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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE CONCEPT OF THE DEHUMANIZATION OF MAN IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GABRIEL MARCEL

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BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

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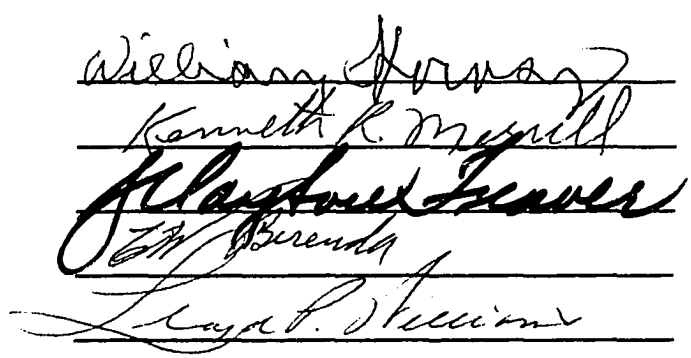
THE CONCEPT OF THE DEHUMANIZATION OF MAN IN

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GABRIEL MARCEL

APPROVED BY



DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

PREFACE

One of the most crucial questions facing twentieth century philosophy concerns the status of man in the world. While this has been somewhat of a perennial problem, yet it has taken on new and serious proportions in the last century. The industrialization of society, the widespread acceptance of a materialistic philosophy, and the abstractive methods of science and technology are but a few of the factors contributing to its increasing complexity. In the wake of these and other dehumanizing forces man has become a real question to himself, asking such questions as, Who am I? What is my role in the world? Among contemporary philosophers Marcel has been outstanding in his long and deep interest in man's problem of identity. For well over a half a century he has directed an inquiry into the questions surrounding man and his nature. In recent years this interest has accelerated. Marcel's probing insight into the being of man, his reflections on its inner meaning, and his extensive exploration of the causative forces underlying the dehumanization of man afford a valuable field of study.

This task is not without its problems for Marcel, himself, presents a singular challenge. His findings through

the years have been recorded as spontaneous utterances in diaries, plays, letters, and essays. Collecting and collating his thoughts on the subject of dehumanization, and arranging them in meaningful pattern is no small feat in itself. Added to this problem is the somewhat private use he makes of language. Key concepts often are clothed in words which obstinately yield their rich meaning; nonetheless, the rewards of careful study far outweigh the difficulties encountered.

The scope of this investigation includes, first of all, a setting forth of Marcel's enriched concept of being, followed by an analysis of the development and effects of modern forces of dehumanization on man. This work finds purpose in seeking to clearly enunciate the warning voiced by Marcel to all mankind of the devastating and tragic effects involved in man's dehumanization.

Acknowledgment is extended to the members of the Dissertation Committee for the valuable guidance given in the preparation of this study: William Horosz, Ph.D., Chairman, Kenneth Rogers Merrill, Ph.D., John Clayton Feaver, Ph.D., Carlton Warren Berenda, Ph.D., and Lloyd Pyron Williams, Jr., Ph.D. Of special help was the wise counsel and continuing encouragement of the committee chairman, Dr. William Horosz, and Dr. Kenneth Merrill, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE DEHUMANIZATION OF MAN IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GABRIEL MARCEL

CHAPTER I

MARCEL AND THE PHILOSOPHIC QUEST

Of the many voices heard in the twentieth century, none has been as prophetic with warning as Gabriel Marcel's. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" of philosophic confusion, rightly depicts the role of this unique Frenchman. The burden of his call, which has become increasingly relevant, is centered on the conservation of man in the fullness of his being. Man, as a fully developed person, has been increasingly endangered by the dehumanizing processes inherent in a modern society. Sweeping industrialization, computerization and automation have all but robbed man of his personhood, his dignity, his being. For the last half century this philosopher has sounded a clear call to all those who would work against this technological erosion of man. His words, at first somewhat prophetic, are increasingly pertinent in this thing-minded generation. Following the customary scientific bent, man has objectified man, reducing him to

nothing more than a set of component elements, to little more than a statistic.

Marcel, the philosophical explorer and pioneer, has patiently and persistently sought out the meaning of being, the inner meaning of man's life. This pursuit, with its many ramifications, has occupied the center of Marcel's research.

Personal Factors Affecting Marcel's Philosophy

In order to understand an individual, the texture of his temperament and the tendencies of his disposition, one should carefully inspect the environmental setting of his formative years. This is especially so in the case of Marcel. The tremendous sweep of his imagination, the metaphysical tone of his thinking as well as his intense interest in the concrete experiences of life, are but a few of the mature characteristics of the man that can be noted in embryo during childhood and youngmanhood. The boy is potentially the man, and the man is the boy actualized. Marcel recognizes these early experiences as determining factors in the later development of his philosophy; consequently, it is with difficulty that one seeks to understand Marcel's trend of thought apart from some knowledge of his youth.

There were several significant occurrences in Marcel's life that influenced the development of his thought. According to his own testimony, the sudden death of his mother while he was but four years of age ranks first in importance.

He describes it as a "death which was completely sudden and which shook the existence of all of us."[1] He has reason to believe that it not only overshadowed his childhood but his whole life as well. He enshrines her memory in the very depth of his being. "I have few visual memories of her; but she has remained present and mysteriously with me throughout my life."[2] While her sister was later to become his stepmother, she was quite different in temperament. With little natural inclination toward his new mother, a strange duality developed between a being who had vanished yet whose presence was actually felt, and another dominating, self-assertive soul whose actual presence was never really near.

> I believe now this disparity, this hidden polarity between the seen and the unseen, has played a far greater part in my life and thought than any other influence which may be apparent in my writings.[3]

No doubt the most telling feature of his mother's sudden passing which was combined with a remaining and strongly felt presence is that it provided a prototype of the polarity between the visible and the invisible. Perhaps this was the initial wedge which began to divide Marcel's world into a multiplicity of polarities so often noted throughout his writings.

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, trans. by Manya Harari. Citadel, 6th paperbound ed.; (New York: Citadel Press, 1956), p. 112. (Hereinafter referred to as Existentialism.)

[2]Ibid., p. 112.

[3]Ibid., p. 113.

With the marriage of his father to his maternal aunt, Marcel testifies of entering a "desert universe" which encompassed his entire childhood. He paints a graphic picture of the sterile and boring days experienced in this newly formed home. In all probability, his youthful world was superficial and arid in part, because of the protective shield thrown about him as an only child. While he longed for the concrete experiences which other children enjoyed, yet he was confined largely to an adult world and its corresponding thought forms. Both parents watched over him with such meticulous care that he felt as if he were an occupant of an unreal world. These well-meaning but misguided caretakers actually constructed a buffer between the young lad and reality. To such a sensitive child it could do none other than overwork an already fertile imagination. Early symptoms of a developing paranoia seem to be present in Marcel's descriptions of himself.

> I was racked by a kind of tension which at times reached an almost intolerable degree. Consciously, I suffered from the exaggerated attention devoted to me as an only child. My illnesses, my successes and failures at school were given an absurd importance. I felt watched, spied upon; I guessed that after I had gone to bed, the conversation in the drawingroom turned on my inadequacies and on what could be expected of me.[1]

To complicate this growing problem, Marcel speaks of being so confined by an atmosphere of moral scruples and hygienic precautions that he described his world as being

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[1] Ibid., p. 111.

"antiseptic." He indicates a connection between this early atmosphere and the particular form which his later thoughts would take when he stated,

> 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 youth upwards. Experience, as it is mostly conceived by philosophers, was to me impure and profoundly suspect.[1]

He further accounts for his tendency toward idealism by observing his need to hit back at the "practical world which at every step proved to me my ineptitude and my awkwardness."[2] It was only on the plane of ideas that he could find shelter from such wounds received by contact with daily life; therefore, it was natural for him to think of philosophizing as a way of transcending. His conception of a super-sensual world apparently influenced his entire spiritual development." Marcel lays the major portion of blame on his early environment and training for his leaning toward idealism. He reasons, in retrospect, that idealism never did look permanently inviting but only as a half-way house from which to launch further probes into reality. This accounts for his particular interest in post-Kantian philosophy, especially that of Schelling. He discovered in Schelling's later thoughts a light "which perhaps one day

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[1] Ibid., p. 104.

[2] Ibid., p. 104.

[3] Ibid., p. 104.

might help me to discover my own path."[1] He recalls his personal sense of need for the individual and the concrete, and his ever-recurring attempts to explore the world of reality.

> My greatest joy in my childhood was to discover, to explore, to imagine more than I could see, to plan other journeys, complementary and more distant . . . My predilection for the inaccessible and the unknown went with a disdain, which shocks me today, for whatever is within the reach of all.[2]

Marcel always had an interest in penetrating to the heart of things. Truly he can be rightly called the explorer, the traveller, the pilgrim. His interest in, yes, his fascination with what lies below the appearance of things has been ever present.

> All the same, I think that I am right in seeing in this predilection something of the metaphysical concern to discover the intimate at the heart of the remote, a concern, that is to say, not to overcome distance by speed, but to wrest from it the spiritual secret which destroys its power as a barrier.[3]

For all his interest in the world of ideas, his feeling toward the super-sensual world seemed to become less and less optical--in the sense of projecting forms into space--and more auditory. His passion for music explains the conviction of profound truth which came to him with the discovery of Schopenhauer's theory of music. For Schopenhauer,

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[1] Ibid., p. 105.

[2] Ibid., pp. 114-15.

[3] Ibid., p. 115.

> Music is not concerned with the representation of phenomena or the fundamental forms that underlie phenomena, but has as its subject the will itself, the nature of which it expresses directly and immediately. Thus, of all the arts, music stands closest to the ultimate reality of things which we all bear within ourselves and speaks 'the universal imageless language of the heart.'[1]

As Marcel sensed a growing need for the concrete and the particular, the theatre became an attractave outlet as a privileged form of expression. In this endeavor he was able to identify himself with the various characters sufficiently to become their mouthpiece. Rationalizing this bent for theatrical expression, he mentions his father's avid interest in the field and the fact of his superior ability in reading plays aloud to him all through childhood. Throughout this process the characters in the plays became actual and real for young Marcel. Hours would be spent in make-belief conversation. His only method of accounting for such behavior was the cruel lack of brothers and sisters of his own.

As he grew older, his dramatic faculties were enhanced by the differences he noted in temperament within his own family circle. This in itself created a separateness between members of the family which seemed all but impassable. Words became useless. Communication ceased. Yet through it all he found that harmony could be achieved in a higher realm through the transcending effect of music or drama.

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[1]Patrick Gardiner, "Schopenhauer," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1st ed., VII, 325-32.

> At the same time, music offered me an irrefutable example of the kind of supra-rational unity which I believed to be the essential function of drama to establish and to promote. This explains the bearing of the most important of my early works, the Quartet in A sharp, on the connection between family tragedy, music and pure thought.[1]

Herein Marcel discovers, through his dramatic works, a way out of the labyrinth into which abstract thinking had led him. In fact, through these earlier years of his dramatic writings he was constantly struggling to understand himself and to get a firmer grip on a reality which seemed continually to elude him.

> It was the problem of the nature of reality which obsessed me throughout those years of blind groping. What I wanted to know was not so much what reality is, as what we mean when we assert its existence, and when we say that it cannot be reduced to its outward appearances, or that these appearances probably conceal more than they disclose.[2]

As Marcel's thought matured, it was apparent that an ambivalence of feeling had gradually developed toward idealism. This fact is to be noted throughout his future writing as one of its most salient characteristics.

> I am persuaded that, in all this attempted critique of a philosophy which both attracted me and filled me with suspicion, I was impelled by that same sense of the concrete and that awareness of irreconcilable differences which lay at the origin of my need to create. This and no other was the nodal point of the two forms of development which I was to follow in my work.[3]

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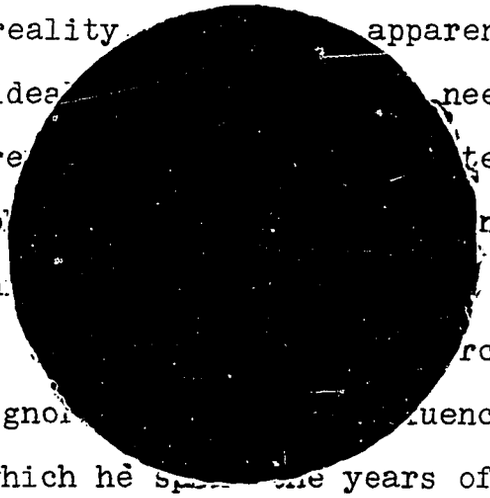
[1]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 107.

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 108.

[3]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 109.

Idealism apparently attracted Marcel because it offered him an abstract way of transcending many of the irreconcilable differences in life. On the other hand he held it suspect inasmuch as it seemed out of touch with concrete reality and the way life unravelled. A bifurcation of approach followed: one emerging from his interest in the concrete difficulties of life, the other from his need of a transcendent unity and reality. [illegible] apparent complication in his approach to idea[illegible] need to create. His dramatic works re[illegible]te irreconcilables of life while his p[illegible]nscendingly point to unity on a h[illegible]



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> I think that not one of us could suspect the fragility, the precariousness, of the civilisation which enveloped us like a tegument; a civilisation on which the wealth of centuries seemed to have conferred a solidity we would have thought it madness to question.[1]

Looking ahead it was difficult to imagine a world that would be other than blessed with peace, tranquility and the pursuit of human values. This sustained pattern of normalcy which projected the inevitability of the progress of man, had

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[1]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 120.

Idealism apparently attracted Marcel because it offered him an abstract way of transcending many of the irreconcilable differences in life. On the other hand he held it suspect inasmuch as it seemed out of touch with concrete reality and the way life unravelled. A bifurcation of approach followed: one emerging from his interest in the concrete difficulties of life, the other from his need of a transcendent unity and reality. From this apparent complication in his approach to idealism arose Marcel's need to create. His dramatic works revolve around the concrete irreconcilables of life while his philosophical writings transcendingly point to unity on a higher level.

In considering Marcel's approach to life one must not ignore the telling influence of the idealistic decade in which he spent the years of youngmanhood. Particularly blessed with peace and utilitarian concerns was the first decade of the present century. For Marcel, these days could only be recalled with nostalgia.

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[1] Marcel, Existentialism, p. 120.

contributed towards Marcel's idealistic view of man. This lingering concept runs through all his later work. Man is valuable, the spirit of man is the ultimately real. It is not difficult to gain some appreciation of the shock administered to him, as well as to the rest of his world, by the sudden onset of World War I. That man would take up arms against his neighbor was unthinkable in that euphoric decade. Such savagery was inconceivable in a civilized world! Rational men would settle their disputes around conference tables, not on the field of mass destruction. "The shock administered by the war explains the change of tone and of key which is noticeable in the second part of my Journal."[1] In fact it was during the early days of this great encounter that Marcel was asked to head the Information Service organized by the Red Cross. His office handled thousands of inquiries concerning missing persons. Every day he received personal visits from the unfortunate relatives who implored him for help,

> . . . so that in the end every index card was to me a heartrending personal appeal. Nothing, I think, could have immunised me better against the power of effacement possessed by the abstract terms which fill the reports of journalists and historians of the war.[2]

This continuing involvement with the lives of so many individuals had a profound effect upon Marcel. As he worked in this area of personal relationships he found himself

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[1]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 121.

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 121.

increasingly inadequate to deal with the tragic character of human existence. In a short while he began so to identify with those to whom he ministered that he saw his own personal problems multiplied by those of the race. He became solicitous for the genuine personhood of all the otherwise "anonymous" individuals listed in his files. It is quite significant that at a later date he makes the observation that

> The dynamic element in my philosophy, taken as a whole, can be seen as an obstinate and untiring battle against the spirit of abstraction. Since the years 1911 and 1912, the time of my first researches and my still unpublished earliest philosophical writings, I have played the part of a prosecuting counsel against every philosophy that seemed to me to remain the prisoner of abstractions.[1]

In an effort to arrive at an understanding of the true nature of man, Marcel initiated metapsychical experiments in the Winter of 1916-1917. Somewhat unique in the history of the Western philosophic thought is the influence which these experiments had on his thinking. He became convinced of the reality of a realm where communication takes place other than by the normal psycho-sensory modes. "The result of these experiments made it impossible for me to doubt the reality of metapsychical phenomena."[2] The Second Part of the Metaphysical Journal is full of discussions on clairvoyance,

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, trans. by G. S. Fraser. Gateway Edition, 1st paperbound ed.; (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), pp. 1-2.

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 122.

telepathy, necromancy, automatic writing, prophecy, psychometry and other metapsychical phenomena.

> These experiences had a lasting effect on Marcel, and, despite opposition from academic philosophers and from churchmen, he held consistently that an honest philosopher must take this realm into account in his thought at least as a metaphysical possibility, and not dogmatically reject it. No prejudice or pressure ever forced him to withdraw from this position, which he held to be vital in his struggle against idealism.[1]

This intense interest in the world "beyond" and the bearing it had on the thinking of Marcel can be noted occasionally throughout his later work. Perhaps his preoccupation with death during the war days pressed him for answers about the real nature and destiny of man until he became more than passingly involved in such speculation.[2] One, however, should not miss the import of these overt beginnings of an theretofore covert interest in the spirit world. While an enriched imagination is beneficial in the field of speculative philosophy, it should be cautiously balanced with due emphasis on the actual existents in the real world.

Marcel's Approach to Philosophy

For over a half century Marcel has courageously followed a lonely path through the labyrinth of modern philosophy. Even to speak of "my philosophy" smacks enough

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[1] Seymour Cain, Gabriel Marcel (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1963), p. 23.

[2] Note Marcel's parapsychological experiments conducted in 1917, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 134-35.

of a structured system that he has carefully avoided the use of the term. "Many a time I happened to focus my attention on these two phrases: 'my system,' or 'my philosophy,' only to be appalled by their ludicrous character."[1] This consistently unsystematic thinker seeks to portray the true nature of philosophizing by avoiding all cumulatively erected structures of thought. He would rather view the thinker as one who lives in a state of continual creativity, one who allows the whole of his thought to be called into question from one moment to the next.[2] He would shrink from the idea of calling any of his thoughts final. His thinking is characterized by a vigor and freshness, as though fed by an artesian well of rich concrete experiences. His thought patterns are highly elusive, yet they constitute an essential feature of his approach. Marcel's philosophy flows from life, not from textbooks or empty theory. While direction is given to his thought from a number of crucial personal experiences, yet there is an appeal in his writings to all men, for his concerns offer a perennial challenge to those seeking an answer to the inner meaning of life. He does not hesitate to grapple with the problems plaguing man. Marcel

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Presence and Immortality, trans. by Michael A. Machado (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1967), p. 15.

[2]See Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, trans. by Katherine Farrer. Harper Torchbooks, 1st paperbound ed.; (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 166.

can be counted among the pioneers of this century who have sought to rescue and rehabilitate the broken human spirit.

Though Marcel's philosophy abounds with what could be called existential concerns, yet he insists on describing his philosophy as "neo-Socratic." He has developed a strong aversion for the term existentialist due to the immediate association of it with the French atheistic philosopher Sartre. He would even reject the term "Christian existentialist."[1] Strange as it might seem, Marcel did not personally choose the appellation "neo-Socratic." One of his students characterized his philosophic approach as being neo-Socratic; thereafter, he laid hold of it as the least inexact description possible concerning himself.

> What the term neo-Socratism implies is above all the--in no way sceptical--attitude of interrogation that is a constant with me, and appears perhaps even more clearly in my stage plays. It also and co-relatively implies an emphasis on communication as realised by dialogue, by addressing oneself to a Thou and counting on him and thus giving him credit. It implies, finally, the adoption of a negative attitude to the results we can hope to reach through any kind of physics because physics can never escape from the objective categories. Viewed in this perspective my thought should appear as the prolongation of a fundamentally anti-dogmatic tradition.[2]

In order to rediscover the real purpose of philosophy one must remember that the model philosopher, Socrates, did not write, did not teach formally, but went about addressing

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, trans. by Bernard Wall. Gateway Edition; (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. xiii.

[2]Ibid., p. xiii.

himself to those he met in the streets; consequently, he had difficulty with public opinion and with the rulers of the day. Apparently, Socrates could learn little from the fields and the trees, but much from the people in the city. He endeavored to help people come to a better understanding of themselves and the events transpiring about them. Marcel's approach is similar.

> Just as Socrates in Athens would start a conversation in order to help a person discover some truth already present in his own consciousness, Marcel, likewise, tries by his work to come into discussion with us and to throw a new clarifying light on our existential experiences. He is present in his philosophy as a person in whom we can recognize and understand ourselves and the events that take place around us.[1]

Socrates sought out man, though enclosed in his own limited personality, in order to teach him how to live in the world, to understand his fellowman and to reach through to reality. All this too, seems to be involved in Marcel's aim. Yet it is particularly refreshing to note that there is no school of Marcellian philosophers for he, too, like Socrates does not seek disciples. "He first asks his readers to explore the 'grain' of their own 'wood' and then he invites them to a dialogue."[2] He is interested in helping them to purify their own ambiguities.

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[1]Thomas J. M. van Ewijk, Gabriel Marcel, trans. by Matthew J. van Velzen. Deus Books; (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1965), p. 26.

[2]Sam Keen, Gabriel Marcel (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1967), p. 5.

There is one further comparison between the two which has invited controversy. Socrates consistently insisted on precise definition and meaningful language. There are those who attribute the same to Marcel.

> This method of Marcel's has certainly a Socratic element in more than one respect. It is not only a continuing enquiry, not solicitous of winding up conclusions in neat parcels; but it has also the Socratic care for the meaning of terms, a desire to 're-value words' rather than create new ones, a dialectical interest and faith in unveiling the presuppositions of everyman's experience.[1]

Those who would make such comparisons feel that Marcel's works are enriched not only by his fine distinctions but also by the new use to which he puts common-place words. Problem and mystery are two words in point. Fraught with uncommon meaningfulness are such common words as participation, presence, communion.

On the other hand, Marcel comes in for what appears to be justifiable criticism for his lack of clarity and precision. Throughout his works he imputes private meaning to certain words. Furthermore, he is not consistent in the use of these new meanings. On numerous occasions he invests the word being or existence with differing shades of meaning. The reader tends toward confusion, wondering just what Marcel does mean. On other occasions he makes use of words which carry emotional overtones, very meaningful no doubt to

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[1]William Ernest Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XIV (June, 1954), 440.

him. In such cases the reader is left bewildered, wondering what Marcel precisely means.

Marcel has an unconventional mode of presentation which might prove to be an initial annoyance for the superficial reader; however, he inevitably leads the reader into something far richer, deeper and humanly truer than ordinary didactic treatises in philosophy. His approach is often intuitive. Sometimes he loses precision but gains meaningfulness in the process.

> He calls, he listens, and invites us to listen with him, as he starts off from a theme and follows it patiently and openly, with a delicate and intricate form of concrete analysis, which concludes not with a Q.E.D. through a necessary sequence of propositions, but with a fulness of discerned meaning through immersion in a reality which must be felt and heard, rather than conceived and seen.[1]

Though some have criticised Marcel for being vague and opaque, yet it may be that by his method of contemplation he sees more deeply to the core of reality than do others. One might say that he feels into the heart of a situation.

> It is only through Marcel's or a like penetration into the mysteries of life that human beings can realize the unity and truth of their existence. Epistemology which has failed to penetrate these mysteries has been necessarily inadequate.[2]

The very heart of Marcel's philosophy centers on the nature of being. He seeks to penetrate the meaning of one's own personal existence; therefore, the drama of being takes

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[1] Cain, Gabriel Marcel, p. 19.

[2] F. Temple Kingston, French Existentialism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. xiv.

place at the level of experience. He makes a strenuous effort to replace man at the center of metaphysics. In effect he endeavors to get man back inside reality as a participant instead of facing it as an observer.

> To be uneasy, I said, is to seek one's center. But these words sufficiently indicate that philosophy, as I see it, is a development which is not pursued only within the subject considered as a spiritual organism, but also within the reality for which this subject is in some way the end--I would even be tempted to say the 'stake,' for this development seems to me very similar to a game or a drama.[1]

Any objective approach to being is out of the question. The secret of being will not be found through logical analysis. Accurate description from without will also fail to reveal its true nature. One must be an active participant in being to understand being.

> I cannot talk about being from the outside, he says; it is something I cannot be outside of without absurdity; the investigation can only be prosecuted within reality; the philosopher can never, must never, stand before it as a spectator regarding a scene. Hence the questions are conclusive; What is being? how do I know it? what happens when I know it? what obligations settle on me through it?[2]

Marcel draws some rather severe criticism because of his alleged mixing of morality and metaphysics. A few critics think of him as a moralizer, not a metaphysician. "Marcel seems rather to ontologize about ethical themes; his philosophy seems to be metaphysical in language and moral in

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Presence and Immortality, pp. 25-26.

[2]Robert Ostermann, "Gabriel Marcel: The Discovery of Being," Modern Schoolman, XXXI (January, 1954), 103.

content."[1] Granted that the question of being is foremost in his mind; however, he comes at this as a moralist. For example, he compares the metaphysician to a bed-ridden person who searches for a comfortable position. In effect, he is saying that the real source of metaphysics is a certain disquiet, a need, an ontological demand. Hence being would be the fulfillment of an expectation. The need for redemption seems to initiate his philosophizing.

Even one of Marcel's close friends, a Catholic brother, looks askance upon his philosophizing and goes a step further by classifying it as theologizing.

> Jacques Maritain, distinguishing between cause-seeking and salvation-seeking philosophies, classifies Marcel among the latter, which for Maritain do not really deserve the title of philosophers: The salvation-seeking attitude is an 'attitude of dramatic singularity . . . and one does not philosophize in that posture.'[2]

While Marcel prefers to dissociate himself from the existentialist movement, yet he has been classified most often with those thinkers by historians of philosophy. His writings are replete with existential themes which set them off from the more traditional forms of philosophy. Turning to a number of typical concerns as found in his works, one notes that Marcel recognizes man to be the gateway through which the world can be understood. Man and his situation are central in his philosophy.

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[1]Pedro Adams, "Marcel: Metaphysician or Moralist," Philosophy Today, X (Fall, 1966), 182.

[2]Ibid., p. 183.

> The first question philosophy must deal with is 'What is man?' In order to find the answer to this question, man must think as a whole person, not as a disincarnate, scientific, objective observer. This implies that the emotions and the will enter into the philosophical quest no less than reason.[1]

If man is to think as a whole person, he must think as a participant and not merely as an observer. The intellect, emotions, and will enter into the experience. Existential philosophy underlines the necessity of decision, freedom and involvement as elements of authentic living.

> At this point we could scarcely wish to disagree with Gabriel Marcel that a philosophy stopping at what he calls objectivity (our philosophies of essence) is in the proper sense of the word no philosophy at all; it betrays man by excluding him from its rigid rational calculations. Man--more specifically human personality--is the key to an authentic ontological understanding of the world; he alone can correct the ravages worked by a distorting knowledge.[2]

Marcel seeks to explore the mystery of existence within man himself. Self-discovery becomes an endless lure. Existence (or being) is reality. Life's ultimate aim is to unfold the meaning of one's own personal existence. "To the Christian and the non-Christian alike the philosophy of Marcel has provided an introduction into a depth of experience out of which vivid life arises."[3]

In approaching life and man's uncertain role in it, Marcel's thought presents the image of a winding path. Here

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[1]Sam Keen, Gabriel Marcel, pp. 5-6.

[2]Robert Ostermann, "Gabriel Marcel: The Recovery of Being," Modern Schoolman, XXXI (May, 1954), p. 289.

[3]Sam Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 2.

it seems that the understanding, in the dimension of metaphor, precedes rational knowledge. This metaphor communicates the inner meaning of his thought.

> To think--to think philosophically--is to walk a winding path. Or to put it more exactly: to think is to engage in an interior movement which imposes itself on the mind of the observer under this dominant and non-contingent metaphor.[1]

Perhaps there is good reason why Marcel's method follows such a sinuous path. When one realizes that man himself is on a pilgrimage through a broken world, then his understanding can grasp that the method follows the man, who is primarily an explorer. Truly homo viator follows a circuitous path.

