermediaries. Thought as thought, on the contrary, is the fallacious result of an act by which the mind cuts the umbilical cord binding it to being and places itself outside
the universe. This philosophy of the pensée pensante, although it is essentially subjective, has nothing in common with subjectivist idealism. It is possible only when constant communication with being is maintained.

Thus, the point of departure for pensée pensante is the personal, concrete experience of participation in existence. The following quotation is crucial in Marcel and marks a new climax to his realism: "At the outset of this investigation we must fix an indubitable 'given,' not logical or rational, but existential. If existence is not at the beginning, it will be nowhere. There can be no passage to existence which is not a slight of hand or a form of trickery." Therefore, philosophy must start with the experience of existence as an immediate concrete participation in reality. The idea of concrete participation has been developing for many years. Marcel now crystallizes this notion as the incarnate subject, bound to body, indubitable existing, an immediate given. As a result of this primary participation the subject is also

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20 Marcel DeCorte, Preface to Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique (Paris, 1949), pp. 14-15: "La pensée pensante s'insère dans l'immediat: elle va à l'être par delà tous les intermédiaires dits psychologiques. La pensée pensée, au contraire, est le résultat fallacieux de l'acte par lequel l'esprit a coupé le cordon ombralcal qui le relie à l'être et s'est placé en dehors de l'univers."

21 Gabriel Marcel, Du refus à l'invocation (Paris, 1940), p. 25: "Au départ de cette investigation il nous faudra placer un indubitable, non pas logique ou rationnel, mais existentiel; si l'existence n'est pas à l'origine, elle ne sera nulle part; il n'y a pas, je pense, de passage à l'existence qui ne soit escamotage ou trickerie."
manifestable to others. I can know myself and he known to others only as I am an existing body. This body has an unthinkable, therefore a mysterious, relation to my soul and yet is not synonymous with me. The precise relations between body, soul, and self remain at this stage of Marcel’s thought still obscure.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON INTERSUBJECTIVITY

The manifestability in existing leads Marcel to consider the communication between subjects. It should be noted that Marcel is here penetrating more deeply the idea of love or intersubjectivity which had been described in *Etre et avoir* in 1935. He gives some history of the new development in this theory. Marcel tells us that, while carrying out his job during the war, he often had to give answers regarding X or Y. He later considered them not so much as answers but as responses to an appeal. The one to whom the appeal was addressed, himself in this case, could not be an object, a mere tabulation of answers. The appeal was personal and an object does not take the "me" into account. He sees, then, that the other person could be treated in two ways: as an object, and as "we." As an object he becomes more external the more I make him external to myself, and he might as well be absent from me. As "we," the categories of "same" and "other" can be transcended through some mutual experience. Formerly he spoke of this twofold consideration of object as the dissolution of the triad into the dyad. As I penetrate myself by reflection and contemplation I
become less external to myself and more sympathetic to the "other." I then allow him to penetrate me. This realization brings Marcel again to his doctrine of intersubjectivity. In *Etre et avoir* he saw love and intersubjectivity as a creative response of a being actively engaged in reality. In *Du refus* he identifies this engagement in reality as concrete participation in existence. The characteristic note, however, of love and intersubjectivity in both loci is that the subject rises above the plane of existence and emerges into the realm of value or being.

Marcel now turns his attention to coordinating many of the other ideas he had previously considered. The notions of creativity, witness, fidelity, and sensation will now develop into his mature doctrine of "creative fidelity."

**CREATIVE FIDELITY**

He first turns his attention again to the nature of creativity. This creativity is a free acceptance or denial of the being's concrete situation. Creativity must mean, then, to create *chez moi*. By this free act one takes into himself from outside himself and participates more fully in a certain plenitude.22

Marcel next expatiates the nature of witness. He draws a distinction at this point between witnessing and attesting. Attestation is purely external, a phenomenon, depersonalized. We attest

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only to a fact in the present, *hic et nunc*. I attest to something external to myself. Further, I must attest; I am obliged; I have no choice in the matter. In this note of obligation attestation and witness are most different. To witness is personal, not restricted to the immediate, and refers to another in the presence of transcendence. This other is the real which demands from me a total commitment. One is a witness to a person capable of responding when the objective element is suppressed. In analyzing this notion of witness and the subject as witness, Marcel approaches very close to the Augustinian notion of truth.

I can be a witness only because I have a "light" which I can give. I can refuse, of course; but then I would be a traitor to the light, and sink to the level of mere spectator. I possess this light only partially and act to increase it when it is not directly visible. It is precisely because this light is not directly visible that witness is a continuing process. Consequently, I must look upon witness as fidelity to a light received, or, as Marcel terms it, a grace received. Witness, then, is a sort of communication, a giving of oneself. It is not indicative of a void to be filled, but more of a consecration to another, a giving of something received. Furthermore, it is an appeal demanding a response. He gives the beautiful example of a little child offering flowers for a word of praise. Things are given to us as a gift, a gift which enriches the being of the one receiving. The gift itself appeals to us to witness to it. In other words, in the gift is
embodied an appeal for us to give of that which we have received. Furthermore, the giver of the gift reveals himself in his gift, as the receiver reveals himself in his response. The object, in this sense, takes on a new quality, a being-for-another in particular. Consequently, by my witness to the gift as well as by my receiving the gift, things are personalized and communication between beings is effected through me. As I receive so do I give.23

Marcel next applies this analogy of the gift, or light received, to sensation. Sensation is the prerequisite for this witness and response to reality. It is a necessary condition, as has been said, if I am to know myself. The act of sensation is to receive, as a gift, but also to witness or respond to that gift, to open myself, to give myself, to create chez moi. Both the reception and the creativity in sensation must presuppose the existence of myself and of the world. My body, then, must be the intermediary between myself and the world, between myself as closed or open, establishing this receptivity and creativity.24 The Bergsonian category of the "open" helps Marcel to develop this notion of sensation as witness. He feels, however, that Bergson never realized the implica-


tions of his discovery.25

Creativity in cognition, however, should not be overstressed. For creativity, first of all, implies a docility to the real which is richer than all the creativity of the mind alone.26 Ostermann calls the experience with the real a rencontre and sees in the witness evoked, as did Maritain in fidelity, Marcel's determinate realism.27

Lastly in this movement, Marcel connects these notions of witness and creativity with fidelity in what he now terms "creative fidelity." It must be noted by this time how these notions of Marcel gradually dovetail into each other and indicate that higher realm spoken of before. They are as different facets of the same thing. That thing is being itself. It has been shown that creativity demands a being in a state of permeability. This presence which is outside is also avec moi; there is a state of coesse between the being that evokes fidelity and that responding.28 Consequently, due to creative fidelity I am a being opened to reality with which I can communicate, not only passively and objectively but actively and with my whole being.

25 Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 130, xiii.
26 Gabriel Marcel, "De l'audace en métaphysique," Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, LII (1947), 239.
Clearly, then, at the end of this second realist movement Marcel has distinguished two realms: that of primary, piecemeal existents; and of unity, participation, values. The latter is the realm of being. Sensation is the foundation for both realms. Things are given to us as gifts in sensation. This demands a double response on our part. First, docility in the face of reality, and second, active creativity. The body, then, mediates between things and ourselves, and is necessary for communication between beings. As we receive this gift or light from things we respond by creating, thus giving something of ourselves to the gift received as well as passing on the gift to others. As this creativity of ourselves to the gift expands and grows we emerge from the plane of piecemeal existents into the realm of hearts, coesse, intersubjectivity. It is this realm of being that further explains the possibility of unity in sensation, existence and communication, but only after this realm has been recognized through the secondary reflection which followed upon the primary experience of concrete participation. Thus Marcel's dialectic transcends itself and finally affirms being as irreducible.

The third movement of Marcel's realist symphony began in 1950; it is his third dialectical ascent. The culmination of his doctrine came in 1949-1950, when he was asked to give the Gifford lectures at Aberdeen University in Great Britain. The collection of his lectures was published in two volumes entitled Le mystère de l'être in 1950 and presents the most systematic presentation of his
complete doctrine. Other books have since been published: L'homme contre l'humaine in 1952; Le déclin de la sagesse in 1954; and his latest book, L'homme problématique in 1955. To the knowledge of this author he has not published anything since.

In this final stage of development Marcel will systematize and crystallize many of his previous unconnected observations. Thus will appear definitely the starting point for his metaphysics— the experience of the concrete ego. Further, he will elucidate the thought process by which this primary situation is illuminated. Finally, he will indicate again the realm of being where the varied experiences of human existence are unified and are given meaning. The development in this third movement will be taken mostly from Le mystère de l'être.

Propaedeutic to his doctrine must be a consideration of his developed method. In general Marcel says that it is experience illumined by truth which gives the starting point for all philosophy. Experience is a concrete situation with inconceivable multiplicity, and it is the task of reason to illuminate the implications in the situation. Thought must then progress to some satisfied unity in this multiplicity. This experience is not a given or an object, but a single lived reality.

TRUTH AS ILLUMINATION

The second advance to be noted is the principle of progression in thought. In general a subject is seized with an inward and
outward yearning to create above himself. This does not mean that he wishes to go outside himself but to deepen himself by an intimately lived experience. An illumination is required to reveal the depths in an experience. The fact itself does not give this illumination. Only the mind can illumine the fact, and this illumination is truth. Truth must be considered both as a striving toward and as a pushing from within. Marcel gives the example of two conversationalists. They forget themselves in the conversation and seek truth from within themselves as well as from the object. Sometimes all the illumination a subject can give the object is appreciation, but he has still advanced in truth. Truth, then, can be looked upon as a *milieu intelligible*, a background for discourse or dialectic which appears incomplete at the beginning and somewhat resolved at the end of the quest. The discourse can be between two persons or between one person and himself. 29

The method of progression in *Le mystère* is substantially the same as in the previous works we have analyzed. The subject begins to reason on a plane of existence and sensation and is drawn to a higher realm, the realm of being. Marcel distinguishes between this higher realm as "the intelligible region" which is "not our natal soil," and, later in the same passage, the lower realm of existence, "the world we do naturally belong to, the world of our sense experiences, the world that constitutes us as existing

29Gabriel Marcel, *Le mystère de l'être* (Paris, 1951), I, 8, 45, 15, 76, 72, 89.
creatures."30 We have seen this double realm steadily developing, and it now becomes of cardinal importance. The progress is carried on through ascending levels which, however, serve to deepen the understanding of the self. The method is not abstractive but always active and dialectical through a phenomenological re-search.