Another characteristic of existential thought can be seen in Marcel's open-ended approach to truth. Man, being finite, is limited in his perspective and is unable to see the whole of reality. Philosophy, like life, is an unfinished product. It is not surprising, therefore, to find many of the important works of existential philosophy in the form of essays, diaries, plays and notebooks. Commenting on those who have endeavored to expound his thought, Marcel mentions that some have yielded to the temptation to systematize it. He considers this to be a professional disease of the thinker, this yen for system. There are those who

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[1]Kenneth T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, The Orestes Brownson Series on Contemporary Thought & Affairs, No. 4 (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), p. 11.

must have a world of rounded-in totality with inner unity and completeness. Marcel regards this postulated totality as a mirage. He agrees with Bergson's view of an "open" world with a growing edge, necessitating an active and imaginative intellect. Marcel should not be expounded in terms of finished conclusions for he continues an ongoing inquiry with openness of mind.

In spite of his disclaim to systematization of thought, Marcel seems trapped in a web of his own spinning. He studiously and systematically avoids systematization of thought. For all practical purposes he interprets life from a particular vantage point and consistently pursues it after this manner. On the other hand it appears that he often flees an enemy (a systematic approach) that is not in pursuit. There is a vast difference between superimposing an arbitrary structure or system on life and the discovery of some system in the very nature of things. The pathological demand for system and organization to support one's insecurities can only be equaled by the total liberation found by those who seek to escape from the supposed imprisonment of system. Freedom from system does not necessarily give one a true picture of reality. System or no system, reality should speak for itself. It appears that Marcel makes a fetish out of non-system, to the extent that one wonders if it is not an overcompensation for the rigidly structured days of his youth.

Marcel, in avoiding philosophic systematization, apparently considers it to be nothing more than an arbitrary superimposition on life and reality, objectifying that which is subjective and hence not analyzable. Following this pattern one would be forcing reality into an arbitrary mold, not letting it take its own particular shape. Cain tends to agree with Marcel's view as he observes,

> Marcel is not the kind of thinker who has a system of cubby-holes--crude or intricate--into which he puts all the stuff of his life and thought, and, when this fails, throws what will not fit into the waste-basket of intellectual oblivion. He is not the kind of a thinker for whom things must come out even, with no overlaps or disjointedness, with everything formulable in logically consistent and meaningful statements. He is not the kind of thinker for whom the world is a neat pyramid of billiard balls, in hierarchical gradation, from the electron-flash to the Absolute--neat, clean, and well-lighted, with everything in its place. He is not the kind of thinker who advances with deliberate and systematic method along a route that has been carefully mapped beforehand to reach points where definite answers will meet definite questions.[1]

In spite of his rejection of systematization in philosophy, Marcel's work is based on an underlying principle of unity which could be considered a system in its own right. For what is a system if not a unifying principle by which related thoughts cohere? His underlying vision, though dimly seen at the beginning, becomes progressively more clear. This unifying vision "expresses itself in the conviction that within the temporal and transient order homo

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[1]Cain, Gabriel Marcel, p. 12.

viator is given a foretaste of eternal realities."[1] While Marcel's works appear to be more of an overflowing response from deep-seated urgings within, yet they are hardly without some unifying principle.

Marcel's Unique Method

An introductory chapter on Marcel's philosophic quest would be incomplete without some mention of his characteristic method of inquiry, which is the most distinguishing aspect of his philosophical explorations. Basic to understanding all of his investigations of reality is his view of the knowing process.

> The distinctive note of philosophic thought, at least according to my conception of it and I have many authorities for that conception, is that not only does it move towards the object whose nature it seeks to discover, but at the same time it is alert for a certain music that arises from its own inner nature if it is succeeding in carrying out its task. We have already said that the point about philosophic thought is that it is reflective; and it is into the nature of reflection, as an activity, that we must now probe more deeply than we have done so far.[2]

Marcel proceeds to distinguish between two types of reflection or thought which he calls primary and secondary reflection. It might be pointed out that both of these are deemed necessary and valid when properly used.

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[1]Samuel McMurray Keen, "Marcel, Gabriel," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1st ed., V, 153.

[2]Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I: Reflection and Mystery, trans. by G. S. Fraser. Gateway Edition; (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960), pp. 95-96. (Hereinafter referred to as The Mystery of Being, Vol. I.)

Primary reflection constitutes the characteristic approach of science and technology. It is brought to bear only upon problems. It is the kind of thinking done when one thinks about things or objects.

> Science only proceeds by way of abstraction and is not concerned with 'being' and the subjective experiences of 'being,' which do not change anything in the object. The object alone is of importance, and nothing else; it is separated from its surroundings and dissected in all its component parts.[1]

This problematic approach has as its salient feature the separation of the questioner from the object about which he is questioning. "A problem is something I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay seige to and reduce."[2] Hence, primary reflection is a type of problem-solving thinking. Since it aims at knowledge that is universal in scope, as well as abstract and objective, it consequently excludes that which is personal and particular as being irrelevant to its purposes. It is specifically interested in that kind of knowledge which is verifiable.

> Problem and verification are complementary ideas; where we can get sufficient distance from our own subjective, emotional, biographical selves in order to pose an objective problem, we can in theory get an answer which will be verifiable by all observers who will go through the appropriate procedures of observation and testing.[3]

Primary reflection, of its very nature, seeks knowledge which is not only verifiable but also objective. Thus

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[1]Ewijk, Gabriel Marcel, p. 27.

[2]Marcel, Being and Having, p. 117.

[3]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 18.

it is necessarily abstract and partial in its relationship between the object and the thinker. It must be remembered, however, that Marcel does not condemn primary reflection in itself but only its misuse.

> However, intellectual and moral confusion result when primary reflection becomes imperialistic and claims the right to judge all knowledge and truth by criteria appropriate only to the realm of the objective and the problematic. When this happens, persons are reduced to mere objects, the world to a collection of things, science gives way to scientism, and the inexhaustible riches of a kaleidoscopic world are forced to conform to the logic of black and white.[1]

Secondary reflection, on the other hand, is the type in which the observer is personally involved. It is found more commonly in the areas of religion, art and philosophy. In making a subjective approach the individual himself becomes a participant. He no longer remains a mere observer, and as such an element of mystery is injected into the whole process. Secondary reflection thus provides a means whereby one is enabled to more deeply participate in the mystery of being. The question immediately arises, what does Marcel mean by the term mystery?

Marcel makes particular use of the term mystery. Even though it has been filled with ambiguity, he endeavors to invest it with a new and precise fullness. In common usage, one often thinks of a mystery as a problem which contains an unknowable element; however, Marcel states that

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[1] Ibid., p. 19.

> 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.[1]

So when I am a part of and inseparable from that which I am investigating, the element of mystery is involved. Mysteries are recognizable only as one becomes a participant in them. It is impossible, therefore, ever to achieve an objective view of oneself. Marcel is not hesitant to proclaim that authentic human life moves within the realm of mystery. There are types of truth, personal truths, which are literally inseparable from their abstraction. This does not imply that mysteries _per se_ are unknowable. For as one participates in these relationships the meaning of human existence glows in a new light. "It is of the essence of the mysterious to be approachable by a type of rational thought which Marcel calls secondary reflection."[2]

It appears that Marcel is seeking to make the simple distinction which obtains between empirical fact and truths gained by intuitive grasp. In all likelihood, the basic difference between primary and secondary reflection can be seen in the fact that the latter seeks for inner meaningfulness in life's experiences, not content with that which might be simply abstracted from them or objectified by them.

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[1]Marcel, _Being and Having_, p. 117.

[2]Keen, _Gabriel Marcel_, p. 22.

Another fundamental distinction as pointed out by Marcel between primary and secondary reflection has to do with the matter of personal involvement--secondary reflection entailing this inseparable type of personal participation with that which is being investigated. The fact is, there can be no kind of experiencing without personal involvement, be it little or great. All experiencing by its very nature is subjective and personal to some degree. Is primary reflection, thus, any less of a mystery than secondary reflection? Can either be totally objective?

Marcel's significant term mystery, with all its privately imputed meaning, seems to be an unfortunate choice since it is surrounded with centuries of connotation signifying the unknowable. Perhaps a new word should have been coined that would have more clearly conveyed his true meaning. This practice of choosing ambiguous, if not misleading terms, continually plagues Marcel's attempts at exposition. Strangely enough, he considers it something of a virtue for it gives more latitude to an enriched, personal interpretation. To him, life has no rigid and exact dimensions.

Marcel's Philosophical Context

In seeking to understand the philosophy of any thinker, it is of first importance to grasp the world situation of his day. Only after this is done can one see the person's view in proper perspective. What kind of a

world is this into which man is thrust? How does he view his own human situation? From his vantage point in time how does he assess the prospects and condition of man in general? More specifically, what is the contextual setting from which he philosophizes? All of these factors lend color and tone to what he says, and afford a backdrop of existential mood against which all his words rise in bold relief.

Marcel, in contradistinction to Descartes' indubitable, sees the existential indubitable as the self incarnate in the body and as manifest in the world. Existence is nothing more nor less than presence to a body. At the first moment of selfconsciousness one finds himself experiencing an apartness, a standing out, over against a world which is also indubitably existent. One's body thrusts him into a world of real beings; hence, Marcel initially sees being in a situation in a personal, individuated sense. Each person is a being involved in a particular situation. Family, friends, surroundings, past, present and future prospects are all a part of him. Man, in effect, is constituted by his personal situation.

> What is real is the altogether. The cogitans is erected by a retreat from the altogether; to that extent it is unreal, and if we want to restore its existential density we must re-cross to the cogitatum. But if we do we find that we recover not our isolated existence, but a global reality which is given en masse and which alone can give the cogitans real roots.[1]

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 17.

So Marcel really sees man as being constituted by his total situation, and not the total situation by the individuated "I." Thus incarnation, the joining of the person to the body, is the foundation of one's being-in-a-situation.

Marcel speaks of a "certain general way of looking at the world."[1] This backdrop, against which he philosophizes, is considered to be a broken world. Perhaps this insightful observation can best be stated by the heroine of one of his plays:

> Don't you feel sometimes that we are living . . . if you can call it living . . . in a broken world? Yes, broken like a broken watch. The mainspring has stopped working. Just to look at it, nothing has changed. Everything is in place. But put the watch to your ear, and you don't hear any ticking. You know what I'm talking about, the world, what we call the world, the world of human creatures . . . it seems to me it must have had a heart at one time, but today you would say the heart had stopped beating.[2]

Here one finds a fashionable lady, Christiane in Le Monde Casse', who is smart, witty, flattered by friends, involved in the onrush of a busy, yet desirable type of life, breaking through the mask of an inner grief, an anguish, to the surface of reality.

No doubt this broken world, which Marcel describes as hurtling on towards mass suicide constitutes the price to be paid for the amazing progress of our times.[3] He pictures

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 21.

[2]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, pp. 26-27.

[3]See The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 28.

the world in its present situation as being whole, single. "It is from this very unity and totality that it draws its sinister new power of self destruction."[1] This kind of unity cannot be other than bad in itself for it is linked to the existence of a will to power. He envisions a single conqueror gaining possession of the technical equipment that would render both rebellion and opposition futile. In such a collectivized world, made possible through scientific and technological advances, the idea of any real community becomes practically inconceivable. Life's old intimate quality has been lost for individuals by the increasingly complex and unified social organization of human life. The socialization of life has been brought about in part by all being treated more and more as agents whose behavior ought to contribute toward the progress of a certain social whole, something that is rather distant, oppressive, even tyrannical. This view is promoted by a growing bureaucracy that has attained a certain degree of power which ultimately tends in the direction of a police dictatorship where persons are treated as pawns. The inevitable outcome involves a strange reduction of personality to nothing more than an official identity.

Marcel adds a further dimension to his notion of a broken world. He poses a question which has definite theological overtones.

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 28.

> If anybody accepts the dogma of the Fall, is there not implicit in that acceptance an admission that the world is, in fact, broken? In other words, is it not the case that the world is essentially broken . . . not merely historically broken, as we have seemed to be saying, basing ourselves, as we have done, on a certain number of facts about the contemporary world?[1]

He continues probing by asking if talk about a broken world does not imply that there was a period when the world was intact? His answer is in the negative since it contradicts both the teachings of the Church and all the showings of history. He insists, however, that the broken state of the present world has become much more obvious than in preceding centuries due to the socialization of mankind, the mechanization of industry, and the consequent loss of dignity associated with being an individual person.

Marcel has weakened his argument about a broken world by his mistaken view of the Church's traditional position. The Church has traditionally held that the world was once intact before the fall of man. This, according to Church dogma, accounts for the broken state of the world. The traditional Christian position would have strengthened his point if it had been correctly stated.

Marcel insists that one needs to reflect on the situation at hand, imagining the logical outcome of present world trends. Through careful observation and assessment the opportunity still remains for concerted and effective action; however, unless the perilous tendencies of the

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 42.

twentieth century are reversed, the prospect for the future looks bleak indeed to Marcel.

In concluding his Gifford Lectures delivered at the University of Aberdeen in 1949-50, Marcel definitely alludes to the possibility of this being the end-time. Such terms as, historical cataclysms, catastrophes, and apocalyptic, are used without any hesitation. While he does not indulge in prophesying, yet he warns with a strong sense of concern and foreboding:

> There have been periods in history when a philosopher's audience could listen to him in a certain atmosphere of serenity. They could look upon their future on this earth as being comparatively safe . . . at least from the great historical cataclysms . . . But our situation today is precisely the opposite . . . we must admit the extreme probability that we are heading for catastrophes even more terrible, even more uprooting, than those which many of us have witnessed during the last thirty-five years.[1]

Marcel depicts the situation of modern man to be that of alienation, both from his God and from himself. He is unsure of his own essence and a stranger to himself, lost and adrift in the universe. His predicament deepens when he recognizes that modern man has gained the technical ability to change or destroy the earth. Sam Keen well describes Marcel's view: "Within this apocalyptic situation, pregnant

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II: Faith and Reality, trans. by Rene Hague. Gateway Edition; (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960), p. 186. (Hereinafter referred to as The Mystery of Being, Vol. II.)

with the seeds of both utopian promise and hellish destruction, modern man exists, ill at ease, a problem to himself."[1]

Concluding Statement

In coming to the close of this brief introductory essay one would do well to recall the importance of a writer's background in reference to his later philosophic stance. Arriving at a better understanding of Marcel as a man should enhance the meaningfulness of his writings. Personal biases of earlier years have a way of persisting into later life, surfacing at last as settled views.

Nor can one ignore the structure of his unique investigative procedure--primary and secondary reflection. This method of approach underlies all of Marcel's philosophizing. One might follow its implications with profit.

Finally, the burden of concern which Marcel exhibits for the preservation of the true humanity of man can best be grasped in the twilight of his foreboding world-view.

Before proceeding further it would be enlightening to consider Marcel's concept of being. In fact, it is necessary to come to an understanding of what he means by being, before one can fully grasp the peril of dehumanization. To this, one's attention is now directed.

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 9.

CHAPTER II

MARCEL'S APPROACH TO BEING

The central concern of Marcel is that man will attain meaningful self-fulfillment. He is interested in the actualization of the rich potential inherent in all persons. He is not only aware of the natural "urgency to be" that characterizes all men, but also of the threat to personhood found in contemporary living. Caught in its current, man tends to be swept into a meaningless existence. Marcel pictures man as being on a pilgrimage through a broken world, largely destitute of true meaning, faced with the constant peril of the loss of being. Prior to an investigation of the predicament of modern man with its many implications, one needs to explore Marcel's concept of being envisioning the richness of full selfhood. Only then can he grasp the wealth of being that man stands to lose as he encounters the technological methods of a thing-centered culture.

It should be stated from the outset that the basic interest of this inquiry is not so much the metaphysical structure of being as it is the phenomenological aspects of

being. What does man possess that makes him distinctly human--that he is in danger of losing through the process of modern living? The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an exposition of Marcel's answer to this as well as other related questions.

The Meaning of Being

Nowhere does Marcel attempt to define the term being. In fact, his disdain for systematic development appears to reach its height when he presents his views on the nature of existence. Abstract definitions and dialectical arguments are all laid aside and instead one witnesses occasional flashes of insight accompanied by sudden sallies of thought. While these are appreciated yet the reader feels a bit bewildered if not confused, for if ever Marcel has an obligation to the reader to be explicit, it is when he treats this all-important concept of being. He freely admits the difficulty of definition.

> As for defining the word 'being,' let us admit that it is extremely difficult. I would merely suggest this method of approach: being is what withstands--or what would withstand--an exhaustive analysis bearing on the data of experience and aiming to reduce them step by step to elements increasingly devoid of intrinsic or significant value. (An analysis of this kind is attempted in the theoretical works of Freud.)[1]

The fact that it savors of interiority and subjectivity does not exclude its verbal formulation and conceptualization; however, a true definition of being (by genus and difference)

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[1]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 14.

is literally impossible since being is not a sub-class of some larger class.

At times it appears that Marcel is contradictory; however, there is the possibility that these apparent contradictions represent nothing more than the growing and expanding concept of being which he has nurtured over the years. Another explanation might be found in his peculiar method of philosophizing. "Each statement is a result of a re-seeing that flashes out of his absorption with a concrete situation."[1] A few examples of seeming conflict will now be cited--all of which purportedly set forth Marcel's "basic concern":

> The fundamental datum of all metaphysical reflection is that I am a being who is not transparent himself.[2]
>
> We are accordingly obliged by necessity to recognize that being, in the full sense of the word, cannot be treated as a datum.[3]
>
> The problem of the metaphysical foundation of witness is obviously as central as any.[4]
>
> . . . it is on the ground of immortality that the decisive metaphysical choice must be made.[5]

Gallagher observes that such propositions are actually interrelated, and the fact that they resemble one another confirms

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[1]Gallagher, Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 118.

[2]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 290.

[3]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 41.

[4]Marcel, Being and Having, p. 97.

[5]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 151.

the value of his procedure and indicates the pervading orientation of his thought.

> Underlying everything is the blinded intuition--but this does not function as a premise from which other statements can be deduced. Rather it serves as a light which is shed upon and reflected by every concrete situation into which thought plunges afresh. And what this light discovers is in each case--presence. Every one of Marcel's 'central concern' formulas brings out in a different way the notion that philosophy is nurtured by an experience of presence. Ultimately this presence can only be an absolute presence.[1]

Being does not lend itself to easy definition as would an object. Being must be grasped, sensed, intuited. Marcel speaks of a blinded intuition, a primordial grasp, a basic self-consciousness. Since being cannot be objectified like a thing, it is best experienced. One does not come to an understanding of being through observation but through individual participation. Thus it cannot be characterized and analyzed as an object. Enumerating its traits cannot set it forth in clear light, for one senses a basic elusion taking place in the process. As an effort is made to pin it down in so many statements, an adroit escape is made by being itself. So the characteristics of being do not constitute it, but are mere indicators of its presence. A fitting illustration can be found in seeking to know what it is like "to be a woman." In vain does a woman try to communicate to a man what is involved in her real being. To understand, one must be one! Under these circumstances, then, how must one

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 7.

proceed to make more explicit this ontological mystery of being? Through personal introspection a few intuitively-gained insights might be set forth, communicable only to like beings--persons. Marcel speaks of this inner process of comprehension as secondary reflection. It is at this point that he speaks of the mystery of being. One comes to an assurance of being by a kind of blinded intuition. This is a primitive assurance of the presence of being. Since the self is part of the content, yet unassessable, this mysterious comprehension at best can be tabbed a kind of intuition.

One might ask the question, what is meant by the affirmation of being? How does one affirm the presence of being? Can it be accomplished in a positive, definitive sort of way? Or on the other hand can being best be seen as a reflection of its polar opposites? As one proceeds into the investigation he must constantly bear in mind the uncertainties (a lack of positive assertive statements) surrounding Marcel's concept of being. His view appears so fluid that one must settle in his own mind what he thinks Marcel's ultimate meaning to be. Gallagher ventures what seems to be the most likely formulation of Marcel's view. In broad outline, his approach will be followed.[1]

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, pp. 53-65.

Now back to the original question: What is meant by the affirmation of being? It simply means that one discoverably declares, through the intuitive grasp of self-consciousness and the awareness of other selves, that he _is_ and others _are_. To acclaim with certainty that being "is" indicates that one has experienced being. At this point the essentially anti-Cartesian character of Marcel's metaphysics emerges. "It is not enough to say that it is a metaphysic of being; it is a metaphysic of _we are_ as opposed to a metaphysic of _I think_."[1] Marcel seriously doubts that a person can abstract the truth about being from his own experience as he introspectively looks within himself. It probably will involve an intense desire to understand himself in his concrete experiences as a man among men.

> It may mean devoting myself to understanding my own life as fully as possible; and where I use the word 'life' in that connection, I could equally well use the word 'experience.' If I try to do so, I shall most likely be led to a strange and wonderful discovery--that the more I raise myself to a really concrete perception of my own experience, the more, by that very act, shall I be attuned to an effective understanding of others, of the experience of others. Nothing indeed can be more important and helpful than to realize this fully.[2]

Marcel feels that the discovery of self consists in experiencing the "we are" over against the "I think." Concrete understanding of the self is not an ego-centric matter. Egocentrism is possible only in a being who has not properly

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[1]Marcel, _The Mystery of Being_, Vol. II, p. 10.

[2]Marcel, _The Mystery of Being_, Vol. II, p. 7.

mastered and assimilated his own experience. When one is obsessed by an ego-centric preoccupation, that preoccupation acts as a barrier between himself and others. As a person breaks down this barrier he tends to rediscover his own personal experience, for it is in real communication with other experiences. If I am cut off from the one, I am cut off from the other. So I can best realize and understand my own being as I sense being through intersubjectivity.

> A complete and concrete knowledge of oneself cannot be heautocentric; however paradoxical it may seem, I should prefer to say that it must be hetero-centric. The fact is that we can understand ourselves by starting from the other, or from others, and only by starting from them.[1]

Marcel's statement is strong. No doubt he is overstating his case by using the word "only" in the above quotation. There is a sense in which everyone must start with himself. For one to be aware of others is predicated on the consciousness of his own existence. While their presence is no doubt enriching, supportive, and clarifying of one's own self-image, yet others do not constitute the self, neither are they prior to self-consciousness.

Gallagher experiences some difficulty as he tries to unscramble Marcel's meaning of "affirmation of being." He finally concludes that one can best understand Marcel's meaning at this point by exploring what he intends by the opposite, "denial of being." "To say that 'nothing is' is

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[1] Ibid., p. 9.

to declare that 'nothing counts.'[1] This entails a negative kind of definition. In all probability this is the meaning of Solomon's statement, "Vanity of vanities . . . all is vanity."[2] Nothing signifies, nothing counts, nothing is! This is certainly the voice of nihilism. So as one views its opposite, denial, a clearer concept of being tends to emerge. Being is not simply to be there, but to be there meaningfully, worthily, valuably. Being is that which resists and defies critical dissolution. It refuses to be dissipated in the hollow appearances of functionalized living. Being doesn't disappear under the disintegrating pressures of contemporary life. Being is not exhausted through the analytic techniques of modern science. Being is not transparent under the eye of the microscope, nor does it yield its treasures of meaning to the observer and technician. It is inexhaustible and opaque to the eye of the logician. To affirm being, then, is to declare a depth, a profundity, a mystery in reality beyond mere observation. Individual participation, personal experience, and intersubjectivity are the key to its comprehension and understanding. It rejects a nihilistic "seeing-through."

To both the affirmer and denier, being is considered in relation to a need. This need is universal and natural, an urge to be, in fact the innate demand for meaningful

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[1]Eccl. 12:8.

[2]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 53.

existence. This is what Marcel terms ontological exigence, which will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

In seeking to understand Marcel's point of view in relation to being, one should not prematurely inquire as to its essence, for this can best be comprehended by grasping the need or demand for it. An insightful analogy can be seen in the fact that the nature of water is understood, at least in part, by the intensity of need which a man dying of thirst has for it. In all practicality it constitutes an important property of water from the dying man's point of view.

Marcel's view of being, according to Gallagher, can best be understood by what he opposes to it. ". . . being vs. having; being vs. existence; my being vs. my life. Of these contrasted couples, the first receives by far the most extensive treatment."[1] In the discussion that follows these general lines of division will be observed.

Being and Having

In seeking to illuminate his meaning of being, Marcel contrasts it with the concept of having. "Fundamentally the whole problem comes back to the distinction between what we have and what we are."[2] He notes that it is extraordinarily difficult to express the difference in conceptual terms.

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 53.

[2]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 311.

Repeatedly he comes back to this point: being cannot be shown, cannot be signified, for it eludes every category in which having is involved. "For Being is, quite fundamentally, not something which we can discuss. We can discuss only that which is not Being."[1]

First of all, Marcel suggests that what one has, obviously presents an appearance of externality to himself.

> What we have evidently has a kind of exteriority as regards the self. Yet this exteriority is not absolute. In principle what one has are things (or what can be compared with things) in the extent to which such comparison is possible.[2]

He further observes that one can only have something whose existence, for the most part, is independent of himself. So what one has is added to himself. This consideration underlines the objectivity of that which a person possesses. It becomes a thing in reference to him. He thus becomes a subject in relation to an object. His being is an internality in comparison to the externality of the object. Here then is established a subject-object relationship.

Marcel also notes that what one possesses is a thing over which he acquires a specific right of disposition. ". . . the fact of being possessed by me is added to other properties, qualities, etc. that belong to the thing I have. I only have that which I in some way and within certain

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 130.

[2]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 311.

limits have at my disposal."[1] It appears, then, that one's possession is a thing which is not himself, but which one attaches to the circle of himself. "What I have is a thing, an alien quid which I, as a qui, annex and over which I acquire a specific right of disposition."[2] Having, then, appears to be an activity of an autonomous self.

In Marcel's discussion of having, as related to one's own body, he makes the statement that a person does not have a body since it is not properly at his disposal, such as in suicide.[3] Therefore, he would say that one is a body, not has a body. As a critical consideration one might point-up the need to distinguish between having in the sense of ownership and having in the sense of trusteeship. In the latter sense one does possess a body. He holds it in trust from the Creator yet is free to dispose of it as will, but not without being ultimately responsible for it. Notwithstanding, Marcel continues to insist,

> 'Having' is being able to dispose of, having a power over; it seems clear to me that this disposal or power always implies the interposal of the organism, i.e. of something about which, for that very reason, I cannot say that it is at my disposal. The metaphysical mystery of non-disposability may essentially consist in the impossibility, for me, of really being able to dispose of that which gives me the disposal of things.[4]

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[1] Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 311.

[2] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 54.

[3] See Marcel, Being and Having, p. 156.

[4] Ibid., p. 82.

The situation in regard to one's own body thus seems ambiguous. In a sense it is a person's prime possession, since it is through one's body that all other possessing becomes possible. One's body enables him to intervene in real events, and as such it is the absolute having.

> Yet in a sense I cannot enclose my body within the set of categories which it alone makes possible. Since all having is exercised over another, the body as mine is not possessed: it is not a thing which I have at my disposal.[1]

It is still pertinent to make the distinction between having in ownership and having in trusteeship. Then, too, one must realize that the term "myself," referring to the person I am, cannot be equated with "my body," the place of my residence.

Marcel gives further thought to two rather meaningful words: dispose and transmit. Sometimes he tends to use them interchangeably and at other times he makes a distinction between them. In reference to the matter of having, the word dispose carries the weight of an individual's power to control, determine, or regulate. On the other hand the word transmit would indicate the ability to transfer something from one person to another. ". . . the case of the transmission of a message which involves an emission at the point of departure and its reception at the point of arrival, can be taken as typical of what we mean by transmission."[2] He states that it is only in so far as a thing is attached to

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 54.

[2]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 312.

a person, and not an integral part of being, that it is transmittable. It is what one has, not what he is that is transmittable. Thus, feeling or sensation, as part of oneself, is not transferrable. "What belongs to me, what I have, is on the contrary precisely what can be transmitted."[1] He makes a closing observation that, "If the category of being is really valid it is because that which is not capable of being transmitted is to be found in reality."[2] Marcel's indication here is that being is that which is real and that it cannot be grasped or comprehended through transmissive knowledge (which is reserved for possessable things) but simply and profoundly through individual participation. The grasp of being must come by an untransmittable knowledge. It arrives via intuition, by participation subjectively experienced.

Since one can only discuss that which is not being, it follows that being is uncharacterizable. "Characterization is a certain kind of possession, or claim to possession, of that which cannot be possessed."[3] The question could be raised: In what sense is characterization a possession? One should first be reminded that being cannot be characterized or abstracted. If this were possible then one could possess another by knowing all the facts that

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[1] Ibid., p. 312.

[2] Ibid., p. 311.

[3] Marcel, Being and Having, p. 169.

constitute him. Thus, in this sense characterization is a certain kind of possession. Knowledge of being comes through a blinded intuition, says Marcel, and not through sense perception. Sense perception can only net abstraction; therefore, man has no way of abstracting being. Since being cannot be abstracted, then it cannot be possessed. While possession or having can be rightly predicated of objects it cannot be used in reference to beings or persons.

Moreover, being can never be a sum. "I am always and at every moment more than the totality of predicates that an inquiry made by myself--or by someone else--about myself . . . would be able to bring to light."[1] Thus being does not lend itself to cataloguing. Only a thing or an object possessed can be characterized. There is that in man that will not lend itself to enumeration.

> But being is beyond all inventory. And man insofar as he is held fast by being is a channel of the inexhaustible. Our civilization is essentially the imposition of the rationalistic side of the human self. As a discursive reasoner, as one who indulges in primary reflection, man is above all a manipulator and a planner; but only what is possessed can be manipulated, and therefore, the vision of modern civilization does not extend beyond man as a 'haver.'[2]

Marcel's conclusion is that a reality such as being is uncharacterizable, and therefore is, insofar as it is given to me as presence. Being and presence always coexist. Likewise, not-presence and not-being are always found together.

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[1]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 199.

[2]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 56.

Being and Existence

In discussing this subject one encounters the difficulty of Marcel's private use of language; however, it will be helpful in understanding what he means by being to observe, in contrast, what he considers existence to be. While there seems to be a lack on Marcel's part of clear-cut precision in differentiating between the two terms, yet an attempt will be made to polarize the ideas. Even Marcel feels a bit hard put at this prospect: "But are we not beginning to find ourselves again, in this perspective, faced by the embarrassing question of the relation between being and existence"?[1] Once again he approaches a near contradiction in his thinking when he states, "We might be tempted to say that there is always a gap between me and my being; I can narrow the gap . . . but at least in this life I cannot hope to bridge it."[2] Herein he establishes an impassable gulf between his existence and his being, yet in commenting on the latter he says,

> We shall do better to say that it is scarcely being at all; it is as though it rebelled against the demands which the word 'to be' brings with it. Later we shall have to examine those demands more and more closely. But if on the other hand, we climb up the slope again, existence will seem to us as having ultimately to be indistinguishable from authentic being.[3]

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[1] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 35.

[3] Ibid., p. 31.

In all fairness to Marcel one should be reluctant in drawing premature conclusions in reference to what, at this juncture, appear to be contradictions. In granting him a careful hearing one might be surprised at the extent of the problem as well as the degree of insight he evidences. The real issue at hand is brought into focus by Marcel's statement of what he considers to be the primary question:

> We have reached a point where the question that should concern us lies in knowing whether there is any way in which I can have experience of myself as <u>being</u>--being in a sense which is not that in which I can grasp myself as <u>existing</u>.[1]

Light might be thrown on the subject if the etymology of the verb "to exist" is explored. If one emphasizes that to exist is to emerge or arise, then the notion of self-consciousness tends to evolve. If self-consciousness, which is a consciousness of one's existence, is not a consciousness of being, then what is it? Gallagher makes Marcel's answer more explicit in putting it thus:

> My own existence I can confidently assert, but my being is not so much vaunted as it is accepted humbly as a perpetually bestowed gift. Actually the use of the phrase 'my' being is already in danger of distorting things, since the possessive hints at an intrusion of egocentricity.[2]

Marcel feels that it is only in the proportion that my existence ceases to gravitate about my exclusive self that it takes on authenticity. So at the transitional point

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 35.

[2] Gallagher, <u>The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel</u>, p. 60.

where authentic existence merges with being it is not my being that is in question but my being. While the word existence is said in reference to a body, it is presence to a body, the term being should be used only in reference to selves, presence among selves.

On the crucial issue of being and existence it would be well to note the view of several of Marcel's interpreters. While a difference of interpretation will be noted among them, yet viewing his position from a number of vantage points will tend to enrich the whole.

Troisfontaines, his leading French interpreter, suggests the following basis for Marcel's distinction between existence and being:

> Man only raises himself to it [being] by a dialectic of three stages. In the beginning, before he is even at the state of being conscious of it or of reacting personally, he finds himself engaged in a situation which he has not chosen and which nevertheless constitutes him: this is the stage of existence. A primary reflection analyzes this conplexus, dissociates the elements which are confused in a primitive immediacy: but the objectification characteristic of this step, if it renders knowledge [science] possible, risks destroying participation. In order to remedy this, a secondary reflection, exercised on the first, permits each one to re-establish--if he wills it--communion with the real, to engage himself in being. Unlike existence, being, then requires the option of the person who voluntarily maintains or re-creates his union with the world, with himself, with other persons, and with God . . . The guiding thread [of my work] is that existence here designates a participation in the real anterior even to the consciousness one takes of it . . . while being applies only to the participation in which there freely

> engages himself a subject who, by this very act, constitutes himself or affirms himself as a person.[1]

Troisfontaines' interpretation claims that for Marcel existence means a situation imposed, while being means a situation freely accepted. Unfortunately, this distinction as such is not to be found explicitly in Marcel. In fact, Marcel nowhere gives such connotation to these words.

Paul Ricoeur suggests that existence and being refer to different levels of participation. As he describes how a subject can retreat from participation at various levels he observes that existence, evacuated, leaves nothing but abstraction; being, evacuated, leaves nothingness and despair.[2] One might easily infer from Ricoeur's interpretation that Marcel associates existence with things and being with persons. When Ricoeur suggests that existence evacuated, leaves nothing but abstraction, he is pointing to the realm of objects and things. By the same token, when he combines nothingness and despair with being evacuated, it has the sound of subjects and persons.

The isolated self, enveloped in egocentric pursuits, is seeking out nothing more than an existence. This Marcel describes as a terrible emptiness. An emptiness which

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[1] Troisfontaines, De l'existence à l'être, Vol. I, pp. 44-45, quoted in Kenneth T. Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), p. 59.

[2] See Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 166.

"ensues in a functionalized world, a world drained dry of being, is a testimonial in reverse to the fact that being, when present, is fulfillment."[1] In contrast to the category of emptiness, fullness depicts the life of him who intersubjectively lives in communion with those about him.

> I concern myself with being only in so far as I have a more or less distinct consciousness of the underlying unity which ties me to other beings of whose reality I already have a preliminary notion. In the light of the ideas which have not yet penetrated to the obscure regions in which we have tried to hack a path for ourselves, I should say of these beings that they are above all my fellow-travellers--my fellow-creatures.[2]

The need or demand for being, spoken of as the exigence for being, is linked to the exigence for perennialness by a bond which cannot be broken. An indubitable truth in Marcel's mind is that the need to be and the need to be eternal are identical needs. "The being which is the unexpected side of the ontological exigence, that being whose presence is felt as fulfillment, is raised on the pillars of eternity."[3]

> I have said that the discovery of being would mean the elevation of oneself to a mode of experience or of life over which critical experience no longer had any hold. And that, I think, amounts to admitting that there is no being save in eternity.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 61.

[2] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, pp. 19-20.

[3] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 61.

[4] Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 183-84.

One attains the realm of being, not by freely accepting his situation, but by recognizing that the roots of his situation are embedded in the eternal.

> Being is the eternal dimension of my existential situation. Being is that to which I aspire . . . Spirit is the channel of being: to experience spirit is to experience the influx of the eternal. Conversely, one who has not become spirit cannot be aware of the presence of being.[1]

Marcel readily adds, "It may seem strange that I should identify, as I have done, the problem of being and the problem of salvation."[2] In all probability, this statement comes the closest to equating Marcel's philosophy with his theology! Here one finds a frank admission that the attainment of being is tantamount to God's purpose for man in salvation. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[3] Perhaps this sheds additional light on Marcel's attempted distinction between mere existence and being. On numerous occasions, as can be noted from direct quotations in this chapter, Marcel definitely indicates that one can experience the presence of being here and now. While the influx of the eternal begins in this life, yet the perfection of being can only be realized in eternity.

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 62.

[2]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 182.

[3]Jn. 10:10.

Marcel's position on the attainment of being is largely in agreement with the traditional theological view that salvation (in the final sense) is the restoration of man to perfection of being. Perhaps the only difference is the matter of approach: the theologian through faith in revelation, Marcel through the labyrinth of philosophical reasoning.

My Being and My Life

Marcel makes a further comparison between my being and my life. In effect, he makes a distinction between the self and the overt expression thereof. He would insist that one's life in no sense can be likened to something which he has. Life is not a having. Life is not something to be invested or that which is capable of being administrated.

> The administration of an inheritance or estate. Life itself compared to an estate, and treated as capable of being administered or managed. In all this, there is room for autonomy. But the nearer we come to creation, the less we can speak of autonomy, or rather we can only do so at a lower level, the level of exploitation; for instance, the artist exploiting his inspiration.[1]

If life is not that which one might have, then can it be said that I am my life? Marcel also rejects this idea even though he embraced this alternative when speaking of the body by saying that "I am my body."[2] Why this inconsistency in formulation? It would seem that the two statements under

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[1]Marcel, Being and Having, p. 130.

[2]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 123.

consideration should more properly be reversed: "I have a body" appears more accurate since one's body is simply entrusted to him and is at his disposal even in suicide. The body is not an integral part of the person since he can live on even though the body is dead. Yet again, it appears quite obvious that I am my life since it is the expression of the self and cannot be separated from the existence of it. No being--no life. These are inseparable, yet Marcel would stress the fact that since one can sit in judgment on his own life indicates that the two are not identical.

> To say 'my being is not identical with my life' is to say two different things. First, that since I <u>am</u> not my life, my life must have been given to me; in a sense unfathomable to man, I am previous to it; I <u>am</u> comes before I <u>live</u>. Second, my being is something which is in jeopardy from the moment my life begins, and must be saved; my being is a stake, and therein perhaps lies the whole meaning of life. This is the only possible way to explain the ordeal of human life (and if it is not an ordeal, I do not see what else it can be).[1]

One's self is not, therefore, reducible to its objective manifestations.

> The reality of the self lies beyond its finite and material expression. It is precisely here that there looms up the threat of betrayal, for there is a constant temptation facing man to reduce his being to its overt manifestation. Our world not only permits but even invites such a betrayal of our being.[2]

The constant presence of death and the following grief of the soul in despair, proclaiming that there is no being,

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[1]Marcel, <u>Being and Having</u>, p. 196.

[2]Gallagher, <u>The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel</u>, p. 63.

and thus no life beyond this physical existence, encourages the betrayal of being.

Marcel makes a further distinction between "my being" and "my life." Not only does my being extend beyond my physical life, but my being is in peril from the beginning of my life. My being is that which must be saved. Herein lies the whole meaning of life. The high risk of losing my being is an ordeal in which I must cling to that which has been entrusted to me. With these thoughts Marcel gives some possible indication of belief in conditional immortality, the view that one is entitled to have everlasting life (being) by participating in salvation--otherwise, he would return to oblivion (non-existence) from whence he had come. In this case the loss would involve loss of being. "But if the spiritual soul of man is the surrogate of being, and if being is at stake in his life, then the primary meaning of soul must be conceived with reference to this 'ontological hazard.'[1] Thus Marcel reiterates the value of being and its separateness from its incarnation in the body. In one's lifetime he is a carrier of more than just his physical life. One's being constitutes the transcendent dimension of his life. By choice he may lay down his physical life as absolute fulfillment of being. This physical act of sacrifice is an answer to a call from deep within his being, and consequently it could be the means whereby he would effect a

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[1] Ibid., p. 64.

union with his true self. Quite paradoxically, according to Marcel, one can find fullness of being by sacrificing his life. It could become the means whereby he would ultimately gain it. It gives depth and meaning to his statement, "What is deepest in me is not of me."[1]

Participation in Being

An important aspect of Marcel's concept of being has to do with its rise or emergence. This in turn raises a number of questions: Is there such an entity, physical or spiritual, as being? If so, what is it? What is its origin? One is confronted immediately with the thought of who is asking these questions about being: How can he be certain of his own existence? It would appear at first glance that one who formulates this problem, should be able to remain outside or beyond it. But this is not so. He is involved in being. He cannot extricate himself from its grasp. Since he can only know himself, his being, by a blind intuition, it forever remains in the realm of mystery not in the area of the problematic.

> So I am inevitably forced to ask: Who am I--I who question being? How am I qualified to begin this investigation? If I do not exist, how can I succeed in it? And if I do exist, how can I be sure of this fact?[2]

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[1]Marcel, Being and Having, p. 223.

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 16.

Everything the intellect knows, it knows as being. Outside of this there is nothing. "The mind knows being, which is to know something of everything that is or can be."[1] The intellect thus knows itself in act and knows its participation and partaking in being. The real solution to the question of, Who am I? begins as an unfolding through experience. A response to the question is thus generated. This experience not only produces wonder but is of a revelatory character. It is quite apparent in Marcel's case that it is the experience of his encounter with existence that initiates his whole philosophical endeavor. He seeks to capture experience in all its pristine simplicity (purity) and extract from it every bit of significance and meaning possible. He emplores the mystery of existence, seeking the inner meaning of man's life. In the process, Marcel finds mystery in existence. He recognizes his inability to plumb its depths in this life. Existence is not a predicate, for if it is withdrawn nothing is left. Experience, rather, is a real participation in being.

> I am therefore led to assume or to recognise a form of participation which has the reality of a subject; this participation cannot be, by definition, an <u>object</u> of thought; it cannot serve as a solution--it appears beyond the realm of problems: it is meta-problematical.[2]

In effect, this is to postulate the primacy of being over knowledge. This is not an assertion of being, but of being

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[1]Ostermann, "Discovery of Being," p. 101.

[2]Marcel, <u>Existentialism</u>, p. 18.

as asserting itself. In a sense, knowledge is environed by being--it is interior to it.

> From this standpoint, contrary to what epistemology seeks vainly to establish, there exists well and truly a mystery of cognition; knowledge is contingent on a participation in being for which no epistemology can account because it continually presupposes it.[1]

In a very elementary way, then, one can say "I am before I know." This statement gives some indication of the mystery involved in being. "A mystery is a problem which encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem."[2]

The recurring theme throughout the writings of Marcel is that of personal participation in being. Experience furnishes the stage on which this participation occurs. Marcel's traditional method of approaching understanding is to begin and end with actual life:

> I think we must first of all try to map it out in relation to life as it is concretely lived, and not to outline its shape in the high void of 'pure thought'; for my method of advance does invariably consist, as the reader will have noticed already, in working my way up from life to thought and then down from thought to life again, so that I may try to throw more light upon life.[3]

Marcel not only accents the role of participation but he goes one step further when he observes that to be is to actually participate in being. All experiences of existence are

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[1] Ibid., p. 18.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

[3] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 51.

shared experiences. There are no isolated experiences of existence. The purely private self appears to be an abstraction. Marcel concludes that the ego given in experience is a being-by-participation. While there appears to be more than one level of participation, yet on each level the self cannot be separated from that in which it participates. For it is through participation that the self arises or emerges. One's experience of existence finds its only foundation in participation. Consequently, the role of philosophy is not to construct a systematic view of reality as a spectator (and thus forsake existence for abstraction), but to think the existent and actual, as a participant, and trace out the implications of the experience of participation.[1]

Marcel, writing in the Foreword of Kenneth Gallagher's insightful book The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, has this to say about the idea of "participation":

> . . . Kenneth Gallagher has had the merit of emphasizing an idea which is absolutely central to my work, an idea, in fact, that in a way even provides the key to my thought, although this has rarely been perceived by others as clearly as I would like.[2]

Gallagher proceeds by suggesting that there are three levels of participation discerned by Marcel though they are not always set forth in clear-cut language

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[1] See Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. xi.

[2] Ibid., p. xiii.

> . . . the level of incarnation, which is actualized through sensation and the experience of the body as 'mine'; the level of communion, which is actualized through love, hope, and fidelity; the level of transcendence, which is actualized through the ontological exigence, primitive assurance, and 'blinded intuition' of being.[1]

Participation through Incarnation

The union of soul with body is called "incarnation." Sometimes Marcel refers to it as "incarnate personality."[2] Incarnation, as such, becomes the central 'given' of metaphysics. "Incarnation is the situation of a being who appears to himself to be, as it were, bound to a body."[3] That which one might speak of as the "existential indubitable" is nothing more than the self as incarnate in the body as well as manifested in the world.

> Existence is said in reference to a body; it is presence to a body . . . It is my body which sets me down in a world of real beings. It is this self in which my philosophical concern flares up. And the great datum for this self is the non-contingency of the empirically given.[4]

Marcel thinks that one's total environmental setting is not something apart from himself, but part and parcel of himself. He would identify this as "being in a situation." A person experiences this situation, his situation, through the self

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[1] Ibid., p. xi.

[2] Marcel, Being and Having, p. 10.

[3] Ibid., p. 11.

[4] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, pp. 16-17.

as incarnate in the body and as manifest in the world with all its necessary components, such as one's family, his past, and his entire set of circumstances. So what is real is the altogether. It is *via* the body that one is plunged into the world of real existence. The presence of the self in the actual world is accomplished by means of the body. "My body is the absolute mediator between me and the actual world, the vehicle in which the self deploys itself in existence."[1] Incarnation is thus not only the central given of metaphysics, but it is also the basis of one's being-in-a-situation.

A pertinent question might be raised: In what respect is one related to all else that exists? Marcel answers:

> To say that something exists is not only to say that it belongs to the same system as my body (that it is bound to it by certain connections which reason can define), it is also to say that it is in some way united to me as my body is.[2]

When one affirms the existence of other things, he indicates that he considers them as connected with his body to the degree that it is able to be put in contact with them. It is in connection with one's body that an existing thing can be defined and find its proper place.

> Thus between me and all that exists there is a relation (the word is quite inadequate) of the same type

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[2] Marcel, *Being and Having*, p. 11.

> as the relation that unites me to my body . . . This amounts to saying that my body is in sympathy with things.
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> And in this way a certain mode of vision becomes possible. In other words, I want to show that I am really attached to and really adhere to all that exists--to the universe which is my universe and whose centre is my body.[1]

Marcel's metaphysics turns on the notion of participation. Participation is his method of breaking-through to realism as well as an escape from individualism. To be is to participate in being.

> Do not fail to note the twofold affirmation of this formula: in existing, we trans-exist. In virtue of our being we are swept beyond our being. Sensation represents but one side of this participation. And what can be said of it can also be said of all ontological participation: it is non-objectifiable. We cannot effectively isolate that in which we participate from ourselves as participants, since at every level it is the participation which founds the being of the participants.[2]

While feeling is a mode of participation it by no means exhausts the richness of the experience. One's situation affects him at various levels of his being. A person might be tempted to call the body-level the plane of existence and the intersubjective level the plane of being, but this would not be altogether correct. One's situation affects every facet of his being; however, the constant connotation is that he is not autonomous or self-contained. Others can permeate one's being. To be living is indicative of a certain type of openness to the reality of others. While a

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[1]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 274.

[2]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 20.

person's presence in the world is accomplished by spatiality, it is for the express purpose of communion. The body is to the incarnate world, as the self in its personal aspects is to the world of intersubjectivity.

> My body is given to me as presence-in-the-world; my person is given to me as presence-in-communion. 'Esse est co-esse' is true not only on the plane of sensible existence but above all on the plane of personal being. The proper beginning of metaphysics is not 'I think' but 'we are.' The tie which binds me to others gives me to myself.[1]

A person is fooling himself if he thinks he has a right to be prior to or more real than others: "I only exist within a certain fullness of experience which is not private but trans-subjective."[2] Since it is the other who takes priority, "I would go so far as to say that it is of the essence of the Other that he exists. I cannot think of him as other without thinking of him as existing."[3] One only signifies (individuates) himself as he separates himself from the other. Perhaps a case could be made for the right one has of being "prior to or more real than others." It could be based on the fact that self-consciousness of its very nature is prior to any other kind of consciousness, even consciousness of an other. Communion is, therefore, a function of the particular way in which one establishes a relationship

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[1] Ibid., p. 22.

[2] Ibid., p. 22.

[3] Marcel, Being and Having, p. 104.

with the other. At this point the second level of participation is reached.

Participation through Communion

Of special interest to Marcel is authentic ontological communion. Herein the other is given to me as a thou--a presence which is non-objectifiable. In this ontological communion one's freedom makes a creative response, thus opening the way to transcendence. It should be noted, however, that one's relations with others precede the expression of one's own liberty. As a child he is one among others long before he freely accepts or rejects them. There is a way in which one can classify this original togetherness in order to show its natural development.[1] The stage of <u>community</u> is to be seen in this early form of togetherness. One dwells in the presence of others in a close-knit fashion. In due course the autonomy of one's self emerges as a privileged element over against others. At this juncture, the stage of <u>communication</u> emerges. Until one is aroused out of the slumber of community, no full human response can be expected. Even so, at this point, the level of communication may be nothing more than a perfunctory kind of expression. Much is taken for granted on this level. The intersubjectivity here is of a factual nature, not that of an

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[1]Gallagher, <u>The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel</u>, pp. 22-23.

invitation. The stage of ontological communion is reached when one freely and purposefully opens himself to a thou in a truly personal encounter. This bears the marks of an invitation freely extended and an acceptance freely made. This passage back to togetherness which is accomplished through communion is a work of one's freedom.

Communion speaks of interiority. It arises through oneness of soul. There is a difference between outward uniformity and inward unity. While individuals may appear much alike outwardly, yet they may be vastly different inwardly. Since communion arises only in a personal response to a personal invitation, then one can assume an inner unity exists where such takes place.

Marcel refers to that virtue in certain people whereby they are open to others as disponibilité. It carries the connotation of openness, availability, abandonment, welcoming, surrender and readiness to respond. The disponible person is hospitable and outgoing to others; the door of his soul stands ajar. This particular concept is one of the most important in Marcel's whole philosophy. For the time being it is enough to comprehend it as the disposition that invites communion. It radiates in acts of love, sympathy and admiration. And if metaphysics comes only through communion then the indisponible man cannot be a metaphysician.

If one were to analyze the word "with" in reference to personal experience, he would reveal the irreducible nature of communion. For two individuals are not with each other as two things are with one another--the latter being external. Only when one person is present to the other as a thou, does the new dimension of being arise which is irreducible to non-personal categories. "Between the I and the thou a bond exists which exceeds any means I have to take cognizance of it."[1] There is an intimacy which exists in communion that cannot be expressed in categories, at least in categories of externality.

Personal communion, then, is similar to every form of authentic ontological participation in that it is strictly non-objectifiable. It cannot be dissected into opposing parts. It is participation with no boundaries. In addition one must be careful because of the ineradicable objectifying bent of language. For it is even possible to set up inter-subjectivity as a kind of something which can be designated. In effect, it is nothing more than an implied understanding even when I try to focus my thought on it.[2] Consequently, intersubjectivity shares with all ontological reality in the fact that it cannot be signified but only alluded to.

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[1] Ibid., p. 27.

[2] See Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 55.

Participation through Transcendence

The third level of participation is the realm of plenitude or fullness of being. It is not sufficient to be present in the world through bodily incarnation. Nor does man reach his highest development in communion with other like beings. For the inner demand of being drives him onward and upward to the full-flowering of his own personal being. This drive finds its origin in the basic dissatisfaction of mere existence. "Let us notice in the first place that the need for transcendence presents itself above all, is deeply experienced above all, as a kind of dissatisfaction."[1] Here one finds an example of the need to transcend the constricting barriers of a mundane external existence. "The dissatisfaction has to do with the absence of something which is properly speaking external to me."[2] Yet there is another sort of transcending need directed not outwards but inwards. Such is the yearning for sanctity, the yearning for completeness and fullness of being. This inwardly directed yearning forms the basic motive to create. "Might it not be said that to create is always to create at a level above oneself"?[3] So it is that on the level of transcendence the central interpretive insight is the notion of creation. Being, herein, is only revealed to creative

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[1] Ibid., p. 52.

[2] Ibid., p. 53.

[3] Ibid., p. 55.

experience, and being's role in thought is not so much a concept as it is a creative-type intuition comparable to that of the artist's.

> The presentiment of transcendence haunts human experience, as the artist's intuition haunts his consciousness. Just as the artist's intuition only comes to be recognized in the artistic process which it alone makes possible, so the presence of being is only recognized by being read back out of the human experiences which it alone makes possible.[1]

The experiences to which Gallagher alludes are those on which Marcel concentrates--love, hope and fidelity. Marcel is convinced that ontological exigence cannot be recognized by an ego in isolation, but only by a subject-in-communion. The acts which establish one as a subject-in-communion, as an I in reference to a Thou, are likewise those which give a person access to being. Freedom characterizes the recognition of these experiences as having ontological value, pointing to the transcendent dimension of man's existence. By this response thought freely sustains itself in its own source. Man is therefore free, through creative participation, to transform his mere existence into a fullness and plenitude of being, thereby satisfying his need for transcendence.

The Thrust Toward Being

The absence of being can best be observed in the widespread emptiness and discontent which is prevalent among

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. xii.

many today. "To say that the universe leaves me dissatisfied, and that in this sense it 'is not' is to admit that within me there is an appetite for being."[1] There is a metaphysical need which is far greater than just a transcendental curiosity. It is a kind of appetite, the appetite for being. It aims at the possession of being through the gradual realization of this innate potential. On the other hand and in a negative sense the lack of its presence points to its possible possession.

> One thing we, or at least some of us, feel acutely: it is this lack of something, this impoverishment, this aridity. We have already seen that it is by starting from that point that we can experience what I have called ontological exigence.[2]

In his Metaphysical Journal Marcel insists that basically he is dealing with nothing more nor less than the opposition between the full and the empty. He considers this opposition infinitely more essential than the one between the single and the multiple.[3]

> Being, as I said before, is expectation fulfilled. There are moments at which life appears to us to be entirely empty. Nothing has any importance, nothing matters. Such experiences are the very negation of the feeling of fulness and profusion that we experience on other occasions. Our attention cannot be fixed, and interest is lacking.[4]

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[1] Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 183.

[2] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 45.

[3] See Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 181.

[4] Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 206.

As one seeks being he is, in effect, seeking that which will end his disquietude.

Out of the depths of being evolves a metaphysical concern. Marcel considers it to be similar to a basic hunger, an appetite, a drive.

> But we have had ample opportunity to understand also that the exigence of being is not a simple desire or a vague aspiration. It is rather, a deep-rooted interior urge, and it might equally well be interpreted as an appeal.[1]

He continues at length to explain that it consists of more than a need, since need implies little more than strong desire rather than that which is demanded. Somewhat in the same vein of thought Kierkegaard chose the term existence, filling it with much the same meaning that Marcel understands by the word exigence. In addition, Kierkegaard's term involved certain theological overtones and a definite feeling of dread. Marcel's term is more primitive and universal, involving intense concern and hunger. W. E. Hocking lauds Marcel's choice of the term exigence stating that to the extent existing appears precious, the concern becomes grave, "existing for a human being can never be a fact devoid of feeling; we have called it a hearth-fire; we have also called it a particular passion-filled presence."[2] Moreover, Marcel thinks of exigence as a single and perfect word. "This

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 41.

[2]Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 444.

exigence is Marcel's native air, derived from nobody: this metaphysical concern and hunger inspired his own search."[1] It is interesting to note that Hocking describes Marcel as being legitimately concerned to give the "Being of man its due gravamen and inward flame."[2]

In speaking about his preliminary reflections on ontological exigence, Marcel mentions its "indeterminate character."[3] He again refers to the translucent nature of this inner urge:

> The fundamental datum of all metaphysical reflection is that I am a being who is not transparent to himself, that is to say, my being is to me a mystery. It is only in moments of interior ebb to which I referred yesterday that I cease to apprehend myself in this way.[4]

In yet another passage he puts the question thus: "What, then, in my view, is this will for being? Is it a will to find myself or a will to create myself? But this either-or is far from clear."[5]

From these brief passages one may gain a sense of the indefiniteness surrounding Marcel's efforts to clarify ontological exigence; however, this inner demand for fullness of being may be more graphically seen in the direction which

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[1] Ibid., p. 444.

[2] Ibid., p. 444.

[3] Marcel, Existentialism, p. 15.

[4] Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 290.

[5] Ibid., p. 183.

obtains between such word pairings as potential and actual, existence and being, person and personality. When one comes into the world he is said "to exist" yet Marcel withholds the descriptive term "to be" until he responds to that inner urge called forth through intersubjectivity and becomes in actuality that which he was potentially. Thus the individual gradually proceeds toward being and plenitude. Ontological exigence, then, is that innate urge present in all persons. It is that demand for being which should culminate in a state of being typified by dignity, purpose, worth, and meaning.