STARTING POINT: IMMEDIATE EXISTENCE OF THE EGO

The phenomenological re-search in Le mystère begins with the concrete experience of the "ego." At this period, then, Marcel unites his reflections on existence with those on the nature of the subject and concludes that here is the logical starting point for metaphysics. My own existence is indubitable; and, as was seen before, it is only due to this existence that I am manifestable to others. This "ego" can be treated both as an object, "some-body," or as a subject, "I." As an object it is as any other some-body, radically detached from myself and lacking in interest for me. When considered as subject, however, it is a lived intimacy with myself; I am my body. My body is not something given to me, nor merely an instrument, but it is an unobjectifiable possession not independent of the possessor. Consequently, I am bound to my body in so far as my life is incarnate in it. Marcel speaks of the body here as the link between the subject thinking and the object

30Marcel, Mystery of Being, I, 76. This passage does not appear in the French edition of the work published in 1951. Chapter IV ends just before it. For a possible explanation see the letter of the translator in Appendix III.
thought, or the external world. Consequently, the body can appear as a problem when it is objectified, and as a mystery when it is not. 31

PROGRESSION: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY REFLECTION

At this point in Marcel's development the double realm of reflection takes on a new note. We have seen before that he spoke of the first intuition and the secondary, uniting reflection. Now he recognizes three movements in thought: the primary unnamed and intuitive experience; the fragmentizing primary reflection; and unifying secondary reflection. Primary reflection follows the original intuitive experience and tends to dissolve the unity of our primary intuition by spontaneous unformed thought which interprets sensation as a message and falls into a contradiction. Secondary reflection works on the data of experience plus the results of the primary reflection. Consequently, secondary reflection makes intelligible the primary intuition by revealing the immediacy of sensation, participation, and the degrees of participation of the subject in concrete reality. Thus it is the function of secondary reflection to effect unity from separateness—the ego as one with existing concrete reality through body. Troisfontaines' analysis of this discovery is pertinent: "I remain a being to whom reality means something and whom, in a most profound manner, it interests.

A (subsequent) reflection upon my first dissecting reflection reveals its fallacious character. Secondary reflection compels me to recognize that the isolated entity, the "I" for whom the world would be a mere happening, cannot be considered apart from the world from which I have pretended to sever it. Secondary reflection, then, the movement of re-unification, unites the notions of subject, existence, being, and experience into concrete participation. It is necessary to and results in the recognition of the individual's primary ontological status—participation immersed.

Considered in itself secondary reflection is creative contemplation. It is the thought of one's inner presence, a communication in the higher world of being, truth, and intersubjectivity. This contemplation is neither a practical looking nor a scientific analysis. It is rather an inner awareness of the outer world, the ingathering of oneself in the face of the real, transliminal to imagination, a drawing near to reality but not abandoning it as in abstraction. Delhomme distinguishes contemplative secondary reflection from primary reflection by saying that its purpose is more to deepen understanding than to see.

32 T. Troisfontaines, S.J., De l'existence, I, 138: "Je reste un être que la réalité concerne et, au sens le plus profond, intérresse. Une réflexion (ultérieure) s'exerçant sur ma première dissociation réflexive en décèle le caractère fallacieux; elle me contrainte à reconnaître que cette entité séparée, ce 'moi' par rapport auquel le monde serait comme adventice, ne se laisse pas penser à part de ce dont je prétends le séparer."

Secondary reflection presents an adequate solution to Marcel's persistent subject-object problem. The subject can no longer be considered as the abstract self of Kant's pure reason, nor some spatial inner reality. Therefore, in the last analysis, a return to the self is achieved by this creative contemplation whose final result is different, more enriched, than the starting point. The object, on the other hand, is recognized as one of the "external circumstances." In themselves such circumstances have no autonomous validity. Nor do they have any independent existence outside the self, or they could never become matter for my inward ordeal, as Marcel has frequently termed the effort of the subject to create itself. They are a part of the self in so far as they positively foster the inwardness of my creative spirit.

This last observation must not be taken in an idealist sense. Marcel does not mean that the external circumstances are created or projected by the subject. What he does mean is that they are bound to the subject by bonds of existence and are part of him in so far as he gathers them into himself. It would be more correct to say that the external circumstances create the "ego," if it be understood that this creativity depends on the light of the mind as well as on the free acceptance of the object by the subject.

"MY LIFE"

Marcel now introduces a new element into his discourse, the notion of "my life." Since this notion will take us far beyond
the scope of this thesis, it can only be considered briefly. It has been seen that participation means having a part in a broader whole. Consequently, if I am to understand the meaning of my life I must appeal to the beyond in which it shares. My life must depend on some other purpose other than itself to give it meaning since in itself it is only a disconnected narrative of works and chaotic acts. Consequently, since I can also refuse this appeal to the beyond, my life has meaning only as I participate freely and creatively in something beyond my life.34

A definitive progression is obvious in Marcel's doctrine at this time. In general, this doctrine is pointing to a beyond, an area of mystery where being and value are fused. Much of his effort in this last ascent has been to develop the nature of the thought which can pierce this realm and communicate in it. Three themes particularly evolve into this doctrine of the beyond.

The first of these is the nature of experience as the starting point for a concrete metaphysics. It is not any existing experience but the lived reality of the incarnate ego. He will later refer to this starting point as "participation immergée."

In his later book Marcel sheds further light on the two subsequent movements of thought. Secondary reflection can be considered as the controlling power over primary reflection. "The power of the second degree which I have proposed can only be regarded

34 Marcel, Le mystère, I, 149-150, 169.
as meta-technical with reference to the abstractive power of the
first degree. . . . But it must not be forgotten that the power
of the second degree is essentially reflection."35 Marcel now
realizes the necessity of primary reflection as fundamentally ante-
cedent to the second. The import of the second is to reflect upon
the first, thus reuniting by contemplation what was separated by
first reflection.

The third development noted is the new knowledge of the en-
riched "ego" in the light of secondary reflection. This ego is
immersed in a situation which may be called "my life." The life of
the ego points to this beyond for intelligibility. The inwardness
of this self which cries for fulfilment in the beyond is distinct
from the objects surrounding the subject over which he has a prob-
lematic control.

Marcel finishes the first volume of Le mystère with some fur-
ther developments in the communication between beings in this
realm of the ontological mystery, and some further reflections on
the nature of the self. To explain the phenomenon of the duration
of the self recourse must be had to a new category: emplacement,
and here the French becomes difficult, since no word in English
adequately expresses all that Marcel means by emplacement. It

23: [L]e pouvoir du second degré, dont j'ai fait état, ne peut
être regardé que comme métatechnique en principe par rapport à
celui du premier degré. . . . Mais n'oublions pas que le pouvoir
du second degré, c'est essentiellement la réflexion."
means being placed in a situation, not by chance but by design. It is placed in this situation not by just any being, but by a supreme Being. This is my particular status as a being who is free, and who can re-create this being for himself. All this is emplacement; perhaps we could least awkwardly call it the "transcendence of being-here." 36

With these last remarks Marcel concludes the first volume of the Gifford Lectures. From his own words it is clear that in his first experience of the ego as a concrete existing being he is a realist. This immediate experience of concrete existence merges into the fullness of being. That element intrinsic to thought which draws it upwards as well as that which explains the existence of the other and the urge of the existent to be is intentionality. Intentionality of consciousness, then, is the foundation for Marcel's realist epistemology. To this important groundwork our attention must now be turned.

36 Marcel, Le mystère, I, 206-207.
CHAPTER IV

A REALIST EPISODEMOLOGY: INTENTIONALITY

Intentionality in Marcel's doctrine can be considered as the urge or pull of a being to go beyond itself to the "other." Prini in fact describes Marcel's entire doctrine as "the intentionality of the soul whole and entire,"¹ and the description is not inappropriate. It has been seen that Marcel begins his reasoning in immediate concrete experience, and the intellect ascends to higher levels of experience. Intentionality of consciousness and thought is the outward urge or pull of the intellect. For Marcel, intentionality indicates other objects as existing, other persons, and Being.

SOURCES FOR INTENTIONALITY

A consideration of the authors whose works we are certain Marcel read up to this period of his life occasions interesting speculation as to their influence in Marcel's doctrine. They were primarily Royce, Maritain, and Edmund Husserl. Marcel's earliest acquaintance was with Royce in 1917 or shortly before. However, as will appear presently, Marcel did not at this early time recognize

the intentionality implicit in his own doctrine. However, the ob-
servations of Royce concerning intentionality seem most probably
to have led Marcel to become more conscious of intentionality.

that an idea is nothing more than an incomplete intention of the
object. The fulfilment of the idea is always what the idea itself
at first intended. To clarify this internal purpose of an idea,
Royce adduces two examples. These examples will also help to clar-
ify Marcel's intentionality. First, in trying to remember a name
the mind seeks to fulfil or realize a purpose only dimly conceived
at first. Second, the same is true in a mathematical investigation
in which certain conditions are present but only intelligible as
pointing to a solution of a problem. Every idea, then, by its very
nature, tends to a conformity with an object.2

Marcel's explicit consciousness or, as he terms it, "discover-
y" of intentionality occured after he read Maritain's book, Réflex-
ions sur l'Intelligence.3 This book was first published in 1924
and a second time in 1926. Therefore, from his own admission, Mar-
cel did not become conscious of intentionality in his own work be-
fore this time.

Marcel next read Husserl on intentionality, and he states in
an article already quoted, published in 1950, that it was Husserl

2Marcel, La métaphysique, p. 48.
who proved the intentionality of consciousness by developing cer-
tain medieval ideas.\textsuperscript{4} The first book in which Husserl speaks of
intentionality was published in 1901 and again in 1928. His second
book appeared in 1929. Husserl no doubt owes much of his own doc-
trine to the "Descriptive Psychology" of his teacher Franz Brentano.
Brentano taught that psychic phenomena, that is, any form of con-
sciousness, was intentional by nature and pointed to a reality be-
yond itself. Husserl's doctrine of intentionality depends much on
that of Brentano as well as on his own characteristic phenomenolo-
gy. Husserl speaks of the phenomenon as "the thing in itself, per-
ceived in its self-owned being."\textsuperscript{5} The nature of consciousness is
to point to this phenomenon as its proper object. Collins' analy-
sis of Husserl's intentionality is apt at this point. There is an
evident similarity between this doctrine of Husserl and the finali-
ty of ideas as described by Royce. "It is characteristic of con-
sciousness to be of something, and that to which it refers is the
field of intentional objects. .... The mind intends its object,
and the office of phenomenology is to bring this objective inten-
tion to fulfilment."\textsuperscript{6}

It must be concluded, then, that Marcel first became aware of
intentionality between 1924 and 1930, although he had been conver-

\textsuperscript{4}Marcel, "Malady of the Age," p. 2.
\textsuperscript{5}Edmund Husserl, \textit{Formale und Transendentale Logik} (Halle, 1929), p. 248.
sant with it from Royce as early as 1917. The first explicit awareness seems to have come from Maritain about 1926, and the second from Husserl about 1929. In speaking of his own intentionality, Marcel later acknowledges explicitly this influence: "My personal position on the point agrees almost completely with that of M. Jacques Maritain, and coincides on the other hand with the German theorists of intentionality, that is, the contemporary phenomenologists." This latter reference is certainly to Husserl and possibly to Brentano as well.