In making a further distinction concerning metaphysical need, Marcel seeks to set forth the difference between the ethical order and the metaphysical order of beings:

> The appetite for being is not a desire to acquire qualities nor a desire for self-perfection; and this is the fundamental difference between the ethical order and the metaphysical order. The metaphysician is searching for what is, not what will be (on this point, cf. Hegel's complaint about Fichte).[1]

He is seeking to point out a certain metaphysical demand for being that is characteristic of all persons, a demand to rise from mere existence to being. On the other hand there are certain ethical demands, entirely apart from the metaphysical, which evolve in a desire to add various qualities to oneself until he reaches a point of perfection. The former has to do with being qua being, while the latter with

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[1] Ibid., p. 290.

attaining specific qualities of being. Marcel likens the metaphysician to a sick person who is trying to find a position in which he will be comfortable. The problem seems to exist in identifying the center (being) in relation to which this position is defined. To develop a correct yet comfortable stance on the concept of being seems to be the crucial problem. As long as one moves among objects the question obviously does not arise. Only when persons are involved, does the question become pertinent.

In summary, one might say that the demand to be is a dynamic motivating factor which provides thrust toward fullness of being. This exigence of being takes the form of a self-directed compulsion toward full participation in being. This strong, innate desire surges toward wholeness and self-fulfillment. It is the thirst for being!

Entrée to Being

In approaching the subject of the access to being, Marcel prefaces his remarks with the statement that his whole philosophical development has been dominated by a two-fold preoccupation:

> Whenever I try to consider that development as a whole, I have to observe that it has been dominated by two interests which may at first seem contradictory; the first of these is more directly expressed in metaphysical terms, but still lies in the background at least, of almost all of my plays without exception. The latter is what I shall call the exigence of being; the first is the obsession <u>with beings</u> taken in their

> individuality but also affected by the mysterious relations which link them together.[1]

To most individuals, this dual concern presents a dilemma; however, to Marcel the dilemma does not exist.

Marcel initially admits that his interests are both in being-as-such in general, and beings in particular (including the mysterious relationships which bind them together). In broad terms one might say that his obsession with singular individuals finds expression in his dramatic work, while his study of being in general is found in his philosophical writings. The dilemma presents itself thus: either one interest himself with the interaction between particular beings and thus view being-as-such as a convenient fiction; or one should give his attention to being-as-such in all its unity and transcendence by abstracting it from the diversity of individual beings. Marcel makes simple reply:

> . . . I have started from the act of faith which provides an a priori solution . . . that the more we are able to know the individual being, the more we shall be oriented, and as it were directed towards, a grasp of being as such.[2]

Thought does not grasp being by making a general abstraction from particularized experience, but by an intuitive experience, personally expressed in individual form,

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Creative Fidelity, trans. by Robert Rosthal. Third Noonday Press ed.; (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 147.

[2]Ibid., p. 148.

emphathetically relived at its saturation point of singularity. Access to being comes through intersubjectivity, and being is the source of my assurance that my situation in existence is eternally grounded. This assurance is not expressible, but intuitively grasped. It is the cognitive face of participation. It is a participation in itself.

> It is the product of the entire self expressing itself to itself, and uttering being in doing so. I can only become aware of the saving presence of being in so far as I am a singular, free, creative, spiritual subject. And I am such a subject only as a member of a spiritual society, not as an isolated ego. Therefore it follows that those acts which found me as a subject-in-communion are also the acts which give me access to being.[1]

Fullness of being is attained through communion. This is a free action on the part of those involved; so refusal is always possible. While one may be tempted to denial and despair, yet the affirmation of being is bulwarked by the assurance evolving from communion.

Intersubjectivity

The basis, then, of communion is to be found in the realm of intersubjectivity, and the entrée to being is found through this door. The awareness that "I am" proceeds from the knowledge that "you are." This knowledge emerges from the unity of all being.

> As subject man is a being in the world, with others, directed toward God originally. There is a point at

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 67.

> whose depth man's existence merges with the existing of all that is, thus takes on global character. When the global character of existence is recognized, it becomes necessary to expand the metaphysics of *I think* into a metaphysics of *we are*.[1]

Hence there is a coming face to face with "Being" in experience at such a depth that one discovers himself as a being. He thereby subsists in a certain mode, participating in being. The mystery of Being for man is grounded in the fact that he is a being in Being--he is involved, situated.

As one pursues the concept of intersubjectivity, the more one's existence takes on the character of including others, the shorter becomes the gap separating it from being, or the more "he is." Marcel uses a number of different metaphors to describe the being or soul.[2] One can see it as a pearl to be drawn from the depths, or as a statue to be released from the stone's embrace, or even as a garden to be tilled: yet, from whatever angle one looks at it he is in danger of not recognizing the higher claims of intersubjectivity. He is in danger of sinning against love, and of arriving at a depersonalized conception of being.

Each must come to the point of recognizing or discovering himself in others without losing his own inner being in the process.

> Being man means participating in one's fellowman. Seen in this way, friendship is a compensation for my

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[1]Arthur Luther, "Marcel's Metaphysics of the WE ARE," Philosophy Today, X (Fall, 1966), p. 191.

[2]See Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 39.

> limitation. Here we can speak of a subject-subject relationship. Confronting the "I" there stands a "thou" as a person, not a "he" as a thing or an object.[1]

As man dwells among men a sense of community arises. This signals the beginning stages of "man participating in one's fellowman." Community naturally proceeds to communication and thence to communion. These are deeper levels of participation. As one draws near to another he discovers himself in the other. In effect, the other mirrors himself. While man is free and can shut himself off from others and treat them as objects, yet a meeting between the I and the thou is possible. This is to be seen in the notion of an invitation, in which two human beings open themselves toward each other (invocation) in a free, inner movement of love, by which they pierce their shell of individuality and thus become themselves. A new subject emerges--a we. This meeting is not approached from the outside but from the inside. "Together we are involved (engagement) in 'being,' and the 'I' opens itself (disponibilité) for the presence of the 'thou' in its entirety, just as the 'thou' does this for the 'I.'"[2] This experience involves a revelation of the one to the other. The kind of meeting described here is not just an interaction but intercourse between I and thou who come to understand and appreciate each other as persons. One

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[1] Ewijk, Gabriel Marcel, p. 68.

[2] Ibid., p. 69.

becomes present to the other. The word "with" takes on new meaning in reference to an other.

The Approach to Being

Marcel suggests that access to being is gained by three pathways: The first of these is entitled fidelity or faith. Perhaps the word faithfulness is more exact. Fidelity in this contextual setting designates more of what one would describe as integrity. For unless one is a person of integrity he is not faithful to himself, nor is he faithful in his representations to others. It is literally unthinkable that one could be united with another unless he is first unified within himself. The actual unity of the self is an achievement in reference to one's freedom. The self one gives is the one he acquires in its giving. "That is to say, the self which fidelity reveals is a self which fidelity creates."[1] It is a creative fidelity, for the being is created in the acts of integrity. Fidelity is to be faithful to oneself, not only in thought but also in action. Fidelity implies an ontological constancy.

> Fidelity is not an arid dedication to the preservation of one's title to self-esteem; its axis is not the self at all, but another. It is the spontaneous and unimposed presence of an I to a Thou. This sheds an indispensable light on the "self-creation" which has been spoken of. The creation of the self actually is accomplished via an emergence to a thou level of reality; I create myself in response to an invocation which can only come from a thou. It is a call to which

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[1] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 69.

> I answer "present." In saying "here" I create my own self in the presence of a thou. Marcel succinctly declares that fidelity is 'the active perpetuation of presence.'[1]

All are called, in effect, to be persons. In being faithful one creates himself, this is creative fidelity, "a fidelity only safeguarded by being creative."[2] We are called "to found ourselves in eternal and unqualified meaning beyond the sum of our conscious states."[3]

The second avenue by which one has access to being, according to Marcel, is hope. Hope is allied with being and consequently inexhaustible. Despair is bound up with the objective and is therefore inventoriable. Hope lifts its head and refuses to succumb to despair. It is not so much a wish as it is an affirmation. This claim of hope is not drawn from the resources of the ego but from a source above it. "Disponibility is the presupposition of hope--disponibility that begins in finite communion and is consummated in the total openness that turns the soul to a source beyond the visible world."[4] Hope is a kind of an appeal to a creative power on which the soul trustingly relies. Hope retires absolutely in favor of an absolute. Thus the necessary condition for hope is communion. Being in touch with another

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[1] Ibid., p. 70.

[2] Marcel, Being and Having, p. 96.

[3] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 70.

[4] Ibid., p. 74.

being affords one the proper foundation for hope, for hoping is putting one's trust in reality, to proclaim its ability to triumph over all threatening dangers. One shall always be exposed to the temptation of shutting the door and enclosing himself within himself. "Against this combination of temptations there is only one remedy, and it has two aspects: it is the remedy of communion, the remedy of hope."[1] One need not despair for he can rise to a communion which is both more intimate and abundant, of which hope can be regarded as the foreshadowing. Invariably one opens his soul when he hopes; hence, the subject of hope is one in need of others. The basic formula of hope, according to Marcel, is: "I hope in you for us."[2] What is the vital link between this thou and this us? "Must we not reply that 'Thou' is in some way the guarantee of the union which holds us together."[3]

Communion gives rise to hope in each other. This becomes an access route to being. But need one not hope in the Absolute Thou? The only possible source from which this absolute hope springs is found in the Infinite. "It appears as a response of the creature to the infinite Being to whom

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, trans. by Emma Craufurd. First Harper Torchbook ed.; (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 60.

[2]Ibid., p. 60.

[3]Ibid., p. 60.

it is conscious of owing everything that it has and upon whom it cannot impose any condition whatsoever without scandal."[1]

> It is a presence which evokes hope, not a cumulation of probabilities. Borne up by a communion whose very atmosphere is eternal, unreservedly disponible to the Absolute Presence which enfolds this communion, the soul moves ceaselessly beyond the reach of critical thought; and this movement reveals the 'intelligible core of hope,' for 'what characterizes it is the very movement by which it challenges the evidence upon which men claim to challenge it itself.'[2]

Marcel finally ventures a definition of hope, feeling better able to handle such an assignment at the close than at the beginning of his analysis of hope:

> . . . we might say that hope is essentially the availability of a soul which has entered intimately enough into the experience of communion to accomplish in the teeth of will and knowledge the transcendent act--the act establishing the vital regeneration of which this experience affords both the pledge and the first-fruits.[3]

Marcel's conception of presence evokes hope within the individual. In each experience of the self or ego is in control. Only the person can release the outflowing of himself. Presence occurs as an out-flowing directionality in response to the proffered other. Presence is not consummated until one unreservedly releases himself in faith, hope and love. In effect, it is the mutual sharing of selves.

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[1] Ibid., p. 47.

[2] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 77.

[3] Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 67.

Presence is created by the confluence of these mutual sharings. Togetherness, nearness, oneness characterize this experience. Presence is secured by the free act of the self in response to the total offering of the other.

The third route of access to being which Marcel elucidates is entitled love. Much of what has been said about communion is applicable to his doctrine of love. Marcel approaches increasingly the position that all experiences which open one toward another should be called love. Ultimately, communion seems to be founded not only on love but is often equated with it. Here again one's attention is called to Marcel's tendency toward ambiguity. He would go so far as to suggest that the intimacy of love is a primary mode of being, irreducible to any other. As was said of fidelity, Marcel repeats in reference to love: the loving act creates the lover. It is not the act of a previously constituted self, but an act which is self-creating.

Love has a transcendent orientation. To the extent that love bears on a thou (even creature love) it rises beyond the order of things and of the destruction which preys upon things.

> But it is only possible to maintain the reality of the beloved because love posits the beloved as transcending all explanation and all reduction. In this sense it is true to say that love only addresses itself to what is eternal, it immobilises the beloved above the world of genesis and vicissitude.[1]

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[1]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 62-63.

At this time Marcel gives evidence of his life-long desire, if not obsession, to be near his mother, who died when he was four. Noting that all things come to an end, Marcel's prophetic affirmation of love indicates that the beloved is exempt from the penalties of thingness. In effect, to love a person is to proclaim: Thou shalt not die! It is an affirmation of immortality, of love penetrating beyond mere physical death. The more one loves an individual the greater is the access to him and knowledge of him as an authentic being. In turn, this tends to give one reassurance of his immortality.

> At the limit where total assurance becomes possible, it could only be because his thingness is swallowed up in an absolute and indefectible presence. Really to love a creature, Marcel would agree, is to love him in God. Only in the absolute does the promise of eternity with which all love is redolent attain to unconditionality.[1]

One's experience of presence is terminated and his assurance depleted unless they arise within an enveloping absolute.

Marcel's tendency to confuse the precise meaning of terms is noted again when in the course of one paragraph in the Metaphysical Journal he states: "only love is real knowledge," "love is the negation of knowledge," "Love needs to appear to itself as perfect knowledge."[2] In spite of this imprecision Marcel sees love as the superhighway by which

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 80.

[2]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, pp. 62-63.

access is gained to being. It is the major connecting link from being to being and from being to Being.

The Presence of Being

The natural accompaniment of intimacy of being is fidelity, hope and love. This experience is characterized by disponibilité, the total spiritual availability which exudes from beings in communion. The attestation of it all can be summed up in the word presence. In fact, presence is the culmination of mutual disponibilité. It is intuitively grasped. Awareness of presence emerges from mutual abandonment in participation.

In contrast, one can see what develops in the lack of presence. This consists of a withholding of self. Man is in charge of this act and/or process. An opposite kind of directionality is noted for it flows inward toward the self. Betrayal, denial, despair and alienation occur. Man becomes imprisoned within himself. When presence is absent then object appears. The subject-object dichotomy obtains. Presence involves a reciprocity which is absent in any relation of subject to object or of subject to subject-object. Unavailability and absence is always rooted in a degree of alienation. One of the characteristics of the being who is present and at the disposal of another is that it becomes unthinkable for him to relegate anyone to the level of a case or a statistic. If one is incapable of presence it is quite evident that he is preoccupied, if not encumbered, with

himself. Perhaps the real contrast is between the person who is opaque and the one who is transparent. Transparency in this sense speaks of fidelity and personal integrity.

There is a vast difference between "presence and absence" on the one hand and "attention and distraction" on the other. One can give attention and yet not convey presence. His self-centeredness excludes others from himself.

> The truth is that there is a way of listening which is a way of giving, and another way of listening which is a way of refusing, of refusing oneself; the material gift, the visible action, do not necessarily witness to presence. We must not speak of proof in this connection; the word would be out of place. Presence is something which reveals itself immediately and unmistakably in a look, a smile, an intonation or a handshake.[1]

If one is to listen with a preoccupied look, then he gives evidence of absence. If one is truly present, then he gives evidence of "the listening eye." While the physical appearance is not proof of the inner stance, yet in most cases it seems to be highly indicative. Withness generally can be sensed by the other. True presence can be felt only when one is freely and sincerely given. To be aware of the presence of being is to be in presence. True presence is always enveloped in reciprocation.

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[1]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 40.

Concluding Statement

From this study on Marcel's approach to being it has been noted that "being itself" is surrounded with an element of mystery which is incommunicable. This, however, does not take anything away from its native splendor inasmuch as its richness can only be plumbed by a deep intuitive grasp. Words, definitions, and descriptions cannot always convey meaning. Of necessity, one must experience some things in life in order to come to an understanding of them. Being is of this nature. In all probability, the confusion surrounding many of Marcel's attempts at explanation stems from the fact that he is trying to say the unsayable. Being can only be experienced by an existent through becoming. This involves participation which ultimately leads toward plenitude or fullness of being. The thrust of being towards self-realization, known as ontological exigence, occurs in participation with other beings. This entrée to being takes place via fidelity, hope, and love; being attested by presence, which is the ultimate in self-realization. This invaluable possession, however, is subject to loss. Since one is not completely transparent to himself nor to the other, he becomes involved in the greatest mystery of all: the personal, transcendental, Absolute Being. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being."[1] In ignoring this

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[1]Acts 17:28.

mystery, man has lost the sense of his own being and that of others. In consequence, men have become problems for each other.

Marcel makes a passionate plea for the recognition of value inherent in human personality. This is especially pertinent in days which are fraught with influences of dehumanization and devaluation. The erosion of being is largely accomplished today through the emergence of the technological mentality. The following chapter is an endeavor to ferret-out the various aspects of this enveloping tragedy.

CHAPTER III

THE EMERGENCE OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL MENTALITY

With the development of science and technology, man has come upon unfortunate times. Threatened with the loss of his sense of being, man is battling desperately to maintain his dignity as a person. Marcel has sought to analyze the deteriorating condition of modern man. It is one thing to be cognizant of the obvious symptoms of man's ailment, but quite another to trace them to their common source. The philosopher must have a broad understanding of their rootage and dynamics if he is to intelligently formulate an adequate remedy. Marcel insists that a common cause underlies both the individual and social alienation of contemporary man--the spirit of abstraction. This notion looms so threateningly on the horizon of Marcel's thinking that his reaction to it forms the basis of his philosophical reflection. "The dynamic element in my philosophy, taken as a whole, can be seen as an obstinate and untiring battle against the spirit of abstraction."[1] In brief, one might say that the spirit

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[1]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 1.

of abstraction evolves when man discounts, in one way or another, the concrete reality from which the abstraction is taken.

While the term, spirit of abstraction, is a coinage of Marcel's, yet the principle itself has evolved with the growth of modern science and technology. As used in this manner the term is peculiar to modern man, since the sophisticated, analytic techniques of science (as applied to the material world) are being increasingly utilized to analyze and catalogue man himself. This abstractive spirit and technique tends to be more highly prized in itself than the man who is being processed.

The Nature of Abstraction

Before looking into the idea of the spirit of abstraction it will be helpful to examine Marcel's view on abstraction itself. What does he understand by this latter term? What is its nature and meaning? While he defends abstraction *per se*, yet he has declared war on the spirit of abstraction. Wherein lies the difference between the original term and his coined phrase about the term?

Marcel admits that it is rather difficult to establish the difference between the notion of abstraction as such, and that of the spirit of abstraction. Consequently, he is not always clear in reference to the precise meaning of the term abstraction. This is unfortunate since the word carries such strategic weight in his overall thinking.

> It would be convenient here to distinguish between the notion of abstraction as such, and that of the spirit of abstraction, but it is not very easy to establish this distinction firmly. Abstraction, as such, is a mental operation to which we must have recourse if we are seeking to achieve a determinate purpose of any sort . . . To abstract, in a word, is to make a preliminary clearing of the ground, and of course this clearing of the ground can appear the strictly reasonable thing to do.[1]

This statement means that one's mind must retain a distinct awareness of certain methodical omissions which are necessary if an anticipated result is to be had. The act of abstracting is a legitimate process in all reasoning, and is basic to intelligent action. "Psychologists have demonstrated with perfect clarity the close internal link between abstraction and action."[2] Without abstraction one could not make the necessary distinctions. "Apart from isolating parts from wholes, elements and dimensions from totalities, there could be no clarity of thought and thus no basis for consistent action."[3] So Marcel recognizes the necessity and legitimacy of abstraction.

By viewing the term "abstract" in contradistinction to the term "concrete," as used by Marcel, a person can enrich his understanding of both terms.

> 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

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[1] Ibid., p. 155.

[2] Ibid., p. 155.

[3] Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 13.

> 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.[1]

So the concrete is not given, it is won. The self apprehends it, a self in which the faculties are not dissociated. There is a unity in the self beyond all its division into faculties such as feeling, willing, and thinking. The concrete lies at the point where the unified self participates in being, in the inexhaustible. The concrete lies beyond the world of objectivity. It is re-created in intersubjectivity. The concrete can be regrasped only by going beyond the process of scientific analysis. In Marcel's thought, the terms abstract and abstraction should be confined to the objectified world of things. They should not be used in reference to human beings. On the other hand, the term concrete should only be employed to describe the actual and real which is discovered by the participation of the self in being.

> Abstraction is a legitimate operation of the mind in pursuance of definite objectified goals, but when the mind turns toward transcendence it must surpass its own abstractions, for transcendence is that which gives no hold for abstraction. The blinded intuition which the self has of such a supra-abstractive concrete is the dynamic principle behind metaphysical reflection.[2]

While Marcel believes that abstraction is the foundation of all reasoning, yet he insists that the spirit of abstraction is a misuse of this legitimate process, and the

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[1]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, pp. 159-60.

[2]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 121.

root from which man's present predicament stems. One's first task is to investigate how Marcel's thinking developed along these lines. Secondly, to determine the nature and meaning of his coined phrase, spirit of abstraction.

As one recalls, the early setting of Marcel's life was quite sterile. With "its atmosphere of moral scruples and of hygenic precautions, I can see why abstraction was the keynote of my early philosophical thoughts."[1] Accompanying this tendency toward abstraction was a profound mistrust of experience and things concrete. It would appear from his own account of these days that this mood was superimposed, because his natural inclinations proceeded in the opposite direction.[2] Marcel experienced a growing distrust of abstraction in his formative years of thought, giving it as the reason back of his fascination with the Hegelian system:

> For, in spite of appearances to the contrary, Hegel did make a very splendid effort to preserve the primacy of the concrete; and no philosopher has protested more strongly against the confusion of the concrete with the immediately given. My severe and hostile criticism, on the other hand, of a pseudo-philosophy like that of Julien Benda is to be explained by the fundamentally abstract trend of Benda's thinking; he has never even suspected the existence of the true philosopher's urgent inner need to grasp reality in its concreteness.[3]

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[1] Marcel, Existentialism, p. 104.

[2] Ibid., See pp. 108-13.

[3] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 2.

Marcel pinpoints his constant battle against the spirit of abstraction as the dynamic element in all his philosophy.[1] This is a rather sweeping statement. Again he mentions the fact that from the time of his earliest philosophical writings (1911-1912) he has "played the part of a prosecuting counsel against every philosophy that seemed to me to remain the prisoner of abstractions."[2] He gives evidence of feeling intensely about this matter by the use of strong words in describing his feelings such as hostility, battle, and horror. In a moment of retrospection Marcel comments, "Can there be any doubt, then, that a bent of mind so deeply rooted is the point of departure of my whole philosophical development."[3] One need only remember the barren and arid world of his childhood to understand his intense compensating distaste for the abstract and sterile.

> And so, in opposition to the strong metaphysical tendency in me, there developed an increasingly explicit refusal to abstract from all the concrete detail of my life that detail which made my life my own in all its irreducible originality.
>
> Thus a tension developed between these two poles which is evident in even the earliest of my essays. Abstraction, far from appearing to me as an end in itself, presented at best a steep and tortuous path which it was of course necessary to follow, but only in order to come eventually upon the genuinely concrete.[4]

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[1] Ibid., See p. 1.

[2] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[3] Ibid., p. 3.

[4] Gabriel Marcel, The Existential Background of Human Dignity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 21. (Hereinafter referred to as Human Dignity.)

"The Spirit of Abstraction"

What does Marcel mean precisely by the phrase, the spirit of abstraction? What is its nature, its meaning? "The spirit of abstraction results when we ignore the concrete reality from which the abstraction is taken."[1] When one becomes more fascinated with the method of analysis than with the concrete reality being analyzed, and prefers abstractive facts over that which is actual, the spirit of abstraction is at work.

> But it can happen that the mind, yielding to a sort of fascination, ceases to be aware of these prior conditions that justify abstraction and deceives itself about the nature of what is, in itself, nothing more than a method, one might almost say nothing more than an expedient.[2]

This situation arises from the passion to value the part above the whole since the analyst is the "creator" of the part. "The spirit of abstraction is not separable from this contempt for the concrete conditions of abstract thinking, I would even say that it is this contempt."[3]

Special attention should be given to the fact that Marcel emphasizes the passional nature of the spirit of abstraction. While he considers abstraction as an intellectual operation which is a necessary component to reasoning, he thinks of the spirit of abstraction as being

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[1]Keene, Gabriel Marcel, p. 13.

[2]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 155.

[3]Ibid., p. 155.

emotional in nature. "The spirit of abstraction is essentially of the order of the passions . . . it is passion, not intelligence, which forges the most dangerous abstractions."[1] To some observers it might appear that the spirit of abstraction is a disease of the intelligence, when in fact its roots are in the passions. When Marcel uses the term passion he is referring to the emotional nature of man. Why, then, should he consider abstraction to fall in the realm of the intellectual and the spirit of abstraction in the realm of the emotional? The answer is to be found in the added investment of emotion and ego-involvement in the spirit of abstraction. Spirit of abstraction points to intensity of feeling. Thus, when contempt for the concrete is added to the simple mental operation of abstraction, one's emotions have already become involved. For contempt is a feelingful expression of an attitude of disregard, meanness, vileness, and scorn.

But Marcel does not stop here, for he considers this contempt for the dimensions of concrete reality a kind of mental imperialism. "The spirit of abstraction can in certain respects be regarded as a transposition of the attitudes of imperialism to the mental plane."[2] In making this statement he alleges that finite man in his attempt to control and dominate the world about him, looks with contempt

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 155.

upon that which he cannot understand, categorize, or manipulate by his application of techniques. To this extent man reaches out to control and dominate as a mental imperialist.

In seeking to extend one's control over all things in the world, including man, it becomes necessary to become involved in a kind of reductionism, a devaluation of the real which arises out of this resentment.

> We should have at this point to make a direct attack on general formulations of the type, 'This is only that . . . This is nothing other than that . . . ' and so on: every depreciatory reduction of this sort has its basis in resentment, that is to say, in passion, and at bottom it corresponds to a violent attack directed against a sort of integrity of the real, an integrity to which only a resolutely concrete mode of thinking can hope to do justice.[1]

Often one resents that which he cannot control, or that which lies just beyond his reach or comprehension.

> Whatever its ultimate meaning, the universe into which we have been thrown cannot satisfy our reason, let us have the courage to admit it once and for all. To deny it is not only scandalous, but in some ways truly sinful; and indeed I am convinced that this is precisely the besetting sin of the philosopher, the sin of Leibnitz and, less obviously, the sin of Hegel.[2]

The universe presents many aspects which staggers the imagination and one's power of comprehension. Man is unable to set forth all phenomena rationally. Reason seems not to be a universal key to all truth. It is but natural for man, then, to discount the reality of that which he cannot encompass with his intellect. This resentment is shown in

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[1] Ibid., p. 156.

[2] Marcel, Existentialism, p. 124.

contempt for actual reality, accompanied by a spirit of reduction through which he tries to reduce everything to a lowest common denominator. This operation is emotional rather than intellectual. When men "accord to any category, isolated from all other categories, an arbitrary primacy, we are victims of the spirit of abstraction."[1] A fitting example is seen of this type of operation in the Marxist who, victimized by abstraction, claims to interpret the whole of human reality on the basis of economic facts. One loses all illusions on the matter when he recognizes the absurdity of subordinating such matters as art forms, religious dogma and creative thought to the prevailing economic conditions of a given era. There really can be no rational justification for this type of reductive operation.

The "Technological Mentality"

Preciseness of meaning and nicety of distinction is essential in coming to an understanding of Marcel's concept of technomania. As Marcel defends the legitimate function of abstraction but condemns the adverse effects of the spirit of abstraction, so he admits the value of technology while attacking its misuse--technolatry. A careful perusal of his comments reveals that he uses the terms, technolatry, technomania, and the technological mentality somewhat synonymously. All of these designations proceed from the

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, pp. 155-56.

assumption that technical thinking yields the only valid knowledge about reality. On the other hand the term technology simply refers to the practical implementation of scientific knowledge to the needs of man. It has to do with industrial or applied science. Furthermore, he understands the term technique to designate the method or the details of procedure essential to expertness of execution in any art or science. Marcel's real concern lies in the dangerous effect which the technological mentality might have on the human spirit.

The Legitimate Use of Technology

Make no mistake about it, Marcel does sense the positive value of the technological approach. He states that only a lunatic would deny its usefulness; he also feels there are other important points to consider beyond its utility. A technician, in applying a technique which he has mastered, experiences a joy which is both innocent and noble. This joy is bound up with the consciousness of power over inanimate things, over matter which is subordinate and in one sense meant to be controlled by man. In overcoming the resistance of inertia in things, the technician discovers a value. This inertia is overcome by a method which has precision. Herein lies the value of a technique--the precision with which it must be applied.

> No technician can do without the virtue of accuracy: in his world inaccuracy is always punished and the

> punishment is sometimes terrible. Hence the awareness of responsibility which he incessantly carries with him.[1]

Marcel adds that there is also the purity of joy which naturally accompanies technical research, especially when it results in a discovery. He observes that the positive element in all this is due to the technician's not thinking of himself but of his task. There is also a difference in human attitudes expressed in actions about things and those about people. It is far simpler for an action to be pure if its bearing is on things rather than on individuals. Persons are often manipulated by techniques generally reserved for things. This practice entails grave consequences. When the technical mind fails to distinguish between methods used on things and those which ought to be used with people, the result is often seen in the crass objectification of persons.