Two observations are necessary here. First of all it is important that the discovery of intentionality occurred in that period in which Marcel was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with idealism and turning, though he was probably unaware of it, to realism. From 1925 to 1928 he published almost nothing philosophical. Yet in 1928, with *Etre et avoir* his realism is practically confirmed, and in 1929 he begins his analyses of intentionality. It seems probable, then, that he read Maritain and Husserl on the point between 1925 and 1929. But -- and this is the second important thing to note -- Marcel did not accept intentionality merely as an accretion to his own thought. It is only a discovery crowning his own long and arduous ascent. Clearly, he had used the phenomenological method from the beginning of his writing. Husserl and

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7 Marcel, *Etre et avoir*, p. 279: "La position personelle sur ce point coïnciderait à peu près complètement avec celle de M. Jacques Maritain, et rejoindrait d'autre part les théoriciens allemands de l'intentionalité, c'est-à-dire les phénoménologues actuels."
Maritain merely confirmed Marcel's thought at this time and identified by name an element in his original investigations. Therefore, it is the contention of this thesis that Marcel did not add realism to his own doctrine as one would put on a coat, but that it was precisely intentionality, inherent in his own doctrine from the beginning, that explains his emergence from idealism into realism. This is the more cogent because he never recognized intentionality while propounding idealism.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF IMPLICIT INTENTIONALITY

From an historical point of view, Marcel's early doctrines from 1912 to 1925 were implicitly intentional. In 1912 he set the problem when he recognized that "in some general way being is present in the mind." In 1914 he discusses the planes of consciousness progressively surmounted by thought. He further recognized the two elements fundamental for intentionality: a dualism in consciousness, and the ability of consciousness somehow to go beyond itself. The dualism was recognized when he saw that thought could distinguish between itself and what was external to itself. Again, he recognized that one's own existence as well as that of others is possible only inasmuch as we are manifestable as bodies. Consequently, he draws the distinction between what is within and what

8Marcel, "Les conditions dialectiques," p. 640: "l'être est d'une manière générale présent dans l'esprit."
outside thought, as well as between the knower and the bodily object known. Consciousness, however, is also able to go beyond itself since it can suppress the exteriority to which it was originally bound and go beyond this immediate experience. Further, consciousness can think an intelligible content which is not body and is not posited in space. Thus from his earliest writings Marcel recognized the ability of mind to go, as it were, outside the subject thinking.

From 1915 to 1919 it has been seen that Marcel was working on the idea of the triadic dialectic. This dialectic presupposes "somebody else" since it is an appeal for an answer and requires somebody to give the answer. Therefore, this triad reveals a type of intentionality between the personal subject asking and the "somebody else" answering, with regards to the third term or object. During this period also Marcel finds that the relationship of mind, of body, and of sensation depends on the external world. He was also then preoccupied with Royce and recognized from him the intentionality of the idea. Even though Marcel was now considering intentionality, he did not recognize it, as was shown above, as the intentionality of the realists.

In the period from 1919 to 1923 we find the first explicit mention of intentionality, although in a Kantian context and referring more to the will than to the intellect.

Now, too, Marcel began working with his notion of an appetite for being revealed in dialectical progression. The mind seeks what
is; that is, something beyond the phenomenon.

Further, in his notion of experience intentionality is expressed implicitly. Experience is an objective fact and an internal disposition. In the immediate experience the being does not realize the fullness of what is, and this unrealized fullness implies a non-actualized presence.⁹

At the end of the period of implicit intentionality it is clear that Marcel understands consciousness as being able to transcend itself. Although bound to body, it seeks beyond this participation in existence to find what is. Through those same bodies existents are in contact, and the triad of questioner, responder, and object implies that when one subject questions he appeals for an answer from another external to himself. In the later part of this first period he speaks of invocation and finds it necessary to distinguish what thought thinks into penser à, which at this time is merely thinking of the other, and penser, which seems to indicate an abstracted essence. He ends on this note and continues his philosophical writing seven years later after reading Maritain and Husserl.

**EXPLICIT INTENTIONALITY: INTENTIONAL PRIMARY CONSCIOUSNESS**

The period of explicit intentionality traverses 1929 to 1933, in its developmental stages and continues into his mature period.

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His first notions concern the nature of thought, and it is here that explicit realism will be found as well as the basic tenets of his theory of intentionality.

Marcel first faces the problem of the principle of identity, which can be enunciated as A is A. If this principle is denied, thought evidently cannot have any bearing on reality. It is a first principle in the Thomistic sense, and self-evident. However, idealists hold that thinking is only the positing of the A. Marcel brings forth two arguments to prove that this is impossible and that thought must be "of other." This terminology is almost identical with that of Husserl. First, Marcel says, if thought is not "of other," it ceases to be a thought, since thought is not a vacuum but identified and circumscribed by a content; it must be "of something." Second, if I do not think of thought as "of something," I cannot think of myself without saying that I must be nothing.10

In this realist period, then, the primary meaning of intentionality is: thought must always be "of something"; it indicates another. The theory of cognition of a prominent Thomist, Etienne Gilson, presents a striking parallel to Marcel's on this point. Gilson says that thought is not self-enclosed, but that it grasps, or rather, necessarily implies, an object.11 Marcel fundamentally

10Marcel, Etre et avoir, p. 39-40.
subscribes to this when he says that "here I rejoin Thomism, at least in so far as I understand it. Thought is in no way a self-relation, but on the contrary is of its nature self-transcendence." 12

For Marcel, the indication of the other, implied in intentionality, can be toward others as existing or as being. He holds that it is almost the essence (in the sense of "nature," as explained in Chapter I, p. 17) of the other to exist and that one cannot think of others without thinking of them as existing. Nor can I think of myself as existing separately from them. Collins notes this existential tendency in Marcel according to which he insists that thought must transcend itself and in this way go out to others and in some way to being itself. He says that "Marcel ... insists upon what Hartmann calls the transcendence of knowledge, its essential ordination to something other than itself and more than its own ideal properties." 13 Here might also be distinguished Marcel's double participation in existence and being, both indicated by intentionality.

INTENTIONALITY OF PENSER AND PENSER À

In this period the distinction between the two movements of

12 Marcel, *Étre et avoir*, p. 40: "C'est ici que je rejoins le thomisme, tel du moins que je le comprends. La pensée n'est nullement relation avec soi-même, elle est au contraire par essence self-transcendence."

thought in Marcel's development was beginning to shape, and he called it the distinction between penser and penser à. In general he distinguishes between these two modes of thought in the following paragraph. "In summary, thinking bears only upon essences. Notice how such depersonalization, perfectly legitimate in this case, is impossible in the order of thinking of. Here it is doubtless some one who thinks of some being or of some thing." Merely to think, penser, is in a manner to abstract, to recognize or build an artificial structure, bearing only on essences. This can be a thing or an individual person who is thought, but it must be depersonalized as an "it" and not a "thou." He says in continuing the above passage that the more penser is filled in, the more it approaches penser à. This is nothing more than to say that the more an object is restored by secondary reflection to its immediate situation in existence, the more it is recognized as real.

His elaboration of penser à is here extensive. This is the German denken, which means thinking of a being or an event in such a way as to make depersonalization impossible. Only a certain person can "think of" a certain being in a manner in which space is actively denied. That is, the person "thinking of" something brings the object into himself and establishes an intimate community between the two terms. He is here striving for the realm of the

14 Marcel, Etre et avoir, p. 41: "En somme, la pensée ne porte que sur les essences. Remarquer que le dépersonnalization, parfaitement légitime dans ce cas, est au contraire impossible dans l'ordre du penser à. C'est bien un tel qui pense à tel être ou à telle chose."
"thou," which grows into that of intersubjectivity.  

The next necessary element in *penser à* is that I can only think the other as existing, whether it is a thing or a person. If it is isolated from existence, it becomes a *pseudo-essence* and *penser* applies. As Marcel says: "I think of a thing, of a being; and existence is here bound to that act of thinking of something or of someone... But if I isolate existence from them, I think it, that is, I treat it as an essence, or more exactly a pseudo-essence."  

He next considers *penser à* negatively. On the supposition that others are merely my thought of others, what would be the consequences for their existence? In this case, existence would be unthinkable, and would involve positing the subject in an endless circle from which he would never emerge with the existence of those objects. This is properly positing the subject-object duality at the beginning of the thought process, which can only terminate in a fruitless search for existence. On following out this supposition the subject would end in impossible solipsism. Marcel goes on to say that the knower must in some way be open to the object if it is to penetrate him. He must not form a closed circle within himself. If the subject does so close himself, the other would merely

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16 *Ibid.*, p. 51: "Je pense à une chose, à une être; et l'existence est ici liée à cet acte de penser à elle ou à lui... Mais si j'isole d'eux l'existence, je la pense, c'est-à-dire que je la traite comme une essence, ou plus exactement comme un pseudo-essence."
be my idea of the other, other as I make him, not other qua other. To put it differently, I neglect the intentionality in my consciousness and instead employ penser and convert the other into a pseudo-essence.

INTENTIONALITY OF BEING

In the next analysis Marcel seems to be considering intentionality indicative of the being of others, rather than of their existence. He begins with a refutation of the thesis that intentionality is merely an analysis of the states of consciousness. The first hypothesis of this erroneous thesis is that I know only my states of consciousness. If this is true, Marcel asks, why are these states definitively limited only to this or that? It would seem, Marcel argues, that states of consciousness presuppose some other reality as a referential axis for themselves. On the original hypothesis of this theory, however, states of consciousness are alone knowable. Therefore, this referential axis cannot be known. Consequently, unless knowledge is to end in a contradiction, the world cannot consist merely of pure states of consciousness. Some "other" is necessary for their intelligibility. Marcel goes further and says that the idea of "other" seems to imply some other order, which would be that of being. This spontaneous and irresistible assertion of the other as being cannot be explained. The idea itself is the indelible mark which the other has left on me. The final conclusion he draws is that the ability of thought to go
out of itself can be understood only in the light of reflection.

In this last analysis is found the link by which the notions of \textit{penser} and \textit{penser à} can be joined to those of primary and secondary reflection. Primary reflection works on the content of \textit{penser}; it is the activity of thought which results in \textit{penser}. Consequently, by primary reflection a thing or a person is abstracted from existence and being, and thought, \textit{penser}, as object or pseudo-essence. Secondary reflection is the activity of thought by which existence and being are restored to the abstracted object, and the object is thought of [\textit{penser à}] as existing and personalized by the subject. Consequently, secondary reflection actualizes the potential intentionality in the idea of \textit{penser}, thus bringing to light, in \textit{penser à}, the object as existing or as being, or both, if the object is a person.

In summary, then, at the end of this first realist period of explicit intentionality, Marcel recognized that consciousness is essentially of an "other," external to the knower. The subject does not posit this "other." This would deny the principle of identity since I am myself and not "other" and moreover would make any thought of myself unthinkable. Nor is this consciousness merely "states" of consciousness. Knowledge is of a definite something. Mere "states" would imply an unknowable "other" of the thinking subject to explain the states. Therefore, fundamental to thought is our recognition of the other which cannot be explained.

Marcel further elaborated the distinction between \textit{penser} and
penser à. The first concerns objectivized essences and structures, and the second persons. If the object is a person or being, thought denies space; and the subject must open himself to the other unless he would form merely an idea of other. If the object is a thing, penser à must think it as existing. This places the communication between the subject and object above mere existence in the region of love and intersubjectivity. This is the realm of the "thou" [toi], as Marcel puts it. This realm of love is neither of other completely as other, nor of self completely as self. His method, then, as has been said frequently, is a phenomenological analysis of the content of thought, which by nature seeks to grasp the reality of the object at first imperfectly conceived in the subject. 17

FURTHER ELABORATIONS OF INTENTIONALITY

From 1933 to 1949 Marcel stresses the fact that philosophy is a re-search. The world is not merely my representation of it. Otherwise my statement of the world would be meaningless since there is no reason why I think this restricted thing and not that, nor why my knowledge increases. He says: "Again reflection will induce me to ask myself how I can in fact think of that restriction and where I get the idea of a certain thing which would be outside my own representation of it; even if I sufficiently think of that

17 Ibid., pp. 152, 155, 77-78, 219, 299.
something only enough to judge it unthinkable."\textsuperscript{18} And so whether I know something to be a certain thing or nothing, I must think in terms of a limit put upon me by something outside my own representation of it.