The Illegitimate Use of Technology

In recent years Marcel has been increasingly concerned with the relationship which exists between the thoughts of men and the cultural structure. With great interest he examines the correlation between the growing technological mentality and the gradual erosion of meaningful existence. Technolatry, or technomania as Marcel sometimes calls it, threatens authentic living on four fronts.

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), p. 9.

First, the technological mentality is pseudo-intellectual. There is the devastating assumption that technical thinking yields the only valid knowledge about reality. Usually, this attitude presupposes a materialistic universe--one in which all qualitative distinctions can be reduced to merely quantitative differences. If this is true, then proper techniques of measuring, weighing, and dissecting should produce all of the facts worth knowing. However, the question arises, will all reality yield its innermost secrets through this method of inquiry? Can proper technique produce the correct answer to all human problems? Is all life exhaustible? If so, then how does one account for the many intimations of the spirit world? After all, can every pertinent fact be tabulated about existents? Isn't there a mysterious element in the universe which defies man's reason and his probing experimentation? Will the inner secrets of being and existence ultimately yield to the tools and techniques of modern man? The answer to these questions is obviously in the negative. Technology, while quite adequate in the realm of objects and things, finds itself without a satisfactory solution for the deeper and inner issues of man's life.

Since a scientific method of investigation usually involves an analytic procedure, it utilizes various techniques. Furthermore, science not only examines the physical universe but probes the realm of living things as well.

Therefore, it is not surprising that science has extended its tentacles of technique to the sphere of man and his innermost being. Marcel holds this to be a grave mistake. For man is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be intuitively grasped.

> It is impossible for man not to consider himself as part of this cosmos--or of this a-cosmos--planned and dissected by the technicians; as a result, he inevitably becomes a target for those techniques which, in principle, are legitimately applicable only to the outward world. There are already countless instances of this in the fields of experimental psychology, psychiatry and so on.[1]

A classic example of the techniques of the outer world being applied to man can be found in the development of psychological testing. While Marcel accepts the validity of psychological testing in the field of motor-sensory behavior (this being purely in the realm of the physical) he rejects its usefulness and propriety in the areas of emotional and intelligence testing. Here a personal invasion is attempted to subject the individual to the techniques of science. Can that which is of a subjective nature be assessed by physical measurement? Thus, when the technical environment becomes widespread, it is not surprising that such analytic procedures are applied to man. As Marcel puts it, "This is one more victory for abstraction, the individual being now a

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[1] Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 15.

unit whom it is possible and right to deal with as with all the other units in his category."[1]

But one must see that a functionalized world produces a specialized self, when man becomes so categorized and classified his resources can be thoroughly tabulated and utilized. Since being is beyond all inventory, the technical approach breaks down in its effort to discover facts pertaining to this reality. There is that in man which can never be known by way of a cataloguing of details.

> It is not the insufficiency of the catalogue which causes it to fall short of his being, but the fact that it <u>is</u> a catalogue. Unfortunately, the more that others tend to lose sight of that 'beyond,' the more he himself loses sight of it. If all the world agrees in seeing him as the sum of designable functions, he is in distinct danger of becoming exactly that.[2]

Secondly, the technological mentality is seen to be <u>anthropocentric</u>. Marcel describes it as a "practical anthropocentrism" in which the technological man sees the world only as neutral raw material to be transformed to meet his desires. In this light the temptation persists for man to foster the view that he is the sole giver and creator of meaning and value. Thus, man usurps the place of God. It generally follows that man tends to bow at the shrine of his own productions, self-captivated by his own categories of thought and trusting only in that which his techniques can

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 16.

[2] Gallagher, <u>The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel</u>, pp. 56-57.

conquer. To the technocrat, nothing seems to be beyond the advancing technology of man. Progress becomes inevitable.

> To man the technician, the cosmos presents itself as matter for domination and he himself appears as an autonomous organizer. Now if he plays this role exclusively--if in fact it is the only role he can conceive--then it is no exaggeration to say that he has repudiated being. For being is not dominable; and to experience being is to experience oneself as non-autonomous.[1]

When man views himself as the center of the universe as well as its ultimate end, he is characterized by a practical anthropocentrism. Man has a growing tendency to understand the world around him, as well as himself, through the methods of technology. This, in effect, is human reason insofar as it strives to manage the earth and everything living within it. Marcel suggests that such an attitude could extend even to the management of other planets.

Marcel maintains that man is being misled in understanding the world and himself in reference to technology. This gives man the impression he can modify the world in such a methodical way, as to satisfy his needs in an increasingly perfect manner. This in turn gives rise to a genuine anthropocentrism.

> Man tends to look upon himself as alone being capable of giving meaning to an otherwise meaningless world. Doubtless this will have a remarkable effect on man's ability to admire the things around him; there will be an increased tendency to admire the products of his

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[1] Ibid., p. 58.

> own technology--as they appear to afford a matchless measure of perfection and precision.[1]

According to Marcel, it lies within the nature of techniques to lead the mind into temptation. He quickly qualifies his statement by saying that techniques do not wield power in their own right, but that they can become the occasion for man's temptation. He continues by pointing out that temptation accompanies power. Whenever man is endowed with power he is exposed to the temptation of abusing it. Consequently, any acquisition of power should be accompanied by the exercise of control over this power itself. But this is by no means inevitable. On the contrary, the more suddenly power is acquired the less likely will one feel able to control it. He is like a self-made man who believes he is in no man's debt, and considers any suggestion at this point an intrusion or encroachment. His stance is proudly humanistic.

> This being said, my suggestion that it is in the nature of techniques to lead the mind into temptation simply amounts to this: a man who has mastered one or more techniques tends in principle to distrust what is alien to these techniques; or rather, he will at a pinch admit the validity of this or that other technique he has only heard of or knows only at second hand; but he will usually be most unwilling to accept the idea that a meta-technical activity may have value. But in respect of technical power which is immediate, what I have called power at one remove is necessarily meta-technical. Indeed it is these powers at one remove which, in a technical civilisation, are most likely to be discredited.[2]

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[1]Gabriel Marcel, Searchings (New York: Newman Press, 1967), p. 43.

[2]Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 11.

Thirdly, the technological mentality is inadequate in meeting the deeper issues of life. Those who are obsessed with the power and adequacy of technology in the life of man tend to experience a diminuition in authentic living. Life on the human scene is freighted with tragedy, heartache, and eventual death. Nothing can ultimately forestall these forces. If one's faith rests in the power of technological ability to meet these crises, then only despair awaits him, for technology finds its sufficiency in a scientific context which speaks primarily to the world of objects and things. There is no answer for the spirit of man in this sterile atmosphere except for the haunting echoes of his own questioning. Technological thought cannot provide purpose and meaning in life nor can it furnish a guide to its final goal.

Life is deeper than logic. As helpful as reason and experimentation may be, they are woefully inadequate in meeting the demands of the soul. "Man shall not live by bread alone,"[1] is a profound insight concerning the true nature of man. Life is lived on the level of the personal, not on the level of the mechanical. Mechanical accuracy can never replace the need for human warmth. Things, in themselves, can never furnish the answer to the deep needs of the soul.

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[1] Matt. 4:3.

For life to be meaningful, it must be permeated with purpose. This, in turn, calls for a system of values. But how can the concept of value be introduced into a world of mere fact? One is now faced with the stock question: Can an ought be deduced from an is? Technology, dealing in facts and figures, finds itself wholly inadequate in supplying a valuable end for man's life. If, as the materialistic technologist suggests, all qualitative distinctions can be reduced ultimately to nothing more than quantitative distinctions, then how can one account for the universal presence in man of the deep spiritual yearning for self-fulfillment?

Fourthly, as the technological mentality relates itself to life it becomes disintegrative to individuated and stable living. Modern society, therefore, presents the spectacle of both anonymity and rootlessness.

Science, with its accompanying technological know-how, has contributed largely to the mass production observed in nearly every area of endeavor. Sameness in fad and fancy dominates the thinking of modern man. To be accepted by others means the presence of a basic likeness. Even the various groups of non-conformists give strict allegiance to the conformity of their particular group. In a desperate effort to be individual and independent they become exceedingly hide-bound to the mores of their clan. Furthermore, it becomes highly necessary to develop a standardized man to provide a market for standardized products issuing forth in

mass production. This in turn demands the development of mass thinking and mass desire. Psychological appeal in advertizing coupled with a propaganda-like pitch become the order of the day. The tragic result is uniformity of persons. Marshalled after this pattern twentieth-century man has become faceless, generalized, and anonymous. Thus he becomes reduced by a technocratic society to a state of technological nirvana, being merged into the great self, mass man.

With increased mobility and the ever changing demands of a highly industrialized society on him, he finds few roots going down into the soil of established community life. It has been estimated that fully one-fourth of the total American population moves every year. With such a fluid situation it is little wonder that the average person is experiencing difficulty with self-identification. Who am I? From whence have I come? are both significant and characteristic questions of the day. Marcel always associates meaningful living with a sense of individuality and rootedness in a concrete environment. Wholesomeness of being and clarity of self-image are always parts of a larger, more stable, contextual setting. Meaningfulness and identity stem from seeing and thinking perspectively. Rootedness in community life encourages such a view.

> A society in which nomadism is the outgrowth of technological demands will produce standardised persons devoid of the intimate flavor of regions. Such a society will be, as Dostoyevsky foresaw, an ant heap and

> not a community. Its individuals will be isolated atoms with no strong sense of identity or of belonging with others. Atomisation and collectivisation go hand in hand, for it is only faceless and isolated individuals who can be formed into a mass.[1]

Perhaps enough has been said concerning the extensive inroads made by the technological mentality into modern society. There is a definite relationship between technological advance and the destruction of the social fabric necessary for meaningful living. Twentieth century culture has been saturated with the misuse of technology until a number of philosophers have awakened to the fact that they must address themselves to the situation, with the hope of keeping human life human--of saving man from himself.

No doubt the most devastating evidence of the disintegration of the substance of authentic living is to be found in the "techniques of degradation" which evil men have used on their brothers. These can be seen in the evil manipulations on the bodies and minds of men during World War II and in many areas during the ensuing years. Only mention is made of this matter now since the last chapter will be devoted to its examination.

Technomania At Work

Since the nature and characteristics of the technological mentality have been examined it follows that one's attention be turned to technomania in action. Three of the

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 12.

basic characteristics of this type mind can best be described in their roles of possessing, objectifying, and desacralizing. One's attention is now directed toward these.

Possessing

Having is one of the two basic modes of relating to the world--the other is being. The phenomenon of having, or possession, is also closely related to the spirit of abstraction. While both of these modes of relating to the world are necessary and proper in their own right, yet it has been noted that as the possessive orientation to life increases, the type of thought which deepens participation in the mystery of being decreases. Herein lies a real danger to modern man. When possessiveness becomes dominant, meaningful living may cease to exist.

One of the dangers implicit in possessiveness is found in what Marcel describes as a sort of "boomerang action."[1] This consists of a subtle, reflexive relation which tends to grow between a possessor and his possessions. The stronger the possessive instinct becomes, the more the possessed object gains control over the possessor. "For the fact must be faced, that this tension, this fateful double action, may at any moment turn our lives into a kind of incomprehensible and intolerable slavery."[2] This possibility

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[1] Marcel, Being and Having, p. 163.

[2] Ibid., p. 164.

lies at the heart of everyday experience with its dangers, its anxieties and its techniques.

> So that in the last analysis--and this is a new point of view--Having as such seems to have a tendency to destroy and lose itself in the very thing it began by possessing, but which now absorbs the master who thought he controlled it. It seems that it is of the very nature of my body, or of my instruments in so far as I treat them as possessions, that they should tend to blot me out, although it is I who possess them.[1]

Having tends to destroy being. A fitting example of this kind of fateful double action is seen in the fanatical positivist, the worshiper of science. When he surrenders to the temptation to limit reality to what can be possessed, controlled, understood, and categorized he is captivated by the ideas which he began by having. "The mysterious fullness of concrete reality is sacrificed to a system of ideas which limits the real to what can be possessed with certainty through objectifying, 'scientific' modes of thought."[2]

Of further import is the danger of a scientifically oriented society selling its birthright of <u>being</u> for the mess of pottage consisting of nothing but clear, sterile, factual knowledge.

> A society which reserves its highest prestige for science and technology will be in constant danger of sacrificing being to having, of denying the mystery of presence for the clear knowledge which makes technology possible.[3]

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 164-65.

[2] Keen, <u>Gabriel Marcel</u>, p. 16.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 16.

Marcel feels that there is but one way to escape the disastrous consequences of a radical orientation toward possession: By man remaining closely related to those activities that recall him to the mystery of being.

> And therefore it is also necessary that these activities and autonomous functions should be balanced and harmonised by the central activities. In these, man is recalled into the presence of mystery, that mystery which is the foundation of his very being, and apart from which he is nothingness: the grand mystery of religion, art and metaphysic.[1]

Apart from such pursuits there is real danger in man being dominated by "having" to such an extent that he will approach his world only in order to subject it to his desires. "When this happens, the categories of function and output become central, wonder and admiration atrophy, and fidelity, hope and love are replaced by the will to power."[2] Marcel feels that technological society has already succumbed to the ever-present temptation to deny the reality of all that cannot be possessed and thus controlled. The predicament of modern man has arisen to the degree of this yielding.

Objectifying

The genius of the technological mentality is to reduce all of life to nothing more than objects over which techniques have full sway. At this point everything becomes possessable, characterizable, manipulable, controllable, and

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[1] Marcel, Being and Having, p. 174.

[2] Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 16.

problematic. All mystery has vanished, nothing remains inexhaustible. Presence is in the process of being degraded to absence. When this occurs the problematized man appears, but bereft of all mystery. He has been dehumanized and objectivized--no longer a mystery, only a problem. This is the final product of a rationalistic, scientific, industrialized civilization.

At the root of the concept of objectification is the idea of the subject-object dichotomy. What does one mean by subject? By object? Wherein lies the difference? The subject is the thinking and acting agent while the object is the receiver of action. The subject refers to the internal self while the object is considered the totality of external phenomena constituting the not-self. The subject is the concrete while the object is the abstract. The subject savors of mystery while the object indicates the problematic. Marcel would continue these polarities by aligning the subject with such concepts as being, participation, presence, invisible, and I-Thou, while he would contrast the notion of object with having, objectification, absence, visible, and I-It.

> The basis for all points of difference is in this view of an object as something external to me, something which is set over against myself. In an objective situation, I am here and the object is there, complete and open for inspection. For the reason that I meet the object as juxtaposed to myself and as not involving myself, I can envelop it in a clear and distinct idea which delineates its limits. With this clarity comes perfect transmittability, and with the transmittability

> the object begins to lead that public and independent life which is the privilege of the world of the problematic.[1]

A problem, then, is an inquiry which is made in reference to an object. The data as presented do not include oneself. On the other hand, a mystery is a question in which I am personally caught up. The data given cannot be regarded as detached from the self. One is completely involved, if not engulfed, in the question at hand.

> Being is not an object which I can inspect from all sides: if I were to have a clear and distinct notion of being, I would be completely an object for myself (since being envelops me, and in order to objectify being I would have to objectify myself). But I cannot objectify myself; I can not observe myself from the outside.[2]

It is important to the self concept to understand what Marcel means by the term objectification. Basically, the term refers to that process whereby something is caused to assume the character of an object. This consists of many different things such as externalization, becoming visible, and taking on the character of things. Marcel especially makes use of the term when one attempts to objectify that which is nonobjectifiable, such as in the case of being or existence. This action involves mystery as contrasted with problem, which is germane to scientific and technical thought.

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[1] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 33.

> In a problem the enquirer is not tangled up with his data; if there is danger of such entanglement, he either takes care to rid his data of his (physical) personal equation or defines a Heisenberg-region of indeterminacy. But if the matter in hand is Existence, human Existence, he can purge the topic of himself only at the cost of "objectifying" what cannot be objectified and remain itself. Without the living pulse as known by himself, and only in himself, the matter before him is emptied precisely of its 'existence,'--its essence has disappeared.[1]

Marcel is not blind to the value of technique; he is at variance only with its dominance. He is not down on objects, but only on the object as the exemplary case of being. A close parallel can be seen between this approach and the fact of his acceptance of the legitimacy of abstraction while being against the spirit of abstraction.[2] The neopositivistic inroads in both Britain and America are responsible for creating the idol of natural-science objectivity.[3]

> The process of "objectification" normal to the physical sciences, with its ideal of knifing the thing thought about cleanly off from the thinker, and vice versa, would, if applied to existence, through its very success destroy the life of its subject-matter, inseparable from being felt.[4]

How does the process of "objectifying" differ from "thinking about"; for it is quite obvious that one must be able to think about existence, being, immediacy, without denaturing

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[1]Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 448.

[2]Supra, p. 91.

[3]See Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 8.

[4]Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 445.

them; otherwise, metaphysics dies in the process of birth. This involves the distinction between problem and mystery. The answer will be simplified by noting that one objectifies a thought-target when he mentally places it within nature, "nature as comprehensive object being defined in terms of a system of events whose verae causae are solely among themselves, or within a common field . . . and therefore independent of the thinker."[1] Objects such as this are fitted for passionless observation and for records whose data are valid for all observers on exactly the same terms.

Marcel maintains that objectification occurs when the self is observed, described, or classified. There seems to be little hesitancy on the part of the technician to treat and approach beings as things. Again, this pursuit is encouraged by the further, false assumption that the only valid knowledge attainable is obtained by this abstractive, objectifying method.

Existentialists often accuse realists of objectifying human experience. The concern of the former for the concrete, intuitive aspects of individual experience account in part for such accusations. In addition, existential thinkers are alarmed over the penetration in contemporary life of industrialization, mechanization, and depersonalization. When the self is objectified it appears as an instrument, sometimes as a possession, and at other times as a body of

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[1] Ibid., p. 445.

statistical facts. Thus it is deprived of its individuality, its uniqueness, and its interiority. On this level it is observed as nothing more than an object among objects.

When this occurs the dehumanizing process becomes something like a chain reaction. The depersonalized individual himself, tends to see himself as others see him. He generally offers little resistance to the techniques of classification, organization, and functionalization.

> He may even be unaware that these operations are taking place. Marcel notes that when depersonalization takes place, one has no sense of being; he is in a state of ontological lack. The philosopher, in turn, in objectifying the self, is contributing indirectly if not directly to this state.[1]

Marcel also insists that the philosopher who views man in this fashion approaches him in the role of a scientist. Aping the technician, he places man before him as an isolated object, suitable for inquiry. He proceeds in an objective manner to investigate, measure, trace, and evaluate the specimen. The self is viewed as a passive object of scientific investigation with all spiritual and personal aspects ignored. Its identity as a subject is laid aside and in its place an objective identity is taken on. After this manner the individual can only claim a mode of absence in surrender of the mode of presence.

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[1]Patricia Sanborn, "Objectification and Self-Knowledge: A Critical Examination," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XXVIII (Sept., 1967), p. 39.

In response to Marcel's stated concept of objectification, there are those who would sharply disagree. Among such philosophers is Patricia Sanborn, who has recently published an insightful reply to Marcel's theory. The following remarks will be largely drawn from her views on objectification.

Sanborn sets the issue by stating that Marcel's "critique of objectification is based largely upon a misunderstanding of the function of objectification, and that this misunderstanding leads to unnecessary confusions in regard to a theory of self-knowledge."[1]

Marcel argues that the self cannot be an object because it is a presence. In spite of his claim that one thing cannot be both a presence and an object, his discussions of the self appear to depend on that very possibility. So it seems that Marcel's very procedure supports the position that he criticizes. His analyses are based on the assumption that the self can be an object.

> To discuss the self at all, it is necessary to establish a distance from it. Whether he views the self as a presence, an instrument or a collection of events, the philosopher cannot avoid objectification. Marcel's analyses of self-realization do not exclude such objectification, for the very reason that they <u>are</u> analyses. They purport to suggest or explain various facets of the self. The self, of necessity, becomes the object of investigation, regardless of the kind of object it is.[2]

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 39.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 40.

Just because the self must be an object in order to be studied at all, it does not necessarily follow that it lose its subjective identity as Marcel assumes. Marcel would insist that objectification alters what it objectifies, converts the dynamic into the static, mediates what is immediate, and distorts the data presented to it. Yet it could be maintained, on the contrary, that an objective approach serves to indicate that the object in question is dynamic, immediate, and more complete than the characterization of it. Rather than distorting the self, it provides one description of what the self is. Thus in a study in which the self is an object of investigation, it retains its identity. It is a certain kind of object. It doesn't lose its uniqueness because other phenomena can also be objects. Being an object does not alter its unique traits, so reasons Sanborn. Marcel apparently overestimates the degree to which objectification affects the object.

Marcel appears to be arguing against the misuse of objectification rather than against objectification itself, yet no such distinction appears in his works. It would appear as if Marcel could make good use of legitimate objectification--which he doesn't! To be consistent with his other distinctions between abstraction and its misuse, technology and its misuse, he should not be against the proper use of objectification over against its misuse. "It is misused when it is expected to reveal all aspects of the

object. This could be corrected by an acknowledgment that only some features of the object are being explored."[1] Marcel's position could better be interpreted, says Sanborn, as a proposal for understanding the self to be a certain kind of object, rather than as an attack on all objectification in reference to man. Consequently, an objective approach to the self doesn't necessitate the distortion of the self.

> The phenomena which lead Marcel to designate the self a presence are not denied, if the self is made an object of inquiry. They are only denied, if the philosopher insists that the self is the kind of object which does not exhibit these phenomena. Furthermore, to objectify the self is not to say that the self is only what is revealed about it as an object.[2]

In all cases the method should be distinguished from the object, for the method simply aims at understanding the object, not at converting it or identifying it, or changing it in any way.

The self, as an object of inquiry, gives evidence of having such features that Marcel designates it as a presence. And it can be known as a presence by participation, a participation in a particular kind of object, but nonetheless an object. So Sanborn concludes that the "self is an object known by a variety of methods, not by any one method to the exclusion of all others."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 43.

[2] Ibid., p. 43.

[3] Ibid., p. 47.

Desacralizing

In the world of science where technology plays a major role, a desacralizing process inevitably sets in that downgrades life to the level of other objects. The technological mentality spawns this desecration of life. Since personal being is considered the highest level of living existence, then a certain sacredness is generally attached to it. In this sense, then, the term sacred can be properly used in reference to human life and personality. In discussing the subject of the sacral in the era of technology, Marcel refers to it as one of the more serious problems of the day. For in effect it poses the question: "What are we to make of ourselves in face of the fact that we are gradually being thoroughly manipulated by a technology that we ourselves have devised"?[1] In other words, man has become victimized by his own doings, by his over-extended technology. This is a sweeping claim by Marcel. Has man's methodologies and creations outdistanced him? Are they actually in control, destroying their own inventor? Wherein lies the sacred, the valuable? Is being, as the inner core of man, desacralized these days and offered as a sacrifice on the altar of technolatry?

True, man belongs to a world in transition. Up until now men have lived in a world with certain definite values. ". . . but at the moment we are facing a different

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[1] Marcel, Searchings, p. 41.

world altogether--one still in its inaugural states, where the values of yesterday are going to be questioned radically, if not denied or rejected outright."[1] Marcel looks with foreboding upon the future when he observes that this situation, cloven as it is, will be the basis of everything to come. Man has entered the era of technology and is already struggling with its tentacles of abstraction. He has a growing tendency to understand the world around him, and even himself, in terms of technology. "Technology is not a unity we can amass. It is human reason insofar as it strives to manage, so to speak, the earth and everything living within it."[2]

Marcel maintains that man is being misled to understand the world and himself in regard to technology as one who can modify and manipulate it as he pleases and at his pleasure. Thus far it appears to be working. But is it really, in the last analysis? Granted, man has devised many things for his own benefit. To some extent he has manipulated the world. But what has happened to the "person" in the process. A frightening gap has developed between man's scientific accomplishments and his moral development. It's questionable whether man will have the strength of character to control and utilize his inventions to the good of mankind rather than to its destruction. In this light one seriously

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[1] Ibid., p. 42.

[2] Ibid., p. 43.

questions whether "man the manipulator" is really succeeding at his technological task. Yet he continues to look upon himself as the sole "one" who can bring meaning to an otherwise meaningless world. This kind of thinking gives rise to a genuine anthropocentrism, to a cheap type of humanism. The sacredness of life with the attendant responsibilities to one's Maker seems completely ignored. Mankind has even assumed the prerogative of God, in that he now surreptitiously holds the right to not only manipulate life, but to give and take it at will.

Marcel suggests that a most fitting example of how the technological has invaded the sacred precincts of life is to be found in the widespread use of contraceptive devices today. He observes that they seem about to assure man of mastery over a function which hitherto he had little control. The generation gap is characterized in part by the

> . . . fact that life is being less and less felt as a gift to be handed on, and more and more felt as a kind of incomprehensible calamity, like a flood, against which we ought to be able to build dykes. There is nothing really ridiculous in the assertion that the growingly general use of techniques of birth-prevention is only one aspect of a very widespread impingement of techniques upon realms from which, until recently, they were almost shut out.[1]

Not uncommonly strange in the Catholic tradition, yet this view would be met with resistance from the rank-and-file man of today. Perhaps the degree of resentment to this position is indicative of the degree of independence and autonomy now

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 94.

experienced in the technological world. Marcel belabors his point and makes it the main thrust of an entire chapter.[1] In fairness to him one should hear him out. He calls attention to the fact that a husband and wife as procreators are limited to fulfilling the conditions according to which a human being becomes flesh. It is important to realize that this privilege is a gift of God, and as such it lends a sacred character to life. The power of procreation is a gift, and any kind of contraceptive practice might lead to the indiscriminate manipulation of human life.

> Man tends to function as though he were the actual producer and not merely a mediating agent. Furthermore, mediation is closely associated with the act of producing; in fact every activity looked upon by man as creative actually has to be understood as mediative.[2]

Marcel points out that if God is the source and sustainer of all life, then in the last analysis man can be nothing more than the mediating agent. But because of scientific and technological progress, man tends to look upon himself as a creator rather than a mere agent. "Consequently, we will have to make a strenuous effort if we are going to extricate ourselves and restore the forgotten reality of mediation."[3]

The process of desacralization has brought about the view of life as one vast stretch of absurdity culminating in despair. In holding this view many parents look upon

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[1] See Marcel, Searchings, pp. 41-53.

[2] Ibid., p. 45.

[3] Ibid., p. 45.

themselves as having unjustifiably destined someone who did not ask for life to share the disastrous gamble with them. Philosophically speaking, this is the most crucial aspect of the problem:

> If we proceed from a completely desacralized, pessimistic view of life we tend to treat life simply as a power we have to control if we are going to minimize its baneful effects. But in effect this pessimistic outlook is a definite component of the technological notion of the world. It leads us to arrogate to itself the right to manipulate life--simply because it has none of those social qualities we discover through a theocentric perspective.[1]

No doubt Marcel's position on desacralization has much to commend it. In all probability, this position of persons, who have intrinsic value, has gradually diminished, while objects and processes have increased in status. But when it comes to the matter of Marcel's basic and prolonged attack on contraceptive devices, there appear some unanswered questions. As an alternative what does he propose to combat the growing problem of population explosion? Is there not a moral issue involved when starvation is part of the possible outcome? Doesn't man have a serious obligation to face-up to the consequences of his choices? Furthermore, as a religiously oriented person doesn't Marcel grasp the reason why many people consider it other than a blessing to usher children into a world freighted with apocalyptic foreboding? Is he not one of the foremost in anticipating doomsday

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[1] Ibid., p. 49.

himself?[1] In assessing the whole problem all of these considerations need to be reviewed. Perhaps Marcel has inadvertently chosen the right principle but the wrong example!

Another facet of the problem of desacralization is to be seen in the statistical approach to life as seen in recent decades.

> Here as anywhere else in business life numbers have an important function. But the number factor operates in absolute opposition to the sacral. The very act of counting itself, I would think, is the beginning of desecration. And if this is so, it is all the more true of statistical evaluation, though, admittedly, those entrusted with the preservation of genuine religious values often condescend to this kind of reckoning--just so much more proof of how far along the process of desacralization actually is. And, conversely, it perhaps helps us grasp the true essence of the sacral <u>in itself</u>.[2]

Marcel also mentions the changing attitude toward death as an indication of the desacralizing trend. In some quarters, where proper respect was once accorded to death, it no longer receives more than passing notice. Even murder is gradually losing the stigma proper to it in the light of the Ten Commandments, he observes. "It would seem that life is regarded as entirely useless; consequently, one can extinguish it like a candle."[3] One is almost tempted to speak of it in the jargon of the market--as a tragic "drop" in the price of life. Perhaps the frequency of large scale wars

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[1]See Marcel, <u>The Mystery of Being</u>, Vol. II, p. 186.