Working with the notion of witness, he again finds the necessity of intentionality, since to witness to something or someone is unintelligible unless it has a reference to another.\textsuperscript{19}

In the period from 1949 to 1954 he elaborates a little more the nature of the intentionality of consciousness, further relates \textit{penser} and \textit{penser à} to the development of primary and secondary reflection, and brings in the notion of "my life" as indicative of intentional witness.

His significant point in the first of these elaborations is that, though consciousness is essentially of the other, I cannot be conscious of myself without first having been conscious of other. Consciousness of self, then, is a derivative and not a starting point; it depends on first passing to the "other" and then returning.\textsuperscript{20} This is consonant with realism as Gilson holds. For realism does not begin with the analysis of a thought, but with the analysis of cognition, which implies two. Consequently, before the

\textsuperscript{18}Marcel, \textit{Du refus}, p. 44: "Encore la réflexion m'amènera-t-elle à me demander comment je puis penser en fait cette restriction et d'où me vient l'idée de quelque chose qui serait audelà de ma représentation, même si je ne pense ce quelque chose que juste assez pour le déclarer impensable."

\textsuperscript{19}Marcel, "Le témoignage," p. 183.

\textsuperscript{20}Marcel, \textit{Le mystère}, I. 60-61.
subject is known as such it is known as thinking an object. This is the starting point for Gilson's realism, and the notion of intentionality is inherent in such a position. As the Thomist describes it: "Something beyond thought would not be thinkable unless certain thoughts were cognitions, and unless every cognition implied something beyond thought."\(^{21}\)

Marcel then goes on to develop the notion that cognition is not a mere seizing or taking, nor is it the recognition of subjective states. States usually refer to the fluctuation of the body, but in this sense they are merely objects conceived as distinct from the self. Consciousness, however, seeks some ideal permanency not found in the fluctuating bodily states. Therefore, a state of consciousness which is fluctuating contradicts that consciousness which is of a permanent state. Furthermore, states are spatial, and reflection and consciousness are not.\(^{22}\) However, consciousness, even though not spatial, is not beyond the pale of experience since what is beyond experience is nothing. Troisfontaines summarizes well Marcel's conclusions regarding the relationship between experience and thought. Experience is not anterior to thought. Thought must be founded in existential experience if it

\(^{21}\)Gilson, Réalisme méthodique, p. 63: "Un au-delà de la pensée ne serait pas pensable, si certaines pensées n'étaient des connaissances, et si toute connaissance n'impliquait un au-delà de la pensée."

\(^{22}\)Marcel, Le mystère, I, 59-60.
is to be intelligible. However, thought is not limited to a merely existential experience. Thus in every experience there is an aspiration toward a higher degree of experience, and this is another reference to intentionality.\footnote{23}{Troisfontaines, De l'existence, I, 191.}

The notion that comes into prominence now is that of intentionality as it refers to being itself, or to the realm of being. The point to be brought out is that Marcel here recognizes a transcendence in the intentionality of thought. This comes to light when he begins reflecting on his own life. One's life goes beyond the consciousness of that life. This consciousness cannot constitute that life since one had life before he was aware of it. Therefore, there must be a beyond where life's purpose can be discovered. This consciousness of one's life is not absolute, since it is alterable and progressive and can in no way be divorced from concrete experience.\footnote{24}{Marcel, Le mystère, I, 182.}

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF MARCEL'S EPISTEMOLOGY**

This properly concludes the historical development of Marcel's theory of intentionality. We will now attempt to summarize by uniting the foregoing reflections into a coherent statement of Marcel's realist epistemology.

The starting point for Marcel's philosophy is "I exist," or
better, since I am bound to my body and to other existents through my body, "we exist"—nous sommes. Sensation is the primary datum, creative, yet docile and open to reality. Thus even in sensation some intentionality is present.\(^{25}\) For body is the existential fulcrum for sensation. Body's existential experience is, on the one hand, only a part of the universe, yet, on the other, indicates the totality of the universe. Consequently, we are certain that others exist outside of our own experience of the moment, because of intentionality.\(^{26}\)

Negatively considered, intentionality is not merely subjectivist states of consciousness. This would be inadequate to explain knowledge. Positively considered, intentionality is the thought of the "other" or thought itself must be meaningless. First, intentionality indicates others as existents, upon which the subject depends for consciousness of himself. Nor can it be objected that the subject merely posits these objects in reality. Such an hypothesis ends in a contradiction of the principle of identity—the "self" is not the "other." This spontaneous recognition of the existence of others is further indicated by the tension between what one is and what one has. Second, intentionality indicates being, a transcendental, a beyond necessary to explain the purpose my life requires and demands. Consequently, my consciousness is not solipsistic.

\(^{25}\text{Marcel, Du refus, p. 16.}\)
\(^{26}\text{Marcel, Journal métaphysique, pp. 261-262.}\)
The first noetic experience, then, is a nameless mass, similar to the first impressions of a baby, which must be elaborated by further reflections. Marcel says in a later work:

These expressions, 'for the sake of the concrete, on behalf of the concrete' have about them a flavour that may surprise the unreflective mind: one might in fact be tempted to suppose that the concrete is what is given at first, is what our thinking must start from. But nothing could be more false than such a supposition: and here Bergson is at one with Hegel. What is given us to start with is a sort of unnamed and unnamable confusion where abstractions, not yet elaborated, are like so many little still unseparated clots of matter. It is only by going through and beyond the process of scientific abstraction that the concrete can be regrasped and reconquered. 27

The first movement of thought elaborating this initial nameless experience is primary reflection. This primary reflection tends to disintegrate, to depersonalize, and to abstract mere structures of thought. This is the "going through . . . the process of scientific abstraction." That reflection following upon the primary reflection according to which the concrete is "regrasped and reconquered," is secondary reflection, the going "beyond . . . the process of scientific abstraction." This secondary reflection is fundamentally recollection and contemplation, creative fidelity and witness to the primary experience. Through secondary reflection I think of others as existents, penser à, and this implies an openness to them. Lastly, secondary reflection achieves a thinking "towards" the realm of being. "Consciousness is essentially consciousness of, or (rather more precisely) consciousness towards.

27 Marcel, Mass Society, p. 119.
It reaches out to a reality from which it can be separated only by a vicious abstraction."\(^{28}\)

Therefore, the intentionality of thought and consciousness answers the "why" in Marcel's epistemology: why thought moves to the other; why thought rises to being; why my life seems so inadequate in itself and points to a beyond. The intentional nature of thought itself, which would never allow Marcel to rest in subjectivism, explains as well why he progressed from idealism to realism.

**MARCEL'S INTENTIONALITY AND THOMISM**

Since Marcel admits influence from Thomists and idealists, it is proper at the close of this chapter to indicate the affinity of his epistemology to theirs. Prini, a Thomist, believes that by reading Thomistic authors Marcel saw the insufficiency of dialectic as such and recognized intentionality and transcendence in thought.\(^{29}\) This is partially true in that it was due to at least one Thomistic author, Maritain, that Marcel recognized the intentionality in his own thought. But as has been pointed out, Marcel used intentionality implicitly before coming under the influence of any Thomist. Furthermore, it was not only Thomism which pointed out intentionality but the idealism of Husserl and Royce as well.

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\(^{28}\) Marcel, "Malady of Our Age," p. 2.

\(^{29}\) Prini, p. 51.
It is true that Marcel acknowledged an agreement with Maritain on this point at least. In addition Marcel came close to the epistemological observations of another Thomist, Gilson.

Doctrinally, when the validity for other existing things arises, Thomistic and Marcelian thought frequently parallel. Consciousness is by nature "of something other," Consciousness for both Marcel and Thomists is always reflective. Direct knowledge is not consciousness. For Marcel one becomes conscious of direct knowledge in the initial unnamed experience only after primary and secondary reflection. But neither Marcel nor Thomists admit that it is sufficient merely to analyze the states of consciousness or consciousness itself to validate an extramentally real object. Both have recourse to something else to supplement this intention of the mind. For example, Hoenen, a Thomist, in his Reality and Judgment uses reflection on the simple apprehension before the judgment to make explicit what was implicit in intentionality. 30 Marcel holds that consciousness is bound to body, and only as a body participates in a concrete world is consciousness of the other possible. This primary experience is in the realm of mystery. Thus both Thomists and Marcel realize the need of some ontological foundation before the epistemological can take place. Once this subject-object relation in concrete experience is had, then thought can reflect and become conscious of itself.

30 Peter Hoenen S.J., Reality and Judgment (Chicago, 1952), Chapter V, pp. 137-150, 164-171, especially 165.
Given the similarities, however, it is perhaps precisely in this epistemology, as Collins believes, that Marcel would find most difficulty with Thomism. "It is doubtful, however, whether Marcel's standpoint can be characterized as Aristotelian, let alone Thomistic. Beyond a broad acceptance of the realist stress upon the primacy of being, he has always experienced difficulties with the detailed epistemological explanations offered by Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange, the leading Thomists whom he consulted at the time of his conversion to Catholicism." It might be observed, finally, that many Thomists as well find difficulty with the epistemology of these two leading Thomists. Even Thomists themselves differ in their approaches to epistemology.

**MARCEL'S INTENTIONALITY AND IDEALISM**

The next question, perhaps more to the point, is why Marcel did not remain an idealist using, fundamentally, the same method as that of the idealists Husserl and Royce. In brief, it is because the starting points of idealists and Marcel differ. The idealists begin with *je pense* and proceed to analyze abstract thought, or the states of consciousness, even though they attempt to take the intentional nature of this phenomenon into consideration. Beginning with thought as abstracted, the idealists, from the start, cut off the object and consequently cannot but end in thought. Marcel, on the other hand, begins with *nous sommes*.

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31 Collins, Existentialists, p. 239, n. 19.
This takes into account the position of the body as the fulcrum of existence. Proceeding to intentionality as such, the idealists are necessarily subjectivists, while Marcel, though not eschewing the subjective starting point, recognizes that the external situation is necessary to define the subject himself. Consequently, the big difference is that Marcel, as the Thomists, recognizes the insufficiency of intentionality itself, while the idealists rest with it.

There is a problem for Marcel as to whether intentionality indicates being as well as existents other than the subject. He himself poses the difficulty. "Thought turns toward the Other... The whole riddle is to discover whether the Other is Being." Intentionality indicates the existence of the other and moves in the realm of being. However, does it grasp the being of the other? The solution lies in Marcel's unique understanding of Being. As has been seen, intentionality depends on a previous experience, the junction with the object. Intentionality arises only after the subject and object have been joined in the experience of concrete existence, the mystère ontologique discovered by secondary reflection. This mystery is beyond epistemology as such, and is non-objectifiable. However, thought does not remain in this initial experience but refers by nature to something beyond itself. This beyond is being. Therefore, thought is somehow a participation in being. Troisfontaines clearly expresses Marcel's thought on this point: "[C]ognition is suspended from a mode of participation

32 Marcel, Being and Having, p. 30.
which no epistemology can hope to elucidate since the epistemology itself supposes it. The act of thinking is incapable of being represented and must grasp itself as such." Consequently, it seems that thought rises to a higher participation than that of existence. This is the realm of being. It is the opinion of this author that Marcel's thought never grasps being-as-being in a Thomistic sense. The most that can be said is that through intentionality a subject is borne to a realm, a dimension of thought, where he is made aware of a personal participation in the fulness of what is.