[2]Marcel, <u>Searchings</u>, pp. 50-51.

[3]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 49.

since the turn of the century has contributed its share to the desacralization of human life, not to mention the atrocities committed in death camps. The cheapness of human life is evident all about.

There are those who would predict the ultimate disappearance of the sacred. Their assertions should be viewed with caution.

> But this by no means signifies that, judged from the standpoint of reflective thought, this obliteration de facto of the sacred corresponds to a refutation de jure. Everything seems to indicate that this radical profanation could not be accomplished without striking a blow at what are probably unformulated needs which are deeply inscribed in the very heart of a human being.[1]

An opportunity presents itself to the philosopher to practice the virtue of humility--which indeed is not difficult in a technological age! Then he can bring into the open the redeeming value which humility possesses, in a world "where the manipulation of techniques in the service of the will to power threatens, in the absence of any counterweight, to engender pride, madness, and death."[2] By giving attention to the whole man, and making a modest approach to the inner meaning of life, the philosopher can hope to make a telling contribution in conserving those values of life that can be characterized as sacred.

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[1] Marcel, Human Dignity, pp. 73-74.

[2] Ibid., pp. 168-69.

Concluding Statement

In a world freighted with tremendous possibilities for the development of being the emergence of the technological mentality poses a serious threat. The potential being has much to lose in the process of becoming actualized. It is possible that one may suffer the supreme "loss of being" itself. The pressures of modern society constantly militate against the achievement of his goal--self-realization, fullness of being. The privileged position of science with its attendant technologies tend to diminish the sacredness of human existence. In fact, the devastating spirit of abstraction has left man bereft of those qualities which make him human. Marcel summarily exclaims:

> To be men; to continue to remain men. These are the words on which I have concentrated unceasingly for twenty years . . . It is precisely my unconquerable love of life that precludes my subscribing to what I would call the "mortalism" of those for whom man finally breaks down like a machine.[1]

One's attention is now directed to an investigation of the possible capital loss sustained by those who have been victimized by technolatry.

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[1] Ibid., p. 169.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOSS OF MEANINGFUL EXISTENCE

In an age characterized by swift developments in science, one can rightfully expect accelerated growth in the field of technology. This of itself is not to be feared, for when properly utilized, technology is a boon to man. But when these same techniques are turned on man himself, seeking his objectification, trouble arises. As was noted in Chapter III, the spirit of abstraction soon develops into the technological mentality, and man is thereby threatened with the loss of meaningful existence.

In the midst of these untoward surroundings man is desperately striving to attain realization of being. His pilgrimage is beset on everyhand by the alluring temptation to depart from the quest and join the ranks of those who seek an easy security in the neat, clear, sterile exactness of technolatry. This is nothing more than an invitation to nothingness and eventual death. This dehumanizing process has taken its toll among individuals as well as in society as a whole. In this chapter one's attention will be primarily directed toward the loss of being sustained by

individuals, while the following two chapters will be used in the investigation of its penetration of the social fabric.

In experiencing the loss of ontological exigence man undergoes a subtle, but devastating, attrition. Ontological exigence is the inner drive toward fullness of being. It is a native urge, a natural hunger for self-fulfillment, an innate demand to rise from mere existence to being. Ontological exigence is the initial human thrust to actualize the potential in man. While its primary concern is the discovery of being through participation in being, yet this sense of being becomes the basis for all meaningful living as well. It is the necessary requisite for the enrichment of life at its best. The following discussion will treat both the loss of essential being and the accompanying loss of meaningful existence.

Even a cursory examination of the contemporary scene would reveal that man occupies a perilous position. While man has always raised questions about the nature of the universe and his own destiny, yet more specifically in modern times has he become unsure of who he really is. Being adrift, he apparently has lost his way in the universe. Embroiled in a world plagued with irrationalism, he no longer admits of being a rational self or the creation of a personal God. He is ill-at-ease, shifting about, seeking an acceptable metaphysical posture. Shot through with purposelessness, he has lost his raison d'etre.

Marcel points to the spirit of abstraction as being the common cause underlying both the individual and social alienation of contemporary man. While this answer seems to be worthy of consideration, yet it is something of an over-simplification, for Marcel occasionally makes mention of other historical factors as contributory to mankind's loss of meaningful existence. It will be necessary, therefore, to give due consideration to these supplementary historical developments underlying man's loss of ontological exigence in order to see the whole picture as it emerges. Needless to say, the rise of the technological mentality from the spirit of abstraction is both the most recent and crucial development of all these causal factors.

In examining man's loss of meaningful existence the historical approach will be used in pointing out certain broad causal factors. The remainder of the chapter will set forth the proliferating effects of this loss on man.

Causal Factors

The Devastating Influence of Naturalistic Science

In seeking to trace the gradual erosion of being, Marcel is mindful of the historical developments within the sciences during the past centuries. He has no argument with science, properly conceived, only with science as it is structured on a naturalistic philosophy of life. This is one which denies that anything in reality has a supernatural

significance; specifically that scientific laws account for all phenomena, and that teleological conceptions of nature are invalid. In seeking to ferret-out the causes of man's decline as a dignified being, Marcel does not hesitate to point toward the naturalistically-inclined scientists. The attrition of <u>being</u> in man has closely paralleled the gradual exaltation of nature and its laws. Obsessed with his methodological techniques, his findings and his naturalistically-inclined interpretations, the modern scientist pieces together the story of the universe and man. This does not tend to present a complimentary picture of man. Composed of nothing more than the dust of the earth--matter in its more refined and sophisticated form, complex, and highly concentrated, and organized to perform the functions of life--man can be reduced to the lowest common denominator of <u>quantity</u>, with no qualitative distinctions possible. Thus the view contained in historical materialism pictures man as nothing more than an organismic machine, fully determined and ultimately predictable. As such he is subject to the analytic procedures of technology, the same as all other elements and organisms. It must not be overlooked that historical materialism as a philosophy developed hand in hand with naturalistically-oriented science and a strong desire to see the world structured on a mathematical

basis.[1] Marcel comments pointedly, "It is hardly necessary to point out the role which historical materialism on the one hand, and Freudian doctrines on the other, have played in restricting the concept of man."[2]

The effects of historical materialism.--In turning to a brief examination of materialism one finds that naturalism and materialism are related terms, but at the same time they are not synonymous. While all materialistic systems of philosophy are naturalistic, yet some naturalistic systems are not materialistic. Materialism is a narrow or more limited form of naturalism, which generally asserts that there is nothing in the world except matter, and that "nature" and the "physical world" are one and the same. A thoroughgoing materialist would claim that only quantitative distinctions can be made. As such, the universe is fully explainable by the physical sciences. In more recent times the doctrine has been expressed as "energism," which reduces everything to some form of energy, or as a form of scientific "positivism," which emphasizes the exact sciences and denies any concern about such things as the ultimate nature of reality.

> Materialism, in the narrow sense, is the theory that all things may be explained in accordance with the laws that govern matter and motion. Materialism holds

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[1]See Hunter Mead, Types and Problems of Philosophy (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), pp. 81-82. (Hereinafter referred to as Types and Problems.)

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 10.

> that all events and conditions are necessary consequences of previous events and conditions. The organic or 'higher' forms in nature are merely more complex than the inorganic or lower forms; the higher forms contain no new materials or forces, and the principles of the physical sciences are sufficient to explain all that occurs and exists. All of nature's processes, whether inorganic or organic, are determined and would be predictable were all the facts about previous conditions available.[1]

So the materialist generally sees the universe monistically, and that "one" stuff is matter which is governed by causal laws inherent in its very nature. While it is somewhat of a hasty generalization to classify all materialists as being the same in outlook, yet for the most part they would agree that there is nothing to be known except that which presents itself through the senses.

The persistent question which presents itself is this: Can the structure, function, and behavior of living beings be interpreted exclusively by physics, chemistry, and related sciences? Since the same physical elements found in stones and stars are found in organisms, do the same mechanical laws operate universally? The materialist would be inclined to say so. Traces of this view can be noted as far back as the pre-Socratic philosophers culminating in the materialistic atomism of Democritus. These particular men believed the universe could be interpreted as simply matter in motion. Democritus also set forth what might be termed

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[1]Harold H. Titus, Living Issues in Philosophy, Fourth Edition (New York: American Book Company, 1964), p. 207. (Hereinafter referred to as Living Issues.)

the first systematic notion of mechanism. During the medieval period, however, the idea of mechanism was nearly forgotten, yet it later gained considerable support in Western thought from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. This was largely due to the development of the mathematical sciences and of the objective, experimental methods in the natural sciences. There were some who thought the world to consist of minute physical quantities that could be measured mathematically. Others, like Thomas Hobbes went further and attempted to raise the science of his day to a philosophy by presenting a thoroughgoing, mechanistic materialism. Hobbes described conscious life as sensations moving in the brain and nervous system.

By the twentieth century, many physiologists, biologists, and psychologists were using physical and mechanistic explanations in their interpretations of all living creatures, including man.

> According to mechanistic materialism, mind and its activities are forms of behavior. Psychology, then, becomes a study of behavior, and mind and consciousness are interpreted as muscular, neural, or glandular behavior. These processes may then be explained by physics and chemistry. Values and ideals become merely subjective labels for physical situations and relations.[1]

In this view, man is lowered to the status of a machine, though complex and sophisticated. The dehumanizing effects of this philosophico-scientific approach to man are

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[1] Ibid., p. 207.

so obvious that little comment is needed to clarify the tragic picture emerging. As if this were not enough, the mechanistic materialist also sees all the changes in the world--from those involving the atom to those involving man--as strictly determined. This constitutes a complete and closed causal series explainable by the principles of the natural sciences without resort to such ideas as "purpose." The world is thus governed by natural laws that may be stated in mathematical terms when the necessary data are available. This type of metaphysics enlarges the concept "machine" and stresses the mechanical nature of all processes both organic and inorganic. Consequently, all phenomena are subject to the same kinds of explanation found in the physical sciences--that is, the concepts of mechanism, determinism and natural law. So what is real in man is his body, and the tests for truth or reality are the senses such as touch, sight and sound. These are the tools of experimental verification.

The implications of a materialistic philosophy and science are grave for man. First of all it seems to relieve man of personal or moral responsibility. If man were not free but fully determined, it would be unthinkable to hold him responsible for his actions. When carried to its logical end, this kind of view would reduce society to chaos. Ethics and morals, if existent, would have nothing more than

relative meaning. Furthermore, when man conceives himself as part of a purposeless universe his existence becomes meaningless. This would entail a loss in the sense of being. "The world, according to the new picture, is purposeless, senseless, meaningless. Nature is nothing but matter in motion. The motions of matter are governed, not by any purpose, but by blind forces and laws."[1]

Marcel does not accept this concept of man and the world, for mechanistic materialism does not appear to tell the whole story. It does not offer a satisfactory explanation of all the facts of human existence. How can the materialist account for love and communion which can occur between two beings. How can he, in the language of Marcel, explain the sense of "presence"? Or how would he explain the mystery of being and intuitive grasp? Can the yearning for immortality be explained on a purely materialistic basis? But even so, Marcel is not so intent on "proving" the presence of being in this world as he is on pointing out the devastating effects on the person holding the materialist's view. Even pragmatically it goes against the best in human nature!

Perhaps Marcel, in his abounding zeal for being, fails to give the followers of materialism their due. No doubt most of these thinkers start from the honest

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[1]W. T. Stace, "Man Against Darkness," The Atlantic Monthly, Sept., 1948, p. 54.

assumption that ultimate reality is matter--nothing more. In the interest of personal integrity they are constrained to "tell it as it is" by the means of careful observation and accurate description. They cannot afford the doubtful luxury of wishful thinking--as some idealists are prone to do. They do not permit themselves to "fill in the unknown gaps" in their findings as some speculative philosophers tend to do. Their approach is not system perfect since they must follow the facts and only the facts. In the interest of scientific accuracy the materialist accepts only that of which he is reasonably sure--through measurement and careful analysis. At this point, however, he runs the danger of screening-out that which is ultimately real--the spirit--if the idealist's dualistic world-view is correct. For if the world of "spirits" exists it escapes the methodology of the materialist. Consequently, he finds himself entangled in the reductive fallacy that occurs when an otherwise complex situation or whole is mistakenly reduced to but one of its parts. For example, a crude type of reductionism might possibly occur if in a world of both spirit and matter one were to conclude that only matter exists. There is the possibility of blurring both useful and necessary distinctions.

> By a paradox which well deserves our attention, the more man, misled not by science but by a certain elementary philosophy of science, comes to regard himself as a mere link in an endless chain, or as the result of purely natural causes, the more he arrogates to himself the right of absolute sovereignty in all that

> concerns the ordering of his personal conduct. The more he is theoretically humiliated by a materialistic philosophy which claims to deny any special identity to himself or his actions, the more does he actually develop a practical pride which impels him to deny the existence of any human order to which he might owe obedience.[1]

The implications of organic evolution.--Both historical materialism and humanistic naturalism are congenial to the theory of organic evolution. While the former views man simply as a part of the great machine of nature, the latter conceives him as the highest product of an organic order of things. As such, the humanistic naturalist rules out the necessity for cosmic support and has abandoned all conceptions of a supernatural Being. He believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process. Man appears to be part of one all-embracing natural order. He is the highest product of the creative forces of the universe, with nothing above or beyond him. So it is not surprising to note that humanistic naturalism is sometimes known as evolutionary naturalism. This, therefore, introduces one to the concept of organic evolution--the fact that all forms of life are characterized by a process of progressive development. In general it is the theory that life proceeds from the simple to the more complex, or from the lower to higher forms, with man being the crowning form thus far.

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[1]Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 95.

As one considers the role of the theory of biological evolution in regard to the developing status of man today, he is made to question the humanistic naturalist's interpretation of the whole matter. Perhaps a person would do well to consider Marcel's blunt warning:

> I am emphasizing this point to show that the genuine scholar is always on his guard against scientism and the temptation to determine human conduct by a theory of evolution, for example, as though this theory were the equivalent of a definitive discovery of truth. In France and Germany today, and surely elsewhere, too, it is not difficult to find men who are bringing to light the lacunae in the theories of evolution that were proposed in the past, along with the daring and rash claims that attended them.[1]

Marcel, therefore, holds in careful reserve any approval of the theory of organic evolution--that man descended from more primitive forms of life rather than being created by fiat by God. If man is not God's immediate creation, then he becomes nothing more than the highest of animals in a strictly natural order. No longer is he a spiritual being created in God's image, as Marcel would hold, but he would be classified on the basis of his physical body alone--a complex animal.

While it is not the burden of this paper to defend or deny the theory of evolution per se, yet it is of real concern to examine the apparent effects which the popularization of this doctrine has had on the dignity of man and the meaningfulness of his existence.

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[1]Marcel, Searchings, p. 31.

> The concept of evolution has played a prominent part in the creation of the modern outlook . . . For many, the concept of evolution is the most far-reaching of all, since it involves so directly man's status and place in the universe. It involves not only science and philosophy, but man's religious outlook and his educational methods.[1]

There appear to be two schools of thought in reference to the effect of evolutionary theory on man's position in the world. One feels that he is enhanced as the highest link in a natural order, while the other school concludes that it downgrades him to being nothing more than an animal. The former humanistic naturalists express faith in humanity and especially in science as a means of attaining truth. Through the use of his intelligence man can create for himself, without the aid of supernatural powers, a rational civilization characterized by inevitable progress. He has a profound respect for modern science: he accepts its assumptions, postulates, techniques, and discoveries. Science is thus viewed not as a transcript of reality, but as something of a human construct to secure control over the world. The humanistic naturalist is especially "humanitarian" in his outlook and finds great interest in biology, psychology, medicine, and the social studies since they are all centered on man and his welfare.

> Does evolution degrade man, since it relates him to the animal kingdom, or does it enhance his nature, since man seems to be the crowning achievement of a long process of evolution? . . . At first, some men

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[1]Titus, Living Issues, p. 136.

> thought that the newer views were degrading to man, and there are expressions of this attitude in literature. Philosophers and many religious leaders, however, point out that, no matter how man came to be, no matter what his genesis, he is not less than what he is--a self-conscious being with unique characteristics.[1]

In taking the opposite view of the effects of the theory of evolution on the race of man, Marcel points to the world-threatening conditions today. He would remind all that man, this highest animal, has misused his talents and powers and has pushed the whole race to the brink of destruction. If he is nothing but an animal, then why not act like a beast? Marcel invites all to carefully examine the world situation. Hatred, covetousness, and murder abound--not only among men but among nations. Since the turn of the century this world has experienced two world wars and today is threatened by a third world-wide holocaust. The depth of degradation to which man will sink in the mistreatment of his fellows is cited by Marcel to illustrate the debased conduct of those who believe their origin is in nature and not in God. The prison camps of World War II are cases in point.

Without a supernatural origin man experiences difficulty in finding meaning in his existence. If there is no Intelligent Cause back of this universe and its inhabitants, if there is no grand purpose or teleological design, then

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[1] Ibid., p. 137.

wherein can man find meaning for his own struggles? Life turns into a bad joke and man is following a path that leads to nowhere.

But on the contrary historical evidence bears out the ennobling aspect of belief in a holy and just God, for man tends to become like the god he worships. The belief in the divine origin of man has much to commend it from the pragmatic standpoint. If one believes he is made in the image of God he generally feels challenged to come up to his best. He usually dwells on a higher plane.

Religious leaders have had three possible options as they have faced the theory of evolution: They might attempt to deny and discredit the claims of evolution; they might ignore its presence altogether, or they might make whatever mental adjustments which appear necessary. Marcel feels convinced that the last option has been chosen by most religionists. In his view this has had a tendency to secularize and downgrade both religion and man. If man is not the creation of God, then he only can be less--never more!

The rise of atheistic thought.--Over the years the naturalistic and evolutionary emphasis in science has taken its toll. Man no longer occupies the favored spot he once enjoyed. The traditional religious view of faith in a supernatural order has suffered extensively. Man has come of age, no longer needing cosmic support from an Other.

> From the rational and idealistic points of view, the assumptions of science constituted a threat to the distinctively human aspects of man, to his moral and religious convictions, which had provided man with a sense of purpose and a reason for expending his energies.[1]

With no need for a superhuman being of any kind man has gradually lost his vision of the Eternal with its accompanying moral overtones. It has become more common than not, to discount any idea of God's existence. Science has proved him needless. Man as the greatest in the naturalistic order has become his own god.

> In a general way, if we consider the historical and sociological evolution such as it has taken place for the past two centuries, it seems that man has lost his divine reference: he ceases to confront a God as His creature and image. Might not the death of God, in the exact sense that Nietzsche has given to these words be at the origin of the fact that man has become for himself a question without an answer?[2]

Thus Marcel goes on record as definitely relating atheistic thought with the plight of man today--"becoming for himself a question without an answer."

In all probability the atheistic teaching of the past century is related basically to the concurrent development of evolutionary thought. Nietzsche was coming to young manhood when Darwin's Origin of Species became popular. Without doubt it had a definite influence on this fledgling philosopher. He unabashedly proclaims the death of God;

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[1]Samuel Enoch Stumpf, Socrates to Sartre (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 403.

[2]Marcel, Problematic Man, p. 29.

furthermore, he insists that men themselves have killed Him. "The Nietzschean affirmation is infinitely more tragic, since it states that we ourselves have killed God, and it is this alone which can account for the sacred dread with which Nietzsche here expresses himself."[1] He continues,

> Do we not dash on unceasingly? Backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Does not night come on continually, darker and darker? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God?[2]

Nietzsche persists in asking searching questions pertaining to the implications of atheistic thought for man. What must collapse now since the traditional belief in God has been destroyed? His words are prophetic as he envisions its results?

> --because so much was built upon it, so much rested on it, and had become one with it: for example, our entire European morality. This lengthy, vast and uninterrupted process of crumbling, destruction, ruin and overthrow which is now imminent: who has realised it sufficiently today to have to stand up as the teacher and herald of such a tremendous logic of terror, as the prophet of gloom and eclipse, the like of which has probably never taken place on earth before?[3]

The loss of meaningful existence accompanying the demise of God in the thoughts of man can also be noted in

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[1] Ibid., p. 31.

[2] Nietzsche, Joyful Wisdom, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, Problematic Man, p. 30.

[3] Nietzsche, Joyful Wisdom, Book V, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, Problematic Man, pp. 30-31.

the irreligious views emanating from such contemporary thinkers as Sartre and Camus. For these men life adds up to nothingness, despair and dread. Marcel succinctly describes their situation by stating,

> When man, by denying the existence of God, denies his own, the spiritual powers which are dissociated by his denial keep their primitive reality, but disunited and detached they can no longer do anything but drive the beings of flesh and soul back against each other in a despairing conflict--those beings which, had their union been safe-guarded and preserved, would have gone forward towards eternal life.[1]

Apart from the rise of the technological mentality out of the "spirit of abstraction," the devastation wrought by a naturalistically-oriented science is the next greater cause for the loss of ontological exigence in man. In assessing the weight of the various scientific factors, none perhaps, is as crucial as the Darwinian theory:

> The naturalistic philosopher quite properly regards the Darwinian hypothesis as one of his biggest guns, since it is largely by means of this theory that it has been possible to extend naturalistic thought over the biological, psychological and social fields.[2]

The Distortion of Values

The devastating influence of a naturalistically-oriented science has culminated in the distortion of the traditional system of values. In fact, one is inclined to describe the situation as an inversion of values, but perhaps the word would be somewhat misleading. A complete

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[1] Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 96.

[2] Mead, Types and Problems, p. 114.

inversion of values would place things above man. But while this may be true in some instances it cannot be said to be generally the case. Yet in a very real sense a distortion or twisting of the traditional value system has taken place. Man is no longer valued for what he "is" but for what he can "do." This pragmatic approach to valuating man has emerged concurrently with scientific technology. Man tends to be of value to the extent that he can be manipulated and utilized by a highly developed industrialized society. This process becomes exceedingly dehumanizing and degrading for man with the telltale loss of the sense of "being." The technological mentality can best be seen in its misplacement of the idea of function--that a man's worth is equivalent to his work. This spirit of abstraction is the very breath of a misused technology and eventuates in a meaningless existence for man.

For centuries, intrinsic value was considered by the church to reside in the person, ultimately in the Absolute Person--God. All through medieval times he was considered the source and sustainer of value. As such, values were thought to be as fixed and certain as the stars of the heavens. These were moral absolutes. Man, made in the image of God, was of supreme value. Being, according to Thomas Aquinas, was the universal value. The highest level of being, personal being, was the ultimate. But something of a tragedy has happened with the development of modern science.

This whole system of value has become distorted. With no need for God and an absolute foundation for his value system, man now speaks in terms of relative value, and as his being the creator of his own values.

> Ultimates, absolutes, and finalities either drop out of the picture or retreat to the background. This trend is a result not only of the theory of evolution but also of the entire scientific development in recent centuries.[1]

Marcel is content and even insistent on holding to the traditional approach to value. His theory of value is based on being. Thus it has a metaphysical grounding. The notion of value presupposes being. Value is centered in being. It is in the realm of the personal or subjective (precisely, the intersubjective) and has no meaning in the realm of scientific, impersonal facts. So there can be no value without being and a subject who can affirm or appreciate it. Marcel chooses to ground his metaphysics in a distinction between the full and the empty, rather than between the one and the many. The important factor to him is the quality of being, not the mere number of beings.

> I have written on another occasion that, provided it is taken in its metaphysical and not its physical sense, the distinction between the full and the empty seems to me more fundamental than that between the one and the many. This is particularly applicable to the case in point. Life in a world centered on function is liable to despair because in reality this world is empty, it rings hollow.[2]

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[1]Titus, Living Issues, p. 139.

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 12.

"Value varies directly with fullness of being. What is 'full' of being is 'full' of value and what is empty of being has no value."[1] By treating that which has value as a fact, one takes away its value. A case in point is the type of scientific analysis attempted by Freud. His treatment of the data of human experience tends to denude it of its value. For example, one cannot accurately reduce a man's religious life simply to libido expressed in myth. Treating a man as if he were a thing, not a being, tends to discount his value in both the viewer's sight and his.

Furthermore, for Marcel value must be incarnate. It is not a mere abstraction.

> Value is incarnated in a person. Each person has his own value--has infinite value and should be treated accordingly . . . Each person or consciousness is the bearer of a unique value destined for eternity. There is a real relation between value and immortality.[2]

Man is destined for the world beyond, and it is through a grasp of "real" value that one glimpses his true destiny. Value is the bridge between the terrestrial world and the eternal world.

> Perhaps a stable order can only be established if man is acutely aware of his condition as a traveller, that is to say, if he perpetually reminds himself that he is required to cut himself a dangerous path across the unsteady blocks of a universe which has collapsed and seems to be crumbling in every direction. This path

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[1]Martha E. Williams, "Gabriel Marcel's Notion of Value," Modern Schoolman, XXXVII (Nov., 1959-60), p. 30.

[2]Ibid., p. 37.

> leads to a world more firmly established in Being, a world whose changing and uncertain gleams are all that we can discern here below.[1]

One of the major contributing factors behind the loss of a sense of being, according to Marcel, is the distortion of value. As has been pointed out, man's value no longer lies in what he _is_ but in what he can _do_. Function, action, utility, and cash value are the areas of supreme importance in a technological society preoccupied with pragmatism. Consequently, the notion of value has nearly been inverted from its traditional source in "persons," and modern society is attempting to ground it in the relative and passing area of "action."

When being becomes exhaustible, when the spirit can be reduced to "nothing more than," man has, in effect, lost his soul. This denial of being as the unit of value can be seen in man becoming problematicized. No longer is the mystery of being present. Man reverts to the level of an objective problem to be solved by the techniques of science.

> It is my own profound belief that we cannot succeed in preserving the mysterious principle at the heart of human dignity unless we succeed in making explicit the properly sacral quality peculiar to it.[2]

Underlying the loss of ontological exigence in the individual is the contemporary accent on the importance of function. It seems as if one's sense of dignity rests upon

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[1]Marcel, _Homo Viator_, pp. 153-54.

[2]Marcel, _Human Dignity_, p. 128.

the functions he performs in society. Marcel sees this condition as one of the major symptoms of the disease afflicting man. Man has lost his ontological sense, his demand for being, the exigence to transcend. "In an increasing degree the awareness of the dignity and sacredness of being is eclipsed in the contemporary world and is replaced by the idea of function."[1]

A careful survey of present conditions indicates to Marcel that the characteristic feature of this age is to be found in the "misplacement of the idea of function" (a favorite phrase of Marcel's), placing second things first:

> The individual tends to appear both to himself and to others as an agglomeration of functions. As a result of deep historical causes, which can as yet be understood only in part, he has been led to see himself more and more as a mere assemblage of functions, the hierarchical interrelation of which seems to him questionable or at least subject to conflicting interpretations.[2]

Again he observes, "I noted that the modern misuse of the idea of function tends to debase all human relations."[3]

Man's loss, then, of meaningful existence appears to begin with his loss of a personal sense of dignity and sacredness of being.

> We view ourselves and others as intricate systems of interrelated functions--biological, mental and social. Our sense of dignity and worth rests upon the functions we perform in society and not upon the awareness that

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 42.

[2]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 10.

[3]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 42.

> there is an intrinsic sacredness involved in merely being human.[1]

Marcel raises the question of what can be the inward reality of the life of this or that man who makes his living as a ticket-collector on the underground? His life is taken up primarily in the matter of punching tickets. Everything in his surroundings tends to conspire to identify this man with his functions. After all he is a ticket-collector. He goes on to point out that the rather horrible expression "time table" succinctly describes his life. So many hours for each function--as worker, trade unionist, voter, etc. He spends so many hours sleeping, eating, relaxing and following a routine similar to what a robot could be programmed to do. This sketch would indicate the emergence of a kind of vital schedule. While the details may vary with country, climate and profession, yet what matters is that there is a schedule. Interruptive factors such as sickness and accident will break in on the smooth operation of the system; however, in lieu of such an event the individual is brought in for regular inspection and overhaul as in the case of any other machine. The medical clinic and hospital play the part of the inspection bench or the repair shop. Marcel ironically tabs death, objectively and functionally, as the scrapping of what has ceased to be of use--and is thus written off as a total loss.