In summary, then, the primary noetic experience of a subject is nameless. The second movement of thought is primary reflection, which separates and abstracts, followed by secondary reflection, which unites and joins. Through secondary reflection reality is illumined and made intelligible. The subject and other existents are recognized, first, as participating in existence; and second, as participating in being. In this secondary movement of thought intentionality is first employed, and secondly, recognized. If I ask how I know that others are existing and being, the response is that it is the nature of my consciousness to so inform me. By secondary reflection the intentionality in the primary experience of "otherness" is made explicit.

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33 Troisfontaines, De l'existence, I, 276: "[L] a connaissance se suspend à un mode de participation dont nulle épistémologie ne peut espérer rendre compte parce qu'elle-même il suppose. L'acte de penser est irreprésentable et doit se saisir comme tel."
Finally, it is clear that both ontologically and noetically, existential participation must take precedence over intentionality. Ontologically, as Troisfontaines points out, "[t]he idea is intentional because rising from the heart of that primary participation." Noetically, it is only when mind, having already recognized existential participation of other realities, turns upon itself and seeks to explain that knowledge, that intentionality comes to light. Troisfontaines confirms this primacy and further indicates that historically the two doctrines developed simultaneously.

"[I]t is from participation that Marcel has been led to recognize intentionality. . . . And as there is question of the same reality as it were, from the front and from the rear, I am tempted to believe that the progression of the two was mutually parallel." 34

Consequently, even though intentionality and concrete participation progress in parallel lines, intentionality presupposes participation for its validity and in itself is insufficient to refute idealism. It is to this concrete participation in existence as Marcel's ontological foundation that we must now turn our attention.

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34 Information in a letter to the author from Father Troisfontaines, October 30, 1954: "L'idée est intentionnelle parce qu'elle surgit à l'intérieur de cette participation primitive." "[C]'est de la participation qu'il est venu à reconnaître l'intentionalité. . . . [E]t comme il s'agit un peu du recto et du verso d'une même réalité, je suis tenté de croire que les deux ont progressé parallèlement."
CHAPTER V

CONCRETE PARTICIPATION--INCARNATION

Since Gabriel Marcel began his philosophizing as an idealist, an exposition of his mature realism demands a discussion of his starting point. This chapter purposes to explain Marcel's realist point of departure. This is the experience of the concrete existence of the self in communion with other existents through body and sensation.

However, three points discussed above are presupposed in this chapter. First of all, there is the epistemology developed in the foregoing chapter. Marcel's thought process consists essentially of three steps: first, the nameless experience; second, the primary reflection on this experience or the abstractive movement; third, secondary reflection, by which the primary experience is reunited in its entirety. Secondly, it should be recalled that the nature of thought is to point to or indicate an object external to itself. This object may be other existents or being. Intentionality is thus the indicator for realism. Thirdly, intentionality is valid only if the participation from which it emerges is valid. This participation--concrete participation--must now be established as validly real.
DEFINITION OF CONCRETE PARTICIPATION

A working definition of participation must be indicated. Participation, etymologically considered, means partem capere, or the taking of a part. This part may be material or immaterial. Therefore, participation means some sharing of parts in a whole. Phenomenologically, the same conclusion is reached. A few examples will bear this out. It is commonly said that an actor takes a part, participates, in a drama. A person may participate in some movement whether social, religious, or otherwise. Catholics also speak of participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Thus it is clear that fundamentally speaking participation means a sharing in something.

Marcel, in general, by concrete participation means to stress a person's sharing in existence. The immediate experience of a human person is the consciousness of his own concreteness of existing as bound to body and sensation. Moreover, there is a double aspect to this primary experience, the first subjective, the second relative; for it is through body and sensation that a person is in contact with other concrete existents. The first experience of concrete participation [participation immergée] is merely an exclamatory awareness, while through secondary reflection at a later stage the implications of this participation are developed. A further participation is elaborated by Marcel as participation in Being [participation émergée]. Therefore, a dual participation must be noted. The relationship between the two is signified by
the title of Roger Troisfontaines' book, *De l'existence à l'être*. Marcel felt that this title adequately expressed his doctrine.¹ From "immersed participation" in existence a person must rise to "emerged participation" in being. Since the latter participation is beyond the scope of this thesis, it will be treated only summarily at the conclusion of this chapter.

**EARLIEST NOTIONS OF BODY, SENSATION, EXISTENCE:**

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATION**

Early in 1914 Marcel became interested in the notions of body, sensation, and existence. He realized that a dialectic must begin with an immediate experience of consciousness. This experience consists of different aspects of one act of the mind positing simultaneously the object, its existence, and a relation to the body of the subject. It will be recalled that Marcel was an idealist at this time. He attempted to formulate a definition of existence as contact or relation with one's body. His subsequent dialectic reveals the body as a necessary datum, but insufficient in itself for knowledge. In fact, this exteriority dependent on body must be negated for a person really to know.

Consequently, at this early date it was the reality of the body which Marcel felt to be the central problem of philosophy.²

¹From a personal interview of the author with Father Troisfontaines, S.J.

²Marcel, *Journal métaphysique*, pp. 26, 125.
He saw that body is not simply a juxtaposition to mind, as Descartes had held, but that it is bound up in some way with the construction of the external world. But the most important advance made at this time was the recognition that body must become a fulcrum for all existents. Sensation was mentioned only in passing.

Though these are realist themes, Marcel was still solving them as an idealist—perhaps not so much that of absolute idealism, but certainly in the Kantian dichotomy of a double experience in consciousness. One is the experience-limit as a datum in space, and the other that which posits this datum in space. Marcel admits a Kantian context here, and speaks of the transcendence of thought over space to resolve the dichotomy. "It would obviously be absurd to see in all this any spatial realism. Anyone can see immediately that this whole theory is consonant rather with Kantian idealism."  

In the period from 1915 to 1923, in which time he became acquainted with Royce, Marcel further developed the notions of body and sensation, and took up the analysis of feeling. All these notions he unites in the immediacy of existence.

Marcel begins with the notion of body as necessary for communication between persons. It must be the mediator between the fact and the questioner. Therefore, the body appears to be an absolute instrument between the subject and object. Since mind

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3 Ibid., p. 27: "Il serait manifestement absurde de voir dans tout ceci un réalisme de l'espace; on comprend aussitôt, en effet, que c'est bien plutôt avec l'idéalisme kantien que s'accord toute cette théorie."
is only where body is, the subject can exercise attention only if body is the medium of mind. This means, further, that a person--I--can exercise attention to something only as I pay attention to myself as a feeling being. Body is thus a condition for all objects. However, if I think of body as itself an object, it ceases to be mine, since an object is indifferent to the "I" thinking. Therefore, the body-as-mine enters the realm of the meta-problematic. Collins sees in this important step the foundation for Marcel's future realism.

My body becomes a problem only when I step back and attempt to detach it from me as one object among others. By that very act, it ceases to be my body and so renders the problem insoluble from the start. It is a strictly non-significant question to ask how my body can be related to the self of which it is the body, for an instrument of the self is no constituent of the self. Existence, sensation and 'my body' cannot be reduced to an aporetic state. Either they are admittedly meta-problematic data that serve as the conditions for every problem, or the mind is doomed to a futile quest for problematic solutions where none are possible. So close is the interdependence between the immediate bases of the objective and conceptual that this phase of Marcel's doctrine has been termed with some justice a 'mysticisme empiriste.' (J. Wahl, Vers le concret, Paris, 1932, 245) [sic].

Marcel then further analyzes the notion of sensation and joins the conclusions regarding sensation to the conclusions on body. Sensation cannot be a message, since this would mean that one must go outside himself to verify its authenticity. Nor can it be a mere translation, since this means to give a datum to oneself which

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5 Collins, Thought, XVIII, 681.
was originally given to the subject in another way. But the only
given in sensation is the physical event itself. Therefore, the
import of sensation must be in its immediacy and the absolute me-
diation of sensation must be joined to the absolute mediation of
body.

In this immediacy of sensation, Marcel has the key that needs
little turning to allow him to emerge into realism. For, as Gilson
has pointed out, in order to comprehend and grasp the meaning of
existential realism the act of sensation must have the nature and
value of a principle of knowledge.⁶

FEELING

Marcel next analyzes the experience of feeling. The body,
first of all, is continually felt as the absolute condition for all
other feelings. A feeling implies a presence that cannot be actu-
alized, therefore, a real conjunction. It cannot merely be communi-
cation since this presupposes feeling. Feeling, then, means, not
to receive, but immediately to participate.

The progression so far reveals an immediate, non-mediatizable
element in experience which is body, sensation, and feeling—an im-
mediate participation. But there is also a relative element in
this immediacy. As a body and sensation are mine, they are imme-
diate. It is also possible, however, to consider body as an

⁶Etienne Gilson, Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaiss-
instrument and sensation as a message. According to these interpretations my body and sensation are distinct from myself. Therefore, Marcel is able to distinguish between the realms of problem and mystery; between primary and secondary movement of thought.

INCARNATION

Marcel next connects the above notions with that of existence. He originally held that the subject posits the existence of the objects constructed in space. Therefore, existence is necessarily bound to consciousness and, for the same reason, to a body. He asks himself at this period whether the new reflections on body will influence his former conclusions on existence. If body and sensation are unobjectifiable immediates, and if existence is only a prolongation of body, then existence must be just as unobjectifiable and just as immediate: incarnation. Therefore, existence can no longer be considered a predicate nor the fruit of a dialectic, nor an abstraction, but must be the non-instrumental mediation, along with body and sensation, in existential judgments. Existence is no longer conferred upon objects since objects are in the realm of predicates and abstractions, but existence must be the immediate starting point of all dialectic. Furthermore, between me and thing there is the same relation as between me and my body. I am attached, as it were to reality through my body, and things depend on me as I on my body. Therefore, if I am to communicate, to act on the external world, it can only be inasmuch as I am united with, rather
as I am my body.  

At the end of 1923, Marcel defines existence as myself grasping my body simultaneously as object and non-object; an immediate mystery. The existence of the external world must be of the same nature as my body; and therefore, as I cannot define my relationship with my body, neither can I define or conceptualize that "other" as it exists.

Further developments of the nature of existence appear in 1925 in Marcel's Existence et objectivité. This short treatise was published in the last stages of his idealism, in which he progressed from the immediacy of existence to the necessity of sensation, feeling, and body—exactly the inverse of his earlier progression. E. L. Mascall's observation is here pertinent: "Strictly speaking, I cannot conceive-a-thing-as-existing, I can only affirm or deny that it exists."  

Existence, then, must be the indubitable given. Marcel brings forth two proofs for this. First of all, to doubt existence is to say that it is not possible to affirm, "that exists." But this doubt presupposes some idea of existence which the subject hesitates to apply to the "that." Therefore, it seems that between the idea of existence and the experience of existence there is no guaranteed contact, since we doubt the application of the idea considered as a whole. If this is true, the idea of existence

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7 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, pp. 253, 251, 267, 261, 266, 305.

must be nothing, existence is meaningless, and our experience is senseless. But we do have the experience of existence and not merely an idea of existence. Hence, existence must have meaning.

The second argument begins with a definition of doubt. Marcel describes doubt as a provisional and recognized rupture of a particular attachment or cohesion which can only be expressed where there is a duality in thought. But, as was shown, existence cannot be a predicate, and in reality the existence of a thing and the thing itself cannot be separated. Therefore, to doubt existence requires a decree, since whatever is given is given as existing. The actuality of any experience is surmounted by the mind deliberately cutting itself off from it, putting aside the irreducible and primary elements of experience. Existence, then, if it is to be real, must be the necessary immediate. This consists in an unquestioned assurance, primary and indemonstrable, of an existing universe; not a principle, i.e., a universal principle, but an immediate cognition, a participation.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON SENSATION AND BODY

Sensation, as well, is similar to the immediacy of existence, and is incapable of characterization. Sensation must be looked upon as an immediate participation in a surrounding atmosphere from which it cannot be separated. And the whole of sensation and existence is bound to a body.