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 9.

This functionalized world exudes a stifling impression of sadness as well. Think of the retired official and many other passers-by who look like people retired from life. There surely is something mocking and sinister even in the tolerance awarded the man who has retired from his work. But the sadness of the onlooker is not the whole story for the actor himself seems seized by a dull, intolerable unease due to an apparent consignment of living as though he were in fact submerged by his functions.

> This uneasiness is enough to show that there is in all this some appalling mistake, some ghastly misinterpretation, implanted in defenceless minds by an increasingly inhuman social order and an equally inhuman philosophy (for if the philosophy has prepared the way for the order, the order has also shaped the philosophy).[1]

When man's worth is his work, then he is thought of as a dispensable commodity. The term "manpower" is coined from this line of thinking. The whole industrial framework is structured on the basis of personal production, man-hours of labor, cost-effectiveness, gross national product and similar terms which bear the cold ring of the impersonal. Man has become something to be manipulated, bargained for, and figured by the slide rule. Functionalized man is nothing but a unit to consider in an economically-oriented society.

On the other hand one is reminded that it is only through refined technique that government and business are

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[1]Marcel, Existentialism, p. 12.

capable of handling efficiently large masses of people. Without the proper implementation of technique chaos would reign. In a highly organized, sophisticated, and interdependent society, technique, system, and computerization become a necessity. Function takes on new importance to the extent that man might possibly overrate its value. One must remember all this activity is just a means to an end--the ultimate good of man. While Marcel would accept the necessity of technical organization in this type of society, yet he would sternly warn against forgetting the value of individual man due to the multiplicity of functions surrounding him.

The Growth of Social Statism

In considering the causes of the loss of ontological exigence, Marcel is quite cognizant of the part played by socialization on the contemporary scene and the growing threat of statism. The word socialization in this context refers to the gradual assumption by society, or the state in particular, of those prerogatives traditionally considered to be those of the individual. In a society that is growing soft these benefits provided by the state seem to be nothing more than a service which the state <u>owes</u> the individual. But already, at this juncture, the individuals making up the state have begun the gradual decline in the direction of the

loss of being. The final outcome of such a process is usually a dictatorial state made up of enslaved subjects. The word statism as used in this discussion indicates the growing concentration of control and planning being vested in the hands of a highly centralized government. So it is with genuine concern that Marcel begins his discussion of social statism in his major work, The Mystery of Being:

> It is, or so it seems to me, by starting from the fact of the growingly complex and unified social organization of human life today, that one can see most clearly what lies behind the loss, for individuals, of life's old intimate quality. In what does this growingly complex organization--this socialization of life, as we may call it--really consist? Primarily, in the fact that each one of us is being treated today more and more as an agent, whose behaviour ought to contribute towards the progress of a certain whole, a something rather distant, rather oppressive, let us even frankly say rather tyrannical.[1]

Marcel speaks repeatedly of the growingly complex nature of human life these days. What is back of this development?

Undoubtedly, as a first consideration, one can point to the problems inherent in population increase. Sheer numbers propose certain difficulties. Significant increases in numbers as well as in concentrations of people, pose problems unknown where these conditions do not obtain. Under such circumstances, one ought not to take proximity and closeness for fraternity.

> In the world whose structure is displayed about us, developing at a rate which is not that of organic growth, we find human beings increasingly separated from one another the more they are herded together.

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, pp. 34-35.

> But this promiscuous closeness that we see, for example, on beaches, where people crowd in together during vacations has nothing to do with fraternity.[1]

Marcel observes that with such proximity no one feels at home, for it is accompanied by such an uproar that the sound is deafening. He views with the same askance the huge suburban housing projects. These projects, which spring up like mushrooms on the outskirts of big cities, are characterized also by promiscuity and tumult. In encouraging solitude he mentions that it is as essential to fraternity as silence is to music. Fraternity seems to be a form of respect, and there is no respect without distance. In cases such as this, "every human being must have access to an interior space without which he withers like a plant, or a tree."[2]

A second consideration concerning the increasingly complex nature of modern life is the heavy concentration of the masses in urban centers. The alarming shift in population has been from the rural to urban centers. It has become necessary, with the industrialization of society, for individual workers to live near the factories of their employment. Here they produce their products en masse, for mass man. The huge metropolitan areas in the United States are unmistakable evidence of the growing seriousness of this problem. Even now there are indications of the development

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[1] Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 158.

[2] Ibid., p. 158.

of the "megapolis"--continuing cities, joined to one another by unbroken chains of business and industrial complexes. As the population significantly increases and the density of urban population grows, the value of the individual tends to decrease proportionately.

A third consideration of complex living emerges with the loss of privacy--the loss of personal freedom. It does little good to have certain freedoms if one is restricted by his surroundings from exercising them. The multiplicity of people in congested areas severely limits one's sphere of activity because of physical limitations. Regular privileges are set aside for the good of the whole. Organized ways of doing things en masse are the order of the day. Of necessity one finds his little niche and fills it, like it or not. Soon the people become a multitude, a faceless, anonymous mass.

A fourth and necessary consideration is that of bureaucratic control. Such a mass of humanity can get out of hand so easily. Mobs can develop in which separate and individual action is nearly impossible. The state must step in to protect and control. Statism begins to take over the functions of the individual, and man is well on his way to becoming nothing more than a statistic. Even though Marcel does not admit that such a conclusion is inevitable, yet he considers it as being highly likely. He fears the centralization of authority with its developing bureaucracy:

> But on the other hand one may well fear--although such a development is not inevitable--that technocracy implies a tendency toward centralization, and that the operation of this central authority cannot be separated from a corresponding hypertrophy of offices and therefore a bureaucracy.[1]

The important question at this point is, what relation should hold between the bureaucracy's development and the growing technicalization of which one is the witness, or perhaps the victim?

In this kind of situation, though one may desire more individual freedom, he is integrated into a certain totality. This evokes diverse feelings ranging between fear and aversion. Seldom do these feelings give evidence of "that shade of admiration or of quasi-religious submission without which a philosophy of the state, however short of optimism, seems unable to take form."[2]

A fifth consideration in this growingly complex society is the exaltation of the state and the subjection of the people. Perhaps the advent of computerization, mechanization and automation is nothing more than modern means called into existence by the sharp increase of the world's population in an effort on the part of leadership to control and manipulate the masses in some rational, organized sort of way. Even so, these systems do not contain the

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[1] Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 162.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

answers to the crucial questions being asked: Who am I? For what am I living? What is of value?

> The State cannot answer him. It only knows abstract concepts: employment, agrarian reform, etc. The same is true of society in general: what exists for it is aid to refugees, emergency relief, etc. Always abstractions. In the universe of the State and of society, this man no longer presents any living reality. He is a number on a filing-card, in a dossier which includes an infinity of others, each one with its number. Nonetheless, this man is not a number, he is a living being, an individual.[1]

Man has not only been socialized, but in many countries of the world he has been subjected to a growing, oppressive statism. The social whole, of which one is forced to be a part, is partially accomplished through the continuous enrollments and registrations which are required by the government on many different occasions throughout life. After surviving dozens of such occasions there exists a real danger of confusing oneself, one's real personality, with the state's official record of the same. A person, any person, consists of more than can be placed in a bulging file folder about him. It is truly frightening when one thinks of the implications of such an identification.

The close resemblance between socialization and a developing totalitarianism can be noted on many levels, observes Marcel, but especially so at the level in which men begin to view the state as some kind of superpower or deity.

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[1]Marcel, Problematic Man, p. 19.

A dangerous point is reached even when one imputes a greater value to the state, as such, than to the individual person.

> It is true that the State in our time, even in countries where it has not reached the totalitarian phase, has become more and more the engrosser and dispenser of all sorts of favours, which must be snatched from it by whatever means are available, including even blackmail. In this respect the State <u>is</u> properly comparable to a God, but to the God of degraded cults on whom the sorcerer claims to exercise his magic powers.[1]

One only needs to think of the various totalitarian states of the present day or recent past to have vivid examples of the tragedy that overtakes unsuspecting citizens under such regimes. The Fascism of Italy, the Nazism of Germany, and the Communism of both Red China and Russia have created situations in which man has not only lost his liberty, but in most instances has been degraded as a human being for the benefit of the state.

The rapid growth of statism in recent years has been due, in part, to the beginning population explosion throughout the world, and the honest attempt by governments to properly handle the masses of people under their care. But perhaps regimentation is too high a price to pay for bureaucratic convenience. Someone needs to come forth with another acceptable option. Marcel seems hard put for a practical and effective solution. In the mean time, under these degenerating circumstances, man seeks a workable

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[1]Marcel, <u>The Mystery of Being</u>, Vol. I, p. 39.

solution while he continues to sustain an increasing loss of ontological exigence.

So far, in this chapter, the discussion has revolved around the causes underlying the loss of ontological exigence. For the remainder, one's attention will be directed toward examining the effects of these factors on the individual man.

Proliferating Effects

The Loss of Mystery and Wonder

Turning now to a review of the effects pursuant to the loss of a sense of being in man, one is first aware of the loss of mystery and wonder. A most tragic result of living in a world devoted to reason and technology is that nothing retains the element of mystery--hence man has lost his sense of wonder. Mystery, according to Marcel, is simply that which is indefinable because one is so intimately a part of it. Experience, firsthandedness, personal participation and intuitive grasp are necessary for its comprehension. But with these tools of understanding the mystery becomes better known than that which is grasped by reason alone! Wonder is that emotional response of faith and acceptance to the mysteries of life, based on overwhelming inner evidence, though outwardly (rationally) incomprehensible.

> What a degree of vacuity it would require to ask the mysterious questions in a mood of mere curiosity! What is being? What is time? Who am I? Is the man

> who asks such questions engaged in a search for information? Could we say about him that his curiosity is aroused?[1]

How inappropriate to speak in such a manner! Only an emaciated person could approach the central issues of being in such a way. Herein one observes the sinister results of a degraded, scientific rationalism. On the contrary, "Let us instead designate by the all-embracing word wonder the organ notes of emotion which sound in the soul in the asking of these questions."[2] There are many areas of life that are sealed from the reason, yet open willingly to the inner feelings and intuition. Perhaps the intuition is the unspoken, yet clear language of the spirit. Intuitive feelings, though admittedly mistaken at times, can provide a depth of understanding not known to the reason. They constitute a main line to the heart of others--plunging on to the sacred center of being. But the tragic fact remains that man, a victim of his own reasoning, has lost the sense of mystery and wonder which should naturally accompany his thoughts about being. It is possible, if not probable, that a person can become so imprisoned within the strictures of his own reasoning that he is effectively hindered from discovering some of the deeper truths of life through fresh intuitive grasp! But those who insist on plodding the paths of reason alone must occasionally be satisfied with nothing

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 39.

[2]Ibid., p. 39.

more than outer appearances rather than inner realities. In the course of time this can become disastrous for the person. The erosion of being can proceed imperceptibly, yet ever so surely.

> In such a world the ontological need, the need of being, is exhausted in exact proportion to the breaking up of personality on the one hand and, on the other, to the triumph of the category of the "purely natural" and the consequent atrophy of the faculty of wonder.[1]

A word should be added concerning reason. Reason, in itself, is profitable and beneficial. The danger lies in its exclusive use, its ignoring the insights gained from experience and intuition. These afford a check to reason. By the same token intuition can be very dangerous without the balancing effect to be found in sound reasoning or experience. This has not been a plea for intuition alone, but for intuition to play its proper role. Both a misguided reason and an unbridled intuition can result in the reduction of an enriched sense of being in man.

Marcel suggests that though this world is freighted with many problems as such, yet man is determined to allow no room for mystery per se. To eliminate mystery in this functionally-oriented world is to bring into play in the presence of such existential events as birth, love, and death--that psychological and pseudo-scientific category of the purely natural. To Marcel this is nothing more than the remains of what he terms a degraded rationalism, from whose

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[1] Marcel, Existentialism, p. 13.

standpoint cause explains effect and accounts for it exhaustively.

When man's ways of thinking are thus channeled, his sense of true being has nearly been destroyed. A devastation has occurred. His capacity to commune, to hope, to love has been so stifled that he no longer has the ability or desire to transcend his deteriorating situation. Alienated and captive he mechanically plods on his weary way. His life is benumbed by the loss of the mysterious sense. With this eclipse of mystery goes the diminuition of the sense of wonder.

> One may perhaps question and investigate a purely natural and functionalized world, but one may not stand in admiring awe with a sense of gratitude before a mechanism which will one day be completely understood. Life in a functionalised world becomes a process without a purpose, a utilisation of means with no clearly defined end, a journey without a goal.[1]

In observing the perilous position of modern man, bereft of the sense of mystery and wonder, Marcel feels that the individual should be recalled into the presence of mystery, "that mystery which is the foundation of his very being, and apart from which is nothingness: the grand mystery of religion, art and metaphysic."[2] Furthermore, Marcel seems to speak with approval of Peter Wust's belief that philosophy lives off of a fundamental piety or trust in being. This is possibly the reverse side of his own

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 10.

[2]Marcel, Being and Having, p. 174.

doctrine of ontological humility, with his thinking that a sentiment of reverence is interior to all authentic philosophy. Seriousness, which is a constituent element in reverence, is not the only legitimate expression of the sense of mystery. Astonishment is an ontological attitude as well. Any thought which loses the gift of astonishment cannot maintain its zest and vitality.

> Philosophy is nurtured by a sentiment of the holy; philosophy springs out of a delight in existence . . . what is constant in all experiences of mystery is the implicit awareness of my own finitude. The knowledge of mystery is sacral knowledge because it reveals this finitude.[1]

Gallagher further observes that this is not a gloomy knowledge, for no one can deny that it is the greatest joy to acknowledge one's creaturehood. Creaturehood can only be truly acknowledged with joy, for gloom represents a type of refusal or rebellion.

The Loss of Human Dignity

A sense of true being and a sense of human dignity go hand in hand. Consequently, the loss of being entails the loss of human dignity. According to Marcel, "The problem in question is that of understanding what becomes of human dignity in the process of technicalization to which man today is delivered over."[2] The term "human dignity," itself, seems a bit general and needs further explication.

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 40.

[2]Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 158.

Human dignity, first of all, is characterized by a sense of sacredness. With the loss of an awareness of the intrinsic sacredness of merely being human, one forfeits his dignity of being. Marcel suggests that a dire need exists for "the restoration of the sacred."[1]

> The only way to rediscover the path to the sacral is to turn away from the world and recapture simplicity, which is perhaps only another word for uniqueness and inwardness, the favorite abode of the sacral.[2]

Again, human dignity is closely connected with integrity. The ancients associated the word integrity with the idea of integration, one who is master of himself; he who is in perfect possession of himself.

> But this word 'development' becomes really meaningful only if the integrity of the human being is considered as the central value--and it is precisely this integrity which is directly threatened today. Here we rediscover the problem formulated earlier, for I believe it is possible to show that integrity and dignity are terms which, though not identical, are indissolubly linked.[3]

Today amidst the confusion brought about by the abstractive devices of technology, man has experienced the reduction from selfhood to thinghood. He does not represent the integrated self nearly so much as the fragmented thing, as perfectly analyzed by the technicians about him.

The loss of human dignity is also closely akin to the functional view of life. "What must be stringently

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[1] Ibid., p. 166.

[2] Marcel, Searchings, p. 52.

[3] Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 162.

insisted upon is that an anthropology with a functionalist commitment has no place for anything in the nature of dignity."[1] Therefore, those who insist on one's dignity resting upon the functions he performs in society rather than upon the integrity of his being, are ultimately destroying the true dignity of man.

> The results of such a way of thinking are disastrous for human dignity. As the capacity to love, to admire, and to hope dries up, the functional man loses the ability [illegible] desire to transcend his situation [illegible] captivity.[2]

One must guard w[illegible]nse of being which, in effect, is the [illegible]isfaction. It is not calculable but

> Everything [illegible] man of his sense of being, of [illegible]th the inexhaustible within himsel[illegible]ultimate source of fulfillment and [illegible]ionalized world produces a specialized sel[illegible]rces can be thoroughly tabulated and utilized. Whatever is of having has limits. But being is beyond all inventory. And man insofar as he is held fast by being is a channel of the inexhaustible.[3]

One cannot live submerged in a functionalized life from day to day without becoming robotish, mechanical, and less than human. In the midst of these circumstances the true dignity and sacredness of being is lost. Kingston offers an insightful comment when he says,

> However, when so many people live as machines from day to day without any meaning in their lives and when many

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[1] Ibid., p. 164.

[2] Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 10.

[3] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 56.

insisted upon is that an anthropology with a functionalist commitment has no place for anything in the nature of dignity."[1] Therefore, those who insist on one's dignity resting upon the functions he performs in society rather than upon the integrity of his being, are ultimately destroying the true dignity of man.

> The results of such a way of thinking are disastrous for human dignity. As the capacity to love, to admire, and to hope dries up, the functional man loses the ability, and even the desire to transcend his situation of alienation and captivity.[2]

One must guard with utmost care his sense of being which, in effect, is the spring of all joy and satisfaction. It is not calculable but truly inexhaustible.

> Everything today conspires to rob a man of his sense of being, of that living contact with the inexhaustible within himself which is the only ultimate source of fulfillment and of joy. A functionalized world produces a specialized self whose resources can be thoroughly tabulated and utilized. Whatever is of having has limits. But being is beyond all inventory. And man insofar as he is held fast by being is a channel of the inexhaustible.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 164.

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[3] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 56.

> who seek for meaning turn to the imaginery world of abstraction, Marcel points the way in which men can come to a realization of what they are, to find their dignity as creatures, based on the world as it is, on the level of Truth and Love, where of course, one finds God Himself.[1]

One further effect of the loss of human dignity is observed in man's loss of freedom. Bound and fettered by his own limited concepts of himself, he ceases to be creative. He ceases to function as a real person. He finds his true dignity when he frees himself from his own egocentrism by participating in the reality of intersubjective communion. True freedom is freedom from self. The loss of ontological exigence is to be seen in the accompanying loss of human dignity and thus of true freedom.

The Loss of Individual Identity

Insidiously resulting from the loss of ontological exigence is the absence of individual identity. Some individuals even question the fact of whether they are or not, while others phrase the metaphysical question by asking: Really, who am I? Marcel mentions that this answer can be found only in the communion of intersubjectivity. Ensconced in participation the answer is found.

> The experience of being arises in communion; even more strictly, it is an experience <u>of</u> communion: <u>esse est co-esse</u> . . . we must immediately make clear that there is no self except in so far as there is

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[1]Kingston, <u>French Existentialism</u>, p. 26.

> communion. My self apart from other selves quite simply is not. It comes to be in communion.[1]

If being develops from intersubjective participation and communion, then it is prior to, and requisite to self identification. An individual cannot know who he is apart from his relationship to others. Consequently, the loss of ontological exigence precludes the possibility of individual identity. So to be, in a limited way, is to be related: in fact it is to be-in-relation to others. By the same token, it is not to be apart from the co-presence of others.

> Not only is the continuing existence of the self a gift from a transcendent generosity, but the most intimate treasures of the self are minted by the communal generosity of other finite selves. I am literally given to myself by others. Unless I am a self, being will not be present to me; unless I am with others, I will not be a self.[2]

Marcel is evidently making a distinction, though not too clear, between the self as simply incarnate in the body, and the self as it comes into full being through participation. Unfortunately, his exposition at this point is not all that could be hoped for.[3]

Marcel continues to observe that wherever there is being there is also presence. If presence is absent, then there is not being. In this respect, being is uncharacterizable. It cannot be approached as a totality and "added

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[1] Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 8.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

[3] Supra, p. 49

up" in a morcellized way. One is always and at every moment more than the totality of predicates which he possesses. "If the category of being is really valid it is because that which is not capable of being transmitted is to be found in reality."[1] One therefore grasps being by an untransmittable knowledge, perhaps by what Marcel calls a blinded intuition.

The loss of individual identity is not only to be seen in the lack of communion and the absence of presence, which is typical of life today, but it can be noted in the lack of community. Marcel finds it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to answer the question, Who am I? from the standpoint of an onlooker or from the outside.

> . . . we have gradually come to acknowledge how impossible it is not only to give, on one's own account, an objective answer to the question, 'Who am I'? but also even to imagine the valid giving of such an answer by anybody else who was considering one's life from the outside.[2]

As one views himself as a part of a community that has developed over the years, he sees himself in a given role and as an integral part or segment of the gestalt. The awareness of such relationships results in a proper perspective of the whole community. Identity and meaning evolve from perspective viewing. Rootedness in a given community life makes for identity.

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[1]Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 311.

[2]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 210.

> The success of technology is in a large measure responsible for the rootless and anonymous character of modern society. The technological explosion has created a mass-produced society of standardised products and uniform workers. It has increased mobility to the point that roots are lost. Marcel sees vividness of life as linked to a sense of individuality which is inseparable from rootedness in a concrete environment.[1]

The modern type of society cannot be considered a community. "Its individuals will be isolated atoms with no strong sense of identity or of belonging with others."[2] Atomization and collectivization usually go together.

Loss of individual identity is aptly illustrated in what Hans Zehrer, in Man in This World, calls the barracks man.[3] He paints a picture of the typical displaced person following World War II. He has experienced the loss of the sense of individual being. He asks the questions: Who am I? What am I living for, and what is the meaning of all this?

The State cannot answer him. It speaks only of abstract concepts: employment, gross national product, social security and the like. Society offers little more of an answer--aid to refugees, emergency relief or a new homeland. Always abstractions. In the universe of the state and society this man no longer presents any living reality. He is simply a number on a filing card, or represents a given

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 12.

[2]Ibid., p. 12.

[3]Hans Zehrer, Man In This World (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1952).

dossier with its appropriate number. But this man is not a number! He is a living, personal, individual being. As Marcel sizes up the situation,

> A strange and incomprehensible power has stolen from him everything which constituted his home, everything which permitted him to take on form.
>
> But this man is not there simply for himself, on his own account. He is also the last link of an historical development. He marks its ultimate possibility. For thirty years this question has been in the making for a whole continent, and soon for the entire planet.[1]

So with the loss of ontological exigence goes the loss of individual identity. The powers and pressures of life have combined with the heat of political adversity to dissolve the individuated person into mass man, faceless man, spiritless man with a broken self-image and powerless to extricate himself from the throes of non-identity and anonymity.

The Loss of Meaningful Existence

The culminating effect of the loss of ontological exigence is to be found in the forfeiture of meaning in life. When the demand to be has been dissipated, all of life tends to lose its lustre and allurement. The very heart has been cut out of striving. The desire to transcend mere existence has vanished. Pitiful man has utterly failed in his primeval effort to become. Nothing is left for which to work.

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[1] Marcel, Problematic Man, pp. 20-21.

This signifies the confluence of the three or more causal streams eventuating in the loss of ontological exigence. The devastating influences of naturalistic science has taken its toll. The distorted system of values which modern man has nurtured has reached its unwanted harvest. The growth of social statism has all but crushed man in to servitude and a place of unimportance. The misplacement of the idea of function has minimized the sacredness of being while accenting what man can do and accomplish. For these reasons and many more, individual man has lost his place in the universe, devalued, dehumanized, and degraded. He has lost the sacred sense of being. This individual and localized failure at the very core of his personality has spread its inoccuous virus to all areas of life, rendering them meaningless and inconsequential. Now nothing really matters--nothing can ultimately matter. Marcel sees this tragic condition as a repetition of that which overtook Solomon in his declining years, and when at the end of his tether he saw all things as vanity.[1]

Life truly has lost its meaning when shallowness, hollowness, and emptiness characterize its everydayness. On the contrary, "Being is the culmination of hope, the experience of being is its fulfilment."[2] Most individuals, however, seem to live on the level of the superficial. Their

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[1]Ecc. 12:8.

[2]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 50.

lives do not have an authentic bearing. In consequence, the malady of despondence has permeated all levels of society. Marcel observes that this functionalized world has produced a stifling impression of sadness. It is possible for a man to be involved in a functionalized world and yet retain the power to reject it. He need not succumb personally to the pressures about him. One possibility is found in his rejecting this kind of world by humanizing the relations which unite him to others. By so doing he has enriched his own life as well. This would indicate that being is not indifferent to value, but finds its greatest value in personal fulfillment. Perhaps it is by presence that one can effect the transition from being to enrichment of being. That which has value is also that which increases in us the feeling of presence. While fulfillment primarily takes on a positive meaning from the creative standpoint, yet functionalized activity is the lowest depth of degradation to which creative activity can descend.

> I think that we must all, in the course of our lives, have known beings who were essentially creators; by the radiance of charity and love shining from their being, they add a positive contribution to the invisible work which gives the human adventure the only meaning which can justify it.[1]

Fulfillment is not something to be considered on its own, but as part of a personal experience in which a profound requirement is satisfied. This should give some intimation

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[1] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

of what life ought to be, as over against what it actually is for many frustrated moderns.

Meaningful living presupposes that the universe is teleological in character. Pattern, purpose and plan must be discovered throughout. A sense of direction stemming from an ultimate goal sets the personal life into a meaningful frame. Meaning, according to Marcel, suggests outgoing relationships. One tends to discover sense and worth as he sees himself and his life in relation to the rest of the universe--the larger whole. More than movement is required. Life takes on meaning as one detects movement goalward. Keen incisively notes,

> Life in a functionalised world becomes a process without a purpose, a utilisation of means with no clearly defined end, a journey without a goal. When the sense of dignity and purposefulness in life is lost, nothing ultimately matters.[1]

Life without a purpose is tantamount to life segmented from the whole, having no conscious connections, no visible relationships, and no rational belonging. Dehumanized man is consequently isolated, alienated, and adrift--without chart and compass he becomes an aimless wanderer, restless and uncomfortable, haunted by memories of a better day.

> It is quite certain--and I have taken care to emphasize it--that man, reduced to a destitution such that his life has become meaningless for him, preserves the memory of a different life which still presented a character of plenitude. It is then a question of knowing what appraisal it is possible to make of this

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 10.

> other life, or this other world, on the basis of a situation which is that of a being entirely dispossessed.[1]

To Marcel, and these thoughts have portrayed his feelings, such considerations should bring one face to face with the brokenness of the world in which he lives. Despair and nihilism constantly prey upon man. It is as though a conspiracy exists to strip him of his being, for the only ultimate source of fulfillment and joy comes from that living contact with the inexhaustible within himself. Quite like Camus and Sartre, Marcel admits that despair and suicide are always possible alternatives facing an individual in this tragic world.

> Despair is possible in any form, at any moment and to any degree, and this betrayal may seem to be counselled, if not forced upon us, by the very structure of the world we live. The deathly aspect of this world may, from a given standpoint, be regarded as a ceaseless incitement to denial and to suicide.[2]

As one evaluates the world from the non-theistic viewpoint he can find nothing in it that withstands critical dissolution. Despair is rooted in this fact. The source of despair on the contemporary scene is found in the visible danger that what one sees of this world may be all there is to see.

> What we see is the moment-to-moment boundary of our being, the nothingness that completes itself in death, our own and that of the race: in such a world,

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[1]Marcel, Problematic Man, p. 39.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

> riddled the while with horror-filled actualities, how can a being aspiring and infinite be other than condemned to frustration? And in just this world we are nevertheless condemned to engage and to act as men: is it possible?[1]

Underlying much of the despair and rebellion toward life is the apparent fact that to be alive in such a tragic and threatened world as this, is not a gift but a penalty. "'I never asked to be born, by what right--by what right!--has life been inflicted on me'? that lies at the roots of that contemporary nihilism, to which I shall have to come back much later."[2]

Concluding Statement

With the loss of ontological exigence the individual ceases to find meaning in life. In most instances he is so paralyzed by this loss of being that he fails to desire its transcendence. Although there are many contributing factors leading to man's dispossessed condition, yet of first importance is the emergence of the technological mentality from the spirit of abstraction. All other causal factors, though important, form the supplementary historical context out of which the spirit of abstraction could more easily arise.

The tragic loss of being, suffered by man, is characterized by a shallow, empty, apathetic existence. Alienation from God, self, and others is surfaced in

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[1]Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 467.

[2]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 244.

purposelessness, eventuating in despair, absurdity, and nothingness. Dehumanized, degraded, and nearly discarded, man appears to be little more than a useless passion. Not only has he lost the exigence of being but his life has become utterly meaningless and therefore absurd. He totals it all and the answer is NOTHINGNESS!

Having examined the causal factors and the proliferating effects of the loss of meaningful existence on the individual, the reader's attention is now directed to the broader social implications of dehumanization resulting from the industrialization of society.