To consider the body as an instrument involves the entire
notion in an endless regression of physical instruments, and the body is not mine, but is distinct from me, and I cannot explain it. Any attempt to explain the relationships between me and my body conceived as distinct from me can only be in terms of a hypothetical relationship in which I place myself in a different condition from that which gave rise to my first inquiry about body. Therefore, when I refuse to consider my body as an object, or in other words, as an instrument, I establish by thought a reincarnation between me and my body. This reincarnation is the work of secondary reflection, which reunites that which was united in primary experience and disjoined by primary reflection.⁹

Participation is recognized at this period as an immediate indubitable condition of oneself in existence through body and sensation. Existence is no longer called into doubt. However, regardless of how realistic this might sound, Marcel is still conceiving participation as transcendent to the duality of body-mind and is still in a Kantian context. He admits this at a later date. "I do not believe I am wrong in saying that, epistemologically speaking, even in Existence and Objectivity, I adhered basically to a Kantian line of thought. It seems to me today that fundamentally participation appeared to me as transcendent to the subject-object dichotomy."¹⁰ To evolve from this Kantian line of thought Marcel


¹⁰Marcel, letter to the author, December 4, 1954: "Je ne crois pas me tromper en disant que sur le plan épistémologique, même dans
must by reflection pierce beyond the objectivity of the existing, sensing, incarnate subject in contact with things and the Kantian phenomena into the actuality of the noumena.

FIRST REALIST CONCRETE PARTICIPATION

Between the years 1928 and 1933 Marcel managed to accomplish this transition without, however, the dubious use of inference. At this time he achieved the most important insight in his development. For on the conclusion of this progression depends the validity of his realism. Participation in existence is the immediate experience of incarnation, in which consciousness of the self as existing and as bound to body cannot be separated. This immediacy of my own concrete existence is concrete participation. Therefore, since in this first experience subject and object are not distinguished, we have the key to combat Kantianism. If thought starts from the subject-object duality, it can never rejoin them; but according to Marcel, the primary experience is not of duality but of unity--my body exists. This is the essential starting point of metaphysics.

Incarnation--the pivotal 'given' for metaphysics. Incarnation--the status of a being bound to body. A 'given' inscrutable to itself; in opposition to the cogito. Of that body I can say neither that it is I, nor that it is not I, nor that it is for me (as an object). At once the subject-object dichotomy is transcended. Inversely, if I start from this dichotomy as a basic principle there will be no logical

Existance et Objectivité, je m'en tenais au fond à une ligne de pensée kantienne. Il me paraît aujourd'hui que la participation se présentait au fond à moi comme transcendante par rapport à l'opposition du sujet et de l'objet."
hocus-pocus which will enable me to rejoin the unity of that fundamental experience. This experience will inevitably be avoided or refused, which comes to the same thing.\footnote{Gilson, \textit{Réalisme méthodique}, p. 49.}

Nor is this existential situation solipsistic, but it is the proper position of a being-in-the-world. Through his body the subject is immediately in contact with all other existents. These existents as well as the subject are parts of the universe. As I cannot place myself outside the universe, I cannot objectivize it; and again there must be an immediacy which denies duality. There are not, then, two orders that must be joined; but in Marcel's doctrine the duality is suppressed in a unity that is a primary experience--I, my body, the world. Gilson aptly describes what Marcel has here stated: "la saisie directe de l'existence des choses dans une sensibilité."\footnote{Gilson, \textit{Etre et avoir}, p. 11: "L'incarnation--donnée centrale de la métaphysique. L'incarnation--situation d'un être qui s'apparaît comme lié à un corps. Donnée non-transparente à elle-même: opposition au cogito. De ce corps, je ne puis dire ni qu'il est moi, ni qu'il n'est pas moi, ni qu'il est pour moi (objet). D'emblée, l'opposition du sujet et de l'objet se trouve transcendée. Inversement, si je pars de cette opposition traitée comme fondamentale, il n'aura pas de tour de passe-passe logique qui me permette de rejoindre cette expérience; celle-ci sera inévitablement écluse, ou recusée, ce qui revient au même."}

From 1934 to 1938 Marcel did little publishing, and from 1938 to 1950 came the series of essays mentioned on pp. 66-67, in Chapter III. Attention must now be given to Marcel's central doctrine of participation as it developed in these essays and in \textit{Le mystère de l'être}.\footnote{11Marcel, \textit{Etre et avoir}, p. 11: "L'incarnation--donnée centrale de la métaphysique. L'incarnation--situation d'un être qui s'apparaît comme lié à un corps. Donnée non-transparente à elle-même: opposition au cogito. De ce corps, je ne puis dire ni qu'il est moi, ni qu'il n'est pas moi, ni qu'il est pour moi (objet). D'emblée, l'opposition du sujet et de l'objet se trouve transcendée. Inversement, si je pars de cette opposition traitée comme fondamentale, il n'aura pas de tour de passe-passe logique qui me permette de rejoindre cette expérience; celle-ci sera inévitablement écluse, ou recusée, ce qui revient au même."}
Any philosophy that claims to be realist must lay down as a first principle the recognition of existents. The primary existent is myself. Not *je pense* nor *je vis* but rather, *j'éprouve*. This philosophy of *j'éprouve* is not a new doctrine of Marcel but merely a further development of two aspects of concrete participation already noted. The first of these is the existential position of a person as *être incarné*, the indispensable condition for knowledge. The second is the creativity of sensation.

1. Condition for Knowledge: *être incarné*

It seems characteristic of concrete participation and also of participation in being for Marcel to use *j'éprouve*. In this term is brought out the simultaneity of the subjective starting point and the initial contact with other existents, necessary for knowledge. This is the immediate unity of experience, *ich erlebe* [I experience], the experience of a concretely existing being who knows and can be known through its own body. Consequently, as I am my body, my existence is manifestable to others, and theirs to me. This unthinkable relationship between me and my body is that of an *être incarné*. Man knows properly as an incarnate being, not a disincarnate spirit or mind. The relation of me and my body is thus the foundation for proper human knowledge.

2. Creativity of Sensation
Here Marcel further analyzes the notion of creativity observed before. Sensation is not merely a passive reception, but is a creative response. The physical event underlying sensation cannot be understood merely as a given to consciousness. Rather, sensation must translate the physical event into knowledge. Thus sensation is a receptivity and an activity, "a welcoming something from outside oneself into oneself." Therefore I must be open to a reality other than myself with which I can communicate. Sensation, then, can be considered in two ways: as non-objectifiable, where it is body-as-subject; and as objectifiable, where it is considered as not-mine. In the first case sensation is immediate, metaphysical, and ultimate. In the second case sensation must be considered as a message. Sensation cannot be demonstrated but is a first datum. This is in accord with realism as Gilson describes it. The error precisely of demanding an intellectual demonstration for the validity of sensation is that of idealism. "Difficulties arise when the philosopher attempts to convert the certitude of sensation into demonstrable certitude proper to the intellect. At this point are born the classic objections of idealism against the validity of the testimony of the senses."

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13 Marcel, Du refus, p. 41: "accueillir chez soi quelqu'un du dehors."

14 Ibid., pp. 39, 33.

15 Gilson, Réalisme thomiste, p. 197: "Les difficultés commencent seulement lorsque le philosophe entreprend de transformer cette certitude sensible en une certitude de nature démontrable qui
Marcel goes on to stress the creative aspect in sensation. He holds that the concrete situation, on the one hand, actually makes me. On the other hand, if this sensation be considered as a message and not as a subject, the body is an object and can be placed in the realm of problems. His final note is that I am free to deny this immediate subjective participation and convert it into the abstracted subject-object duality, in which case I do violence to the fact and would end in idealism. Whereas, if I accept this immediate datum and re-create it within myself, I am witness to what exists outside myself and in some way bring it into myself to become a part of my own existence. Existing reality thus becomes a part of me.16

FINAL STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF CONCRETE PARTICIPATION

LE MYSTÈRE DE L'ÊTRE

In Le mystère we find the final development of concrete participation. First Marcel elaborates the notion under the passivity of participation and distinguishes the various gradations in this phase of participation. Later he will elaborate the activity in participation.

serait l'oeuvre de l'intellect. C'est alors que naissant les objections idéalistes classiques contre la validité du témoignage des sens."

1. Passive Concrete Participation

The passive aspect of participation involves the immediacy of "I exist," as an exclamatory awareness and an outward manifestability. This is neither the cogito nor the sentio, because any inference destroys the immediacy of the experience. Sum is the hallmark of affirmation, or better sumus. The body in this immediate experience can be considered as subject or object. If the body is treated as object, the immediacy is destroyed; the body as subject must mediate cognition or thought falls into the world of abstractions which incarnation of its nature transcends. This ego in the primary experience is an immediate massive datum of existence not transparent to itself. It is not completely dematerialized since the body is used as an instrument and has possessions which imply things. However, neither is it completely material, or an infinite regress of bodies would be necessary to explain its activity; the unity in experience would be unintelligible. Therefore, the existing ego is rather a fundamental feeling of myself—a feeling passively considered—which cannot amount to merely objective possession, or to any instrumental relation, or to something which could be treated purely and simply as identity of the subject with the object. This is the fundamental indubitable experience with which philosophy must begin. To deny or to abstract from this experience is to substitute a product of the mind for reality. This fundamental feeling of the concretely existing ego is the recognition of
concrete participation.17

Marcel next distinguishes the grades of participation in this passive phase of the doctrine. There is first the purely objective participation, as for example, the share in a piece of cake. This is mere possession and can be ideal in the sense that I can get it for another. The second degree is the objective-subjective participation, as when one takes part in a ceremony. This is the particular personal expression of some objective announcement. However, it can still be ideally conceived since I am able to project myself in thought in order to accomplish this degree. The third degree is that of non-objective participation, as prayer and sacrifice. This is a particular ceremony which is a special aspect or indication of a greater participation.

Marcel then distinguishes this non-objective participation into two divisions, participation immergée and participation émergée. This is the most important conclusion in Marcel's notion of concrete participation and that about which we have been speaking and to which the reflections on body, sensation, and feeling have been directed. Participation immergée, or immersed participation, is participation in existence. Participation émergée is participation in Being. A conscious, contemplative, free being, therefore a person, arises from participation immergée into participation émergée—de l'existence à l'être.

2. Participation *immergée*

For the purpose of this thesis the notion of participation *immergée* is most important. Consequently, this notion will now be developed at length. At the conclusion of the chapter will be put a brief discussion of participation *émergeée*. In itself, any lengthy discussion of this notion would take us far beyond the thesis.

In participation *immergée* the ontological concrete starting point for philosophy is given. This immersed participation is the metaphysical status of the knowing subject. Secondary reflection reveals it as a common feeling and an inner presence, transcending what can be seen and had, similar to the mysterious link which binds a peasant to the soil. It is purely immediate experience, a participation in which we are immersed.18

3. Active Concrete Participation

But, as has been seen, Marcel does not rest with the merely passive aspect of participation in the philosophy of *l'éprouve*. From the beginning he has insisted that an active element is also present. In this period of his mature doctrine he coins a new term, receptivity, which transcends both activity and passivity.

Receptivity implies the situation of a being-in-the-world, accenting now not the subjective aspect of participation but the relative or communicative. Active participation is to receive

18 Ibid., 128-134.
Such active reception requires a deliberate orientation of mind and feeling and is therefore possible only for a free person. In other words, a stone may participate in existence, but this is merely passive; an animal may participate in existence through sensation, but not fully. Participation, as Marcel wishes the notion to be understood, requires a person who can orient himself to existing reality, recognize and react to it, and somehow re-create it within himself—chez soi. This presupposes a deliberate welcoming attitude, a free predisposition to respond. Consequently, a spectator whose only motive for observing reality is mere curiosity, or an empiric looking only to the future, does not actively participate in reality. What is demanded is a here-and-now response of an individual with a sure grip on existence.19

This will be developed later into the highest form of participation, creative contemplation, participation émergée.

This responsive attitude is further clarified by two examples. To re-create chez soi is more closely akin to the work of the artist than to that of the scientist. An artist professes to re-create the present form of things. This requires a self-commitment as well as contemplation of the thing to be re-created. The scientist, on the contrary, professes the non-responsive attitude. He manufactures for the future; his work depends on the material conditions of workability. His is the attitude of a spectator who

19Ibid., 135-136.
makes as if he would participate, but refuses to do so.20

SUMMARY

At the end of Volume I of Le mystère Marcel has completed the foundation—the realist point of departure—for a future metaphysics. In summary, this starting point is incarnation, concrete participation in existence, j'éprouve. More precisely, participation immergée is the initial, primary, existential starting point shrouded in the mystery of cognition—a mystery in which the subject encroaches upon its own data. One's own body is recognized as the fulcrum for all existents, both of the "I" and of the "other." The body is not an object, but is the fundamentally felt personalness of sensation and feeling, the subject's own unobjectifiable experience. Body is thus the indubitable basis for knowledge of one's own and other's concrete existence. In the primary stage this experience is only passively felt in the immediacy of participated reality. When thought begins to reflect upon this primary experience, it first divides into subject and object, and later, through the activity of secondary reflection reunites, reincarnates this primary experience. Secondary reflection shapes and explains the primary experience, noting, by the recognition of intentionality, the unique situation of a being-in-the-world. Even secondary reflection does not exhaust the meaning of this primary experience.

20 Ibid., 136-140.
since it is part and parcel of the mystery of being. This primary experience is not a problem which can be put before the scientist and exhausted. Rather, contemplation, akin to that of the artist, brings a person to participate more and more fully in the primary existential experience. Consequently, concrete participation is a two-edged tool verifying not only the existence of the self in reality, but also the concrete reality of other existents with which it is in communion. Thus Marcel's starting point is not cogito, not sum, not even le sens, but rather j'éprouve, nous sommes, or coesse. Marcel DeCorte has given an adequate summary of this concrete existential starting point. He has pointed up, as well, the richness of this experience as also involving the subject in participation émergée or participation in Being.

We here come to the heart of Gabriel Marcel's philosophy, the invisible center of gravity around which all his researches revolve. Let us designate this core with a reputable but unavoidably inadequate term: participation, or more exactly perhaps, communication; and express, more or less accurately, the first affirmation elicited by this participation: esse is essentially coesse. Incarnation is coesse of mind and of life; metaphysical cognition is the coesse of thought-thinking and of being: the first conditions the second, but incarnation is itself conditioned by its own coexistential structure. In other words, the knowledge I have of myself as myself and of the other as other, would strictly not be possible unless there is a pre-ontological and pre-predicative solidarity as its principle and sanction.

21 DeCorte, Preface to Position et approches concrètes, pp. 16-17: "Nous touchons ici au noyau de la philosophie de M. Gabriel Marcel, au centre de gravitation invisible de toutes ses recherches. Nommon-le d'un vocable accrédité, mais inévitablement déficient: la participation, ou plus exactement, peut-être, la communication, et exprimons d'une manière approximative l'affirmation première qu'il diffuse: esse est essentiellement coesse. L'incarnation..."
DeCorte expresses very well, by the terms pre-ontological and pre-predicative, the fundamental ontological status of a person—coesse—before the abstractive process of primary reflection, or the metaphysical secondary reflection can function. Therefore, Marcel's starting point is clearly not a fabrication constructed by ontological thought, but an initial metaphysical concrete given that is later recognized as the starting point by subsequent movements of thought.

MARCEL AND THOMISTS ON PARTICIPATION

Before the thesis is concluded, something can fittingly be said concerning Marcel's relation with Thomists on this doctrine of concrete participation.

Perhaps the most obvious parallel between the two doctrines is that both Thomists and Marcel agree that the properly human way of knowing is neither sensitive nor intellective, but the conjoined operation of both. Thomists make this explicit by joining body and

est coesse de l'esprit et de la vie; la connaissance métaphysique est coesse de la pensée pensante et de l'être: la première conditionne la seconde, mais elle est elle-même conditionnée par sa propre structure coexistentielle. En d'autres termes, la perception que j'ai de moi-même en tant que moi et de l'autre en tant qu'autre n'est rigoureusement possible sans une solidarité antérieure pré-ontologique et antéprédictive qui la fonde et qui la sanctionne."

Translator's note: The phrase "esse est essentiellement coesse" can be translated in either of two ways: 'existence is essentially coexistence' or 'to be is essentially to be with.' Father Troisfontaines, in a personal interview with the author, attests that Marcel himself frequently uses the term être (esse) with reference to existence or to being.
soul; Marcel joins reflection to sensation and feeling.

In the initial grasp of existence as unobjectifiable, indemonstrable, and yet the primary indubitable, some agreement can also be noted. Cognition must begin from the conjunctum of sensation and intellecction; existence is grasped through sensibility in the primary experience.

Beyond these agreements, comparisons would be hazardous. First, as was pointed out in Chapter I, the terminology of Thomists and Marcel concerning existence and being admits of disparate interpretations. Second, though perhaps Marcel's nameless experience could be compared to a certain Thomistic intuition of being spoken of by Maritain, and though perhaps Marcel's primary and secondary reflection could be said to encompass elements of Thomistic simple apprehension and judgment, the difference in these interpretations far outweigh the similarities. Consequently, Marcel's doctrine of concrete participation in existence, though not contradicting any fundamental Thomistic doctrine, would be difficult to establish as Thomistic in itself. However, this is not to say that Marcel's contributions cannot be used by Thomists. Rather, Thomists could well find in many of Marcel's reflections, a welcome complement to their own system.

THE REALISM OF GABRIEL MARCEL

At the end of this thesis we must take a backward glance at the ground covered, enrich the starting point, and indicate the
direction toward which Marcel's thought rises beyond the scope of this thesis. The first part of this summary is concerned with Marcel's doctrine of intentionality and participation immergee. The second part will summarize his doctrine of being; and the realm of being characterized by participation emergee.

It is the contention of this thesis that, though Marcel began his philosophy among the abstractions of subjectivist idealism, by his own reflection he came to realism. The purpose of this thesis has been to establish the fact of this realism by an historical analysis of his development and the philosophical foundations of his realism: intentionality and concrete participation in existence.

1. Intentionality and Participation immergee

Intentionality, as developed by Marcel, was seen to be a characteristic of thought which by its nature led the thinking subject to the "other." This "other" is both the existent and being. But Marcel also held that, unless intentionality began from a subject whose nature is to participate in the concreteness of the existing world, it is no more than the projection of the mind.

Therefore, the doctrine of participation can be considered the center and summit of Marcel's philosophical peregrination. He has made this explicit in the letter previously mentioned: "It is participation which had priority in my thought . . . "and " . . . in no way was this a question of participation in an Idea, but of
participation in Being."\(^{22}\) In the course of the thesis we have seen the significance of these remarks and can agree now with Marcel's own estimate of its importance in his doctrine.

This notion of participation can be taken in two senses. The first is participation in the concreteness of existing, which establishes Marcel's doctrine as realist. The other is participation in being.

Marcel terms concrete participation in existence participation \(\text{immergée}\). This participation, passively considered, is my body with concomitant sensation and feeling immersed in and open to existing reality. Consequently, I am my body, and my body is part of the concretely existing universe. If I consider my body only as myself, this participation \(\text{immergée}\) is merely subjective. However, this would be to destroy my situation in the world. For my body is also the fulcrum for all other existents. Participation \(\text{immergée}\) must, then, also be considered actively. I not only submit to existing reality but I must re-create other existents in myself, and make them part of my own existence. And so we have the philosophy of \(j'\text{éprouve}\) or nous sommes.

2. Participation \(\text{émergée}\)

Marcel's doctrine of participation in the second sense is more

\(^{22}\) Marcel, letter to the author, December 4, 1954: "C'est la participation qui dans ma pensée possédé la priorité . . ." " . . . il n'était nullement question de participation à l'Idée, mais de participation à l'Etre."
abundant and fruitful than in the first. In fact, many of his more fundamental notions can be understood fully only in the light of this further participation. To develop it at length, however, would take us far beyond the thesis. Consequently, this pregnant idea can only be delineated here in brief.

Father Troisfontaines has very well expressed the relationship between these two types of participation. "Are we not forced once again to recognize that our entire life is unfolded in the stage between the primordial unity of immersed participation, which is preconscious (existence) and the final unity of emerged participation, consciously and willingly re-created (being)?" Rising out of immersed participation a free, conscious being may emerge from his existing reality to participate in the fullness of being. This participation in being Marcel terms participation émergée. The Being in which the individual participates is the fullness of what is, an upsurge of joy, what I am when I am most myself. When I rise above the merely existing world of immersed participation, I act most fully, consciously, freely, re-creating my own being. This being, which is part of myself, is only partially developed in myself. Moreover, it is distinct from my existence. My being must be looked upon as a gift. This gift, this grace or being, is some-

23 Troisfontaines, De l'existence, p. 331. "Ne sommes-nous pas aménés à reconnaître, une fois encore, que toute notre vie se déroule au stade intermédiaire entre l'unité primordiale de la participation immergée, preconsciente (l'existence) et l'unité finale de la participation émergée, consciemment, volontièrement recrée (l'être)"
thing which "is put in peril from the first moment of my existence, but which can be saved, only, however, on condition that it has already been saved. That reality . . . is my soul." 24

Since the re-creating and saving of his soul, i.e., his being, is so closely bound up with man's freedom, a short explanation of an individual's freedom is here in place. In general Marcel distinguishes between non-authentic and authentic freedom in a man. These two notions parallel the division of the realms of Problem and Mystery. Non-authentic freedom is in the objectivized realm of problems. Thus it can be analyzed as an objective universal predicate. Choice, described as free because made without external compulsion, is the act of this unauthentic freedom.

Authentic freedom, however, is that freedom most referred to in this thesis. Authentic freedom is in the realm of Mystery. Therefore authentic freedom is the non-objective, personal, realm of the self. Consequently, authentic freedom is inseparable from the realm of being and values. The exercise of this freedom is possible only when I am most myself, when I have an interior plenitude, when I am in the presence of and in communion with God. As I am my being, I am my freedom. A person will use this freedom rarely, and only in a most significant creative situation in which he chooses to re-create his own being. Therefore it follows that,

24 Marcel, Journal métaphysique, p. 282: "Quelque chose est mis en péril dès le moment où j'existe, mais peut aussi être sauvé et ne sera même qu'à condition d'avoir été sauvé: Cette réalité . . . c'est mon âme."
even in the face of external compulsion one can still be authenti-
cally free. The essence of man is his freedom. Since my freedom
is my being, and my being is my soul, my freedom is the soul of my
soul. 

Since the gift of being, or soul, is only partially developed
in different existents, Marcel must distinguish a "slope" of being,
as he terms it. At the foot of the slope are things which merely
exist. Ascending the slope, man finds his place as both sharing
in existence through body and, in some partially developed manner,
in being through soul. As man exercises his creative freedom in
co-operation with the gift, the grace given to him as soul, he can
gradually come into the fullness of being and more and more close
the gap between his existence and his being. However, no matter
how much a person tries, at least in this life, the gap will never
be closed. Only at the very summit of the slope is there One who
does not exist, but Who IS—*Ens Supremissimum*—"I am Who am." Con-
sequently, this realm of Being, this realm of participation in the
plenitude, the fullness of what is, becomes the realm of value
where truth, goodness, hope, and faith are found. This is the
realm of the "Thou," where being communicates with being in the
intersubjectivity of love, and where creature communicates with
the Creator through loving contemplation and prayer.

25 For a thorough discussion of freedom in Marcel, see Trois-
fontaines' *De l'existence à l'être*, I, 316-330.
EVALUATION

In conclusion, what should be said of Gabriel Marcel's contribution to the historical and doctrinal continuity of philosophia perennis, the sum-deposit of philosophical truth built up by the insights of thinkers of all generations? It must be concluded that Marcel's contribution has been chiefly the illumination of human subjective experience. This is the opinion, too, of Jacques Maritain: "In the order of genuine phenomenology (where moral and psychological analysis is really an approach to ontological problems and where the very purity of an unprejudiced investigation allows philosophy to plumb human experience and to isolate its real meaning and values) this Christian existentialism is past master, and it contributes very valuable discoveries." 26 Human experience is the promised land which leads man beyond himself if he will enter within himself through recollection and find there the Absolute Presence. This is man's true worth. As Marcel says: "And this explains at last what I said earlier about experience being like a promised land: it has to become, as it were, its own beyond, inasmuch as it has to transmute itself and makes its own conquest." 27

Man is thus Homo Viator driven on, by the exigence for existence and being experienced in himself, to a deeper and closer

26 Maritain, Existence and the Existent, pp. 129-130.
27 Marcel, Philosophy of Existence, p. 96.
participation in the reality of existents and in the transcendent reality of Being Itself. Man is not sum but sursum, and this ultimate participation in the Transcendent Being sheds new light on our notions of faith. Markus stresses this contribution as the reason why Marcel is called a Christian existentialist. "What is meant is more like what we usually try to say when we call St. Thomas a Christian philosopher. In both, the philosophy is developed without recourse to the tenets of faith, yet, somehow, energized from within by a drive towards the faith and the supernatural. The result is a philosophy capable of standing on its own feet; not based on revelation, but on the natural use of our intellectual faculties, and yet open to, and completed by the supernatural. Our Christian faith finds itself thoroughly at home in both St. Thomas's and Marcel's universe."28

In the light of Marcel's doctrine, man can never fulfill the description given of him by Bertrand Russell. "Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; . . . his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocation of atoms; . . . no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; . . . all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in

the vast death of the solar system, and . . . the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins."

Marcel has as his purpose, then, the illumination of individual human experience. For this reason, to ask whether Marcel's realist approach is philosophically valid is to ask a meaningless question. A starting point cannot be properly demonstrated, it can only be explained. This explanation must, furthermore, be conducted in the light of universal concepts. Such universality is fundamentally inconsistent with the experience of the individual man in Marcel's doctrine. To answer the question each individual must reflect upon his own experience, and in the light of his findings, judge whether Marcel's realism is valid.

Marcel's doctrine should not, and will not be accepted as a whole. Rather, as Collins says of existentialism in general, we "will probably benefit most not by adopting any form of existentialism en bloc but rather by appropriating the insights of existentialism within our own scientific and philosophical contexts. Yet we cannot allow its distinctive contribution to disappear in the process or be watered down. The existentialists are primarily moralists of a strenuous breed. Theirs is the salutary warning that knowledge is not everything for man, that it only heightens

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29 Bertrand Russell, "Mysticism and Logic," Hibbert Journal, XII (July 1914), 147.
the need for mature choice and a responsible use of freedom." Thus Marcel presents insights into the subjective experience of every man unequalled perhaps by any other philosopher. His is the illumination of the individual man's situation on this earth—Homo Viator. The themes of self-creativity, faith, hope, love, are all Christian themes developed by a Catholic and give us, both Catholics and Thomists, a profound and useful complement for our own doctrine. But we must remain alert to the danger of reinterpreting, changing, watering down the doctrines of Marcel to fit our own systems. For the personal ordeal of which he speaks does not lend itself to violence. The teachings of Gabriel Marcel must be verified, not by a process of abstractive conceptual analysis and deductive syllogistic proofs, but by the lived reality of each individual man.

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APPENDIX I

A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM GABRIEL MARCEL

1er Décembre 1954

Cher Monsieur,

Je reçois votre lettre et veux y répondre sans tarder.

Mais je puis dès à présent répondre d'une façon tout à fait catégorique à votre question. C'est la participation qui dans ma pensée possède la priorité et non l'intentionnalité. Je me rappelle du reste très bien n'avoir découvert l'intentionnalité qu'en lisant les réflexions sur l'intelligence de Maritain. Je ne crois pas me tromper en disant que sur le plan épistémologique, même dans Existence et Objectivité, je m'en tenais au fond à une ligne de pensée kantienne. Il me paraît aujourd'hui que la participation se présentait au fond à moi comme transcendantale par rapport à l'opposition de sujet et de l'objet. Et ceci remonte très loin. Car j'ai un repère chronologique précis. Je me souviens que lorsque j'allai rendre visite, aussitôt après avoir été reçu à l'Agrégation, donc en été 1910, à Monsieur Darlu, qui avait été un des membres de mon jury, lorsqu'il m'interrogea sur mes projets, je lui répondis que je me proposais de travailler sur la participation. Il me paraît aussi-tôt qu'il ne comprenait pas de quoi je parlais et qu'il prenait ce mot dans une acception platonicienne. Je lui dis alors qu'il n'était nullement question de participation à l'Idée, mais de participation à l'Être.

Je dois dire du reste que, lorsque je me replonge, comme je viens de le faire, dans ces écrits qui sont tous la préparation de la Première Partie du Journal Méthaphysique, j'éprouve comme une sensation d'écoeurement. Ceci est lié essentiellement à la pauvreté et à l'insuffisance de la terminologie. Je restais alors en effet prisonnier d'un certain langage d'ailleurs vacillant (waving) entre le néo-criticisme et le néo-hegelianisme. Et il me paraît aujourd'hui que, muni de ce mauvais équipement, je tentais péniblement de me frayer un chemin vers une certaine issue, une certaine lumière dont je n'avais que le pressentiment comme informulable.
De toute manière, je tiens à vous dire ma gratitude pour le travail que vous avez entrepris, et je serais heureux de pouvoir vous aider.

Veuillez croire, cher Monsieur, à l'assurance de mes sentiments bien sympathiques.

Gabriel Marcel

21, rue de Tournon
Paris, 6e.
APPENDIX II

A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM ROGER TROISFONTAINES, S.J.

Namur, 59, rue de Bruxelles,
30-X-1954

Mon bien cher Père, P.C.

Pour ce qui est de la question traitée dans votre thèse, je la crois fort intéressante. C’est vous qui éclairerez la doctrine de Marcel sur le sujet. A mon avis, la description phénoménologique de la pensée manifeste en elle cette self-transcendence que vous relevez, mais n’est-ce pas parce que la pensée n’émerge elle-même que tardivement à l’intérieur d’une participation (existentielle) qu’elle contribuera à rendre ontologique? Si bien que lorsque j’écris "la participation suppose la réalité de l’autre-que-moi," cela ne veut pas dire nécessairement que cette réalité de l’autre-que-moi est reconnue d’abord, indépendamment de toute participation. Cela signifie plutôt que la participation dont je prends peu à peu conscience mais qui "existait" avant cette prise de conscience, condamne déjà toute pré-tention solipsiste ou même idéaliste. L’idée est intentionnelle parce qu’elle surgit à l’intérieur de cette participation primitive. Seulement, c’est à vous d’établir si l’étude phénoménologique de cette intentionnalité suffit à "prouver" la participation et à réfuter l’idéalisme, et – seconde question, d’ordre historique – si c’est à partir de l’intentionnalité que M. Marcel a retrouvé la participation ou au contraire si c’est de la participation qu’il est venu à reconnaître l’intentionnalité. En fait, je ne saurais répondre avec certitude, et comme il s’agit un peu du recto et du verso d’une même réalité, je suis tenté de croire que les deux ont progressé parallèlement. Mais votre travail nous éclairera sur ce point.

Cordialement vôtre in Chrito

Bon travail!

R. Troisfontaines, S.J.
APPENDIX III

THE OMITTED PASSAGE IN LE MYSTÈRE DE L'ÊTRE, VOLUME I, CHAPTER IV.

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR FROM THE ENGLISH TRANSLATOR,

GEORGE S. FRASER

July 31st, 1957

Dear Father Crocker,

Please forgive my delay in answering your letter of the 13th, which has just reached me. Gabriel Marcel delivered the first batch of his Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen in, I think, the summer term of 1949 and made his own, very eccentric and original English translation (his personality is a charming one . . . ). The Harvill Press . . . asked me at first to reshape his English version - this was in the late autumn of 1949 - and when I found that almost incomprehensible got me the original French version. Marcel had already begun to revise that, and there were several detached pages and paragraphs, to be inserted at various spots, for which English equivalents had not, I gathered, been delivered in the original lectures. Both English and French versions were typescripts . . . with a number of ink additions and corrections. I worked on my version in London towards the end of 1949 and (the bulk of it) on a Glenn Line steamer going to Japan, between the Port of London and Singapore, in the early weeks of 1950. I sent my translation and Marcel's original English and French typescripts back from Singapore. I haven't seen the published French text, but if it was not published until 1951 the probability is that Marcel did a good deal of cutting and polishing before publishing the French version; I am surprised, however, that he should have omitted a passage which, like you, I found eloquent and significant and also about as near as he gets to a clear abstract statement of one of his central positions (his hatred for "abstraction" as such - would that be an explanation?) But certainly the passage was there in his original typescript of 1949 and I didn't, for instance, make it up myself! . . . . I was scrupulously faithful to his thought, and to what one might call the rhythm of his mind. So the only feasible explanation is that the passage was there in the 1949 version and
that he took it out in the French 1951 version. One other rather sinister possibility does, however, occur to me. . . . there were some loose pages of French typescript to be inserted at various points; just possibly the passage you allude to may have been one of them; . . . somewhere between Singapore and London and Paris, to which the Harvill Press will have returned Marcel his typescripts the relevant page or paragraph may have got mislaid!

I am afraid this is rather complex, but I hope at least it reassures you that the passage is, in its original - whether discarded or lost - authentic Marcel.

. . . . For a non-philosopher like myself - a poet, a critic, and a man of letters - he is one of the most attractive of contemporary philosophers I know.

Sincerely yours,

George Fraser
The thesis submitted by John R. Crocker, S.J.
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.

March 26, 1959

Date

Signature of Adviser.