CHAPTER V

DEHUMANIZATION THROUGH INDUSTRIALIZATION

The question arises as to how the industrializing process contributes toward the dehumanization of man. In what ways and to what extent has this taken place? Could it have been avoided or is it a natural accompaniment of the industrial revolution? In what way has industrialization contributed to the good of mankind? Does this outweigh its bad effects? These and other questions tend to flood one's mind as he considers the age of mechanization and its implications. Fortunately, Marcel has spoken both clearly and provocatively on the issue at hand. He definitely feels that the technological mentality, developing concurrently with the rise of science, has affected society in an adverse way. On the other hand he is not oblivious to the blessings which technology has brought to a burgeoning population. In this chapter an examination will be made of the societal effects of dehumanization. While the individual man will not be overlooked, the accent will fall on the dehumanizing effects of industrialization on various groups within society and on society as a whole. Marcel

believes that industrial civilization carries the seeds of societal decay. The contagion of technolatry has woven itself into the very fabric of the industrialized culture and man has become depersonalized in the course of events.

When the term Industrial Revolution is mentioned it usually has reference to the change brought about in England in the latter part of the eighteenth century--and later in America, by the introduction of power-driven machinery to replace hand labor. The gradual, yet drastic changes, instituted by this progressive event have influenced the lives of all.

A brief setting forth of the more common terms used in this chapter will be of help in maintaining proper distinctions. The word science is used to indicate the organized research being done to discover new truths in any field of knowledge. Technology signifies the implementation of the necessary know-how to apply the discoveries of science to the practical needs of man. The word industrial relates to the cooperative effort by both capital and labor to produce the needed articles in any given field. Mechanization usually signifies the introduction of power-driven machinery in a given industry for both the saving of labor and the speeding-up of production. In a broader sense the term is used to include not only the introduction of machinery, but other laborsaving devices and processes such as automation and data processing.

The Industrialization of Society

The Industrial Civilization

Of recent date in the history of the western world has been the mechanization of labor. As has already been indicated, this gradual occurrence has taken place in England and America in the last two or three centuries. When mechanization comes to a given society it brings a radical change in its life and power. The outcome is a society that makes great use of machinery, conducts its operations in industry and commerce on a large scale and supplies the needs of its simplest members by an elaborate series of world-wide exchanges. The creation of such a society must be in some respects a gradual development. While there was large capital invested in industry and commerce long before the eighteenth century, and mass-production was not altogether unknown before that time, yet the flurry of sweeping new inventions and power-driven equipment changed the picture in a very definite way. No people and no age could pass directly and immediately from a primitive and simple economy to a life so complicated and complex as that found in modern England or America. There are some who criticize the term revolution in this connection, arguing that it implies sudden and catastrophic change; however, on closer examination one finds that the great inventions that distinguished the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the new discoveries in physics, chemistry, and atomic power, have

played such a decisive part in creating a new kind of society that the term revolution is not too violent a description of the changes produced. While this change has come to different peoples at different times, yet its basic characteristic is to be found in the transformation which takes place from a rural-type society with its local markets to an industrial society with world-wide connections; from a culture embedded in a natural setting to one submerged in a technological environment.

Marcel is more interested in the term industrial civilization than in the term industrial revolution. His major concern rests on the effects which an industrialized society has suffered because of these revolutionary changes. Industrial civilization speaks more to him about the people than the machines. This term seems to have an obvious meaning; however, Marcel feels this to be true only because it evokes a set of images and ready-made ideas.

> The moment we say 'industrial civilisation' we see factories, smoke, slums, suburbs, what have you, and all the commonplaces about mechanisation spring into our minds; 'Mechanisation means progress,' or 'Mechanisation is a scourage,' and so on.[1]

He thinks that the notion of civilisation itself has its ambiguities, and that the idea of industrial civilization, seemingly more exact, is affected by them. Perhaps a better and more meaningful term could have been chosen by Marcel. The word industrialism might convey a more accurate meaning

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[1]Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 1.

since it signifies a social organization in which industries, especially of the large-scale type, are dominant.

Marcel enlarges on his concept of civilization by stating that it first meant the state of civilized man as over against a savage or barbaric state. This was the prevalent view among the Greeks. A much later notion appeared which incorporated the humanistic accent of the Renaissance. Thus civilization as a somewhat global concept became inseparable from certain universal values.

In the eighteenth century, especially in the writings of Rousseau, the idea of civilization was confronted with a form of nature worship which pin-pointed its corruption. On the other hand, in the nineteenth century, "the West, fascinated by the progress of science and technics, seized on the idea of civilization as the reward of the fullest development of man's rational faculties."[1] This constituted the basis of positivism and all the schools of thought connected with it. For them it was the triumph of enlightened order over confusion, violence and disorder. Those who were among the optimistic a hundred years ago even thought of it as being the solution to the ills of the world. Positivism was certainly the means to universal peace, implying the gradual substitution of right for might, with the possible corollary of the harmonious development of the sciences and

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[1] Ibid., p. 1.

the arts. Marcel calls into question such optimistic statements:

> It would be difficult for us after the events of the past half-century to share this optimism and in particular to see why man's growing mastery over nature would go hand in hand with the triumph of right. In any case, the development of historical science and sociology has in the meantime given rise to a very different conception.[1]

It is indeed tempting, observes Marcel, to say that in view of all this there came about a dissociation between the concept of civilization and value which had theretofore been inseparable on a global scale. Up to that time civilization as a global concept was identifiable anytime and anywhere by certain universal values. Now it appeared more and more evident, especially in the light of ethnological discoveries, that those whom the civilized had presumptuously tagged as savages had their own civilization with its recognizable structure. Instead of the confused notion of civilization as a whole there has developed the idea of civilizations which are distinct, separate, and irreducible to one another's terms. Where once the civilized world was the depository of universal values with the primitives identified as the have-nots, now a variety of civilizations possessed relative values. With no absolute or universal values, "it would be more true to say that with the development of a pluralist and historicist theory of civilisations, values

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.

came to be relativised."[1] A civilization does imply beliefs, that is to say values. Marcel states that it is dangerous to assert a priori that these values are necessarily those which rationalistic European thought has attempted to define as universals. Not that such a reduction is necessarily impossible, but one should proceed with the utmost caution.

On the other hand, when one looks further into the concept of rural civilization, he needs only to think of England to see how these two kinds of civilization were able to co-exist for a very long time, with industrial civilization finally predominating in the end, and this in circumstances which can easily be defined. "What is also evident is that each of these civilisations forms around a particular way of life, and above all that each of these ways of living belongs to its own particular environment."[2]

So Marcel agrees that there are different types of civilizations with their relative values. More than one civilization can be present at the same time in a given society. Marcel is deeply impressed by what Georges Friedmann has to say about the technical environment which permeates industrial civilization.[3] Friedmann contrasts this type of environment with what he terms the natural

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 3.

[3] Ibid., See p. 3.

environment, which is more comparable to the personal, if not primitive, kind of civilization.

The Technical Environment

Marcel has a tendency to use synonomously such terms as technical, industrial, and scientific. As he discusses what Friedmann terms the technical environment, he could have well-used the term industrial civilization, or industrial environment. One's attention is now directed to the technical environment which has emerged from the industrial civilization.

In speaking of the natural environment Friedmann states that man is therein present in his work. His span of work is no bigger than his natural movements in their technical capacity. He is thus very close to the article of production. Only a tool would intervene between his hand and/or foot and the material he is shaping. Thus his production is humanized due to his expert craftmanship and the pride he finds in making a superior article. Creativity, imagination and extensive planning go into the make-up of each item. Part of the person can be seen in the finished product. It thus becomes the highest expression of the soul through the skill of trained hands and feet. The completion of the work by himself adds not only continuity and precision but the harmony of the finished whole. The profession of medicine still affords a fitting example of the fullness of human presence.

> The natural environment as such is a climate of presence and sympathy. In it 'a life rich in direct understanding, in presence, is combined with the spread of craftsmanship and the beginnings of industry.'[1]

From the opposing view nothing more different could be found than the technical environment which, as such, is artificial and inhuman in the strongest sense. Even in situations in which everything has been done to improve the material conditions of work, boredom is the worker's mate. In the factory world all that remains of nature is man himself. If there were no other persons in it one might perish. One's hand of flesh and bone seems very fragile in comparison to the hard, dense metal which it handles all day. As long as this world is frequented by men, by comrades, there appears to be a chance of moulding it to the ends of culture and dignity. But the question remains as to how much longer and on what terms this comradeship can remain genuine. Marcel comments that

> It stares us in the face that it is in grave danger of being impaired by the intrusion of politics, or if you like of propaganda.
>
> The moment men are brought in whose function is to pass on slogans, a milieu which was still living and charged with currents of friendship and even genuine brotherhood is in danger of being frozen, or to put it in another way, of turning into a field for the transmission of quite different currents, which are inhuman and magnetised by the ends purely of domination.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 4.

In recent years, the education of so many has been almost exclusively technical to the point of raising the question whether this type of person is more susceptible to the kind of propaganda Marcel refers to than those possessing a more general culture of half a century ago. Marcel observes that "it seems that a counter-weight to the growing technical trend in education needs to be invented."[1]

There is also an artificial character about the industrial environment. Sometimes the Soviet Union is used to illustrate this fact. Its culture is described as having room for nothing but pre-established plans and manufactured objects. Anything that develops naturally or grows is suspect. Marcel adds that what is true of the Soviet world is not necessarily true of industrial civilization in general, "but is this not perhaps merely because in other countries that civilisation has not yet unfolded all its implications!?"[2]

There is a danger of the technical environment becoming for us the pattern of the universe. In other words, one might say that the categories of its particular structure are valid for an objective conception of the world. This interpretation becomes embodied, seeking to reconstitute the world, more or less moulding it to its own image.

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

[2] Ibid., p. 13.

When Marcel visited Venezuela he had the feeling that what had been a landscape was being turned into a builder's yard.

> There you may witness the kind of planned sectioning and cutting up which I would venture to call sacrilegious. I had this feeling most strongly in Rio de Janeiro, where the hills were going to be levelled without the slightest consideration for the reality of the original site.[1]

This experience is very significant for Marcel, for in the past a city moulded itself on the natural structure or pre-structure, now one is likely to see larger and larger agglomerations piling up without any regard for natural pre-formation. There is no hesitation in doing violence to nature to carry out an abstract plan.

> These words, abstract, abstraction, keep coming back, and this cannot be helped because it is just the crux of it. But we must try to understand the reason for this predominance in the industrial world of the abstract, the planned, the organised, the dissected.[2]

Extensive mass production is related to the existence of the masses whose needs must be satisfied. It is very obvious that an individualized economy is inadequate to meet such needs. But these masses are at both the beginning and the end. As masses, they are partly its consequence, in every economic field.

> There is also the fact that big industry tends itself to create the needs which it later claims to satisfy. And no doubt it must be added that this whole process becomes increasingly inevitable as time goes on, or

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

[2] Ibid., p. 14.

> if you prefer, it tends to create its own inevitability.[1]

Marcel states that one is confronted by an enormous system which consolidates itself more and more. He does not see the logical possibility of anything altering it in principle. History teaches that such logical considerations are inadequate. He considers the mysterious role of crises, natural upheavals and catastrophes to be the possible bringing into play of compensating elements which tend to confound one's reason. Hocking differs to some degree with Marcel in viewing the nature of this problem; yet he does not minimize its importance:

> In the end, Marcel makes this proposal, that 'the world of techniques' is one of those imaginary 'unities or totalities which do not exist in fact' (203), and I would nominate for the same title 'the masses,' outside of actually totalitarian lands. They, with the world of techniques, are abstractions but not thought-creatures alone: they are tendencies with heavy psychological draft. As abstractions with the potency of becoming facts, they constitute a menace against which no guard is superfluous and no warning too early nor too grave.[2]

Contrasting Developments

Technical Progress

There are certain values to be found in industrial civilization and by linking these with the accompanying environment one might be able to discover the limits of this

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

[2] Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 465.

type of civilization. Such a situation, however, contains a fundamental paradox. Mastering the forces of nature by increasingly elaborate technical processes is a liberation and should be welcomed as such. On the other hand, it is no less true that this liberation is in danger of being itself turned into slavery. The drama of industrial civilization lies within this contradiction. This particular civilization runs the danger of developing <u>against</u> certain universal values which appear to be a part of civilization in general. This harks back to the ambiguity Marcel encounters when discussing the word civilization.

But here one must proceed with caution. So with great care he admits that it is ridiculous to denounce technical progress as such. Some of those who attack technical progress and machinery tend to turn them in to some kind of a monster. This is a case of mistaken identity. For if work is poorly done it is not the fault of a machine but an operator, a somebody. The lifeless machine is not at fault, but man who has used it wrongly. Marcel, however, would take issue at this point. He feels that such a statement is an over-simplification or a mistake. The truth to him is infinitely more complex than that, as will be pointed out later.

To condemn technical progress would be quite absurd. It is possible to establish certain principles which would be difficult to dispute. To start with a definition,

> . . . a technique is a specialised and rationally elaborated form of knowledge, and let us add that the techniques we are concerned with here are all skills which contribute to the transformation of the world.[1]

All of these offer certain basic characteristics which it would be difficult to overstress. They do not run the danger of getting lost as does a knack, so-called by craftsmen. A knack can be passed on by example if at all, and not by theoretical training and instruction. The basic characteristics of techniques are:

> (1) They are specialised and, almost always, within their own specialised field they tend to give rise to new forms of specialisation.
> (2) They are perfectible.
> (3) And they are transmissible. Indeed, the more rationalised they are, the more easily can they be transmitted.[2]

The perfectibility of techniques should be emphasized as well. One technical process is better than another because it improves output or makes it possible to produce the same amount in less time or at less cost. Furthermore, only in the technical domain has the word progress kept the fullness of its meaning. The moment it is applied to such fields as morals or institutions it becomes obscure, for the criteria applicable to ethics or politics can not have the same precision as they have in the field of technics.

But Marcel feels that the essential questions after all are those "which have to do with human happiness, or

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[1] Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 7.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

shall we say contentment on the one hand and with spiritual quality on the other."[1] Moreover, it has yet to be shown that the progress of social techniques has either increased contentment or developed spiritual quality.

In commenting on the positive value of technical progress Marcel makes the point that he is not thinking only of its usefulness but of something more than utility.

> There is no doubt that in applying a technique which he has mastered the technician experiences a joy which is not only basically innocent, but even noble. It is a joy which is bound up with the consciousness of power over inanimate things, that is to say, over a reality which is subordinate and is in a sense meant to be controlled by man.[2]

It is true that things tend to offer a resistance, the resistance of inertia which is good to overcome. This presents the technician with a challenge, for this inertia can only be overcome by methods which are quite precise. "The value of a technique is that of the precision with which it is applied, and we must remember the connection between precision and intellectual honesty."[3] Hence, the technician carries a constant awareness of responsibility.

> And, again, there is the purity and soundness of the joy which goes with technical research when it results in a discovery. I am inclined to think that what is positive in all this is that the technician is not thinking of himself, but of his task, and

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[1] Ibid., p. 8.

[2] Ibid., p. 8.

[3] Ibid., p. 9.

> here again there is the saving virtue of precision.[1]

One should make a distinction between human attitudes involved in actions applied to _things_ over against those applied to _people_. It is much easier for an action to be pure if it bears on things, while if the same procedure was applied to persons it would be an abuse of the gravest kind.

Hocking tends to look on science with its attendant technology as a "passionate respect for dispassionate fact."[2] He considers this a monumental moral achievement. But then he is quick to add,

> Now when this science is turned on man himself, these very moral impulses tend to make the science of man morally immoral! For while it is evident empirical righteousness to be dispassionate and objective about man's physical insertion in the context of nature, yet to be dispassionate and objective about man the passion-filled maker of science is plain empirical unrighteousness. Marcel's strictures on a technological society, inspired by a rigorous science of man, are enlightening and fully justified.[3]

Hocking further observes that it is not with impunity that man thinks of himself and his actions in terms of the causal linkages of physical events; "and to show how this highly rational emptying society of its soul bears on the desolation of mass-mindedness and its inherent criminality are services

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 9.

[2] Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 462.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 462.

of instant importance."[1] It is only when technology assumes control of the whole of life that it becomes a death threat. Hocking raises the question whether, when thus kept in place, an economy inspired by technology may not have a positive contribution to make to human fraternity. He further suggests that the functional and fraternal relations among men run contrastingly deep. Paralleling this relationship is the contrast to be found between impersonal and personal relations.

> Economic relations are as a rule relatively impersonal and abstract; family relations (for example) relatively personal and concrete. In the market a man is valued for what he can do; in the family for what he is, regardless of 'output.'[2]

Yet, in spite of this difference, Hocking states that the world of work and the world of love belong together in natural alternation. He cites the instance of the pride with which a youngster brings home his first week's pay for a week's labor. The family assumes that his function as future provider for his family is a mark of character closely related to his love for the family. Though he must function in the impersonal order of the market, this character trait as a provider enhances his being-loved-for-what-he-is in the home. "The hardness and impersonality of the economic judgment is its virtue, and its contribution to the soundness of intimacy."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 462. [2] Ibid., p. 462.

[3] Ibid., p. 463.

In continuing the investigation of the effects of technical progress on man, one's attention is called to an earlier remark[1] that it is always the operator and not the lifeless machine which is at fault. Marcel further adds,

> We might say, using Christian terms--and these terms are urged on us not only by faith but also by reflection--that it is in the nature of techniques to lead the mind into temptation . . . All we have to ask ourselves here, and this without trespassing beyond experience, is what the notion of temptation means and in what circumstances it may become active. My view is that it is invariably bound up with power. The moment that we are endowed with power of whatever sort we are exposed to the temptation of abusing it.[2]

To exercise this sort of power demands an exercise of control over this power itself. However, on the contrary, the more suddenly power is acquired or the less it simulates natural growth, the more it tends to resemble the self-made man who believes that he is in no man's debt. It rejects, as though it were an encroachment, all forms of limitation or control over itself. That it is in the nature of techniques to lead the mind into temptation can be seen in the man who has mastered one or more techniques distrusting in principle what is alien to these techniques.

The effect of technical progress on man can not only be seen in the temptation to misuse power, but also in the dependence which develops in man on the machine. This is accompanied by a comparable decline in creative thought and

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[1] Supra, p. 192.

[2] Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 10.

activity. The virtue of resourcefulness is also gradually diminished in man. A further limitation is to be seen in the fact that he is laced to a set, undeviating pattern of machine production. He must, of necessity, be satisfied with a standardized product. As part of the total process in mass production, man becomes an accomplice in a great conspiracy against the person as an individual. Furthermore, since the technician constantly deals with quantitative measurements, he tends to discount the value of qualitative distinctions such as are found in religion, love, and morals. The ultimate peril, consequently, is the half-baked man, cognizant of only half the issues involved.

The Dehumanizing Process

In the midst of the industrial civilization with its technical environment, it is well-nigh impossible for man to consider himself apart from it. He inevitably becomes a target for those techniques which are legitimately applicable only to the outward world. Marcel views the fields of psychology and psychiatry as replete with such instances. By way of example he cites the incredible development of the use of tests in America and in Americanized countries. While admitting that there are certain areas in which their use is altogether justified (e.g. the field of motor-sensory behavior) yet when tests are implemented in determining intelligence, Marcel strenuously objects to their use.

> I have had a recent confirmation of it in talking with a Swedish psychologist who told me that he had literally discovered since he came to France the limitations of certain techniques which were sanctioned in his own country without the slightest warning as to the conditions in which they could be suitably applied.[1]

As a further observation he states that as soon as the technical environment becomes the predominating environment it is usual for such techniques to become generalized and to proliferate. "This is one more victory for abstraction, the individual being now a unit whom it is possible and right to deal with as with all the other units in his category."[2] This approach to life is bound up with a certain technical representation of the world. When man projects upon the world the light of a knowledge which is technicalized, he receives in return an increasingly monstrous image of that world and himself--an image which is ever more distorted.

> As a result the subject tends less and less to be treated as a subject and is consequently less and less respected. Hence that spreading violation of privacy which is one of the most horrifying features of the modern world, whose worst excesses in this direction show themselves in literature.[3]

Marcel was once told of a situation, by a person connected with the terrible problem of displaced persons, that a certain country only wanted people who could make shoes! "The entity one-who-can-make-shoes is substituted for the concrete reality of so-and-so, married to such and such a person and father of such and such a child."[4] He feels this

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[1] Ibid., p. 15. [2] Ibid., p. 16.

[3] Ibid., p. 17. [4] Ibid., p. 17.

to be an insult to life understood in its deepest sense. Here one finds life conceived only in bio-sociological terms, as a process whose physico-chemical conditions are objectively definable and which exists in view of a certain task related to the collectivity. "Here again the wildest excesses of the totalitarian regimes seem only to be the ultimate expression of monstrous logic, the logic of de-humanisation."[1] This hallmark is always to be seen in the surge for power, finally ending in "an immense holocaust to nothingness."[2]

In his typical vein of thought, Marcel sees in all this a huge inverted caricature of what the Christian calls the plan of redemption. For if on the one hand the development of persons is accented, then a true inversion takes place when a devitalized rationality is turning human beings into nothing but robots. This enormous process of de-humanization is constantly eroding the personal element in society.

> Thus, I do not hesitate to say that, if we could discover what this process is at bottom and in principle, putting aside the illusions and misconceptions which it encourages and exploits, we would see that it cannot be considered as anything except basically daemoniac.[3]

Marcel thus exposes the dehumanizing process for what he sees it is--a devastating, insidious, anti-Christian attitude emerging from the cauldron of industrial civilization.

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[1] Ibid., p. 17. [2] Ibid., p. 18.

[3] Ibid., p. 18.

Thus far one's attention has been called to the general aspects of industrialization and its consequent effects on man and society--especially as they pertain to the dehumanizing process. The discussion has closely followed Marcel's approach and his thinking. His concern has centered on what he terms "industrial civilization" with its technical environment. Since man is submerged in this atmosphere, he is the subject of Marcel's philosophic concern. An examination will now be made of the salient and more specific factors involved in the dehumanization of man resulting from modern industrialization. Collectivism, atomization, and mechanization will be explored in their relationship to society.

The Dehumanizing Effects of Industrialization

Effects of Collectivism on Man

The concept of collectivism has arisen in conjunction with industrialization. A simple dictionary definition of the term usually signifies some type of politico-economic system of organization which is characterized by collective control over production and distribution. The way in which the term is used herein is broader than the one just given, for in addition to what has been mentioned, the idea of the formation of the masses is added. Mass man, mass production, mass thinking, and mass consumption are included in the present usage of the term. The basis of collectivism and

some of its more serious implications for man are to be examined.

Collectivism has arisen with industrialism by means of technology. In fact, collectivism is based on technology. Without it the formation of the masses would be impossible.

> Technology spells the mobilization of everything which was immobile heretofore. Man too has become mobilized. He not only follows automatic motion without resistance; he even wants to accelerate it still more.[1]

Without the mechanical aids and the scientific processes it would have been literally impossible to form a rational mass out of conglomerate humanity. Mass thinking develops as man exhibits a growing tendency to understand the world around him, and even himself, in terms of technology. In speaking of technology, reference is not made to the cumulative sum of a variety of different skills, for it is not a unity which one can amass. Technology is human reason as it seeks to manage the earth and everything in it. Marcel readily poses the question thus: "Are not the most enlightened spirits of our age intent upon organizing the earth as scientifically as possible"?[2] He joins forces with his fellow existentialists even to the point of using the same phraseology as he issues a warning about the enervating influences which issue from mass civilization. He battles for the authentic image of

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[1]Friedrich Georg Juenger, The Failure of Technology, Gateway Edition; (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1949), p. 157.

[2]Marcel, Searchings, p. 44.

man against all the forces that threaten to mar it. This even includes forces which man has let loose upon himself by applying technological methods (designed for things) to human beings.

Massomania, an excessive enthusiasm if not craze exhibited by those technicians who wish to categorize all of humanity, has been the constant pursuit of many technicians taking part in the industrialization of society. Each individual, however he may desire it to be otherwise, is molded and integrated into certain totalities. As such he unconsciously finds himself preying upon others and being preyed upon. He is engulfed in the current of a gigantic collectivism. As part of a great economic system he finds that he has little to say in reference to the direction of flow and the establishment (or choosing) of values.

> The great majority of men are merely consumers and to that extent wholly dependent. They are thereby self-condemned to a new kind of slavery the true nature of which is, moreover, concealed from itself. Nor should we overlook the fact that this slavery is actually a consequence of the omnipresence of advertising, which is itself organically connected with industrial development. Those who produce television sets or refrigerators must be able to create an environment capable of absorbing them.[1]

No doubt these facts have been noted many times; however, they do raise the question of the possible effects on man. How does he view the situation in reference to human behavior and how does he tend to evaluate himself in this

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[1]Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 160.

contextual setting? To say the least, he sees himself in a passive role as a consumer. He no longer sets the pace, but finds himself controlled and directed by outside forces. In all probability he considers himself more and more in relation to the products of his own techniques, probably undervaluing himself in comparison with the far more accurate and enamoring apparatus which his technical skill has perfected.

In commenting on the loss thus sustained to the person and that which he considers to be sacred, Marcel has an encouraging word pointing to a possible solution. He suggests that the way to rediscover the path to human value is by turning away from the world and recapturing the simplicity of individuality, uniqueness, and inwardness.

> It is vain to hope that human reality as it is comprehended by statistical methods could ever admit the sacral. It is completely foreign to grace. Grace can only reach the individual, and if it reaches the masses through the individual then it will only happen if the masses arouse themselves from the stupor that made them masses in the first place.[1]

In the midst of criticism and analysis concerning the forming of the masses and the accompanying blight on humanity, there are opposing views which have recently developed. The radical position of Harvey Cox is a case in point. In his recent book, The Secular City, he actually celebrates the progressive secularization and urbanization of the world as the logical outcome of Biblical religion.

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[1]Marcel, Searchings, p. 52.

Man is becoming mature and of age in accepting the challenge of technopolis. He is coming to realize that his duty and privilege is to face up to the problems of urbanization and secularization. This is his world. His interest should lie here, not in the hereafter. He should not seek to return to the good old days but make the most of the present day. This is God's will for man. He should view technology as a blessing since it enables men to live together in a close, meaningful way. Cox's concept of urbanization is certainly far more inclusive and meaningful than most. Cox admits that urbanization is not just a quantitative term. "It does not refer to population size or density, to geographic extent, or to a particular form of government."[1] Also, urbanization is not something that refers only to the city.

> Urbanization means . . . an impersonality in which functional relationships multiply. It means that a degree of tolerance and anonymity replace traditional moral sanctions and long-term acquaintanceships. The urban center is the place of human control, of rational planning, of bureaucratic organization--and the urban center is not just in Washington, London, New York, and Peking. It is everywhere. The technological metropolis provides the indispensable social setting for a world where the grip of traditional religion is loosened, for what we have called a secular style.[2]

In making use of his coined term technopolis, Cox states that it has a meaning all its own and expresses

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[1]Harvey Cox, The Secular City, rev. ed., (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 4.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

vividly his concept of the foundation on which a new cultural style has appeared.

> It will be used here to signify the fusion of technological and political components into the base on which a new cultural style has appeared. Although the term is an artificial one, it reminds us that the contemporary secular metropolis was not possible before modern technology . . . Technopolis represents a new species of human community.[1]

Cox goes on to detail the characteristics of the secular city. He speaks of its "shape" as that of anonymity and mobility. These symbols suggest both possibilities and problems. They describe the social shape of the modern metropolis. These symbols are central, but not necessarily evil--possibly good.

> How frequently is urban man depicted by his detractors as faceless and depersonalized, rushing to and fro with no time to cultivate deeper relationships or lasting values? Anonymity and mobility can of course become damaging. But since they have been made into anti-urban epithets it is even more important to examine their positive side. Anonymity and mobility contribute to the sustenance of human life in the city. They are indispensable modes of existence in the urban setting. Seen from a theological perspective, anonymity and mobility may even produce a certain congruity with biblical faith that is never noticed by the religious rebukers of urbanization.[2]

The style of the secular city is pragmatic and profane. The modern city dweller is always interested in consequences, will it work? He is also interested in the here and now, thus classed as this worldly.

> We have affirmed technopolitan man in his pragmatism and in his profanity. To do so we have not abandoned the Bible; we have found, on the contrary,

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[1] Ibid., p. 5. [2] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

> that its views of truth and of creation display important areas of similarity with the style of the secular city . . . The Gospel does not call man to return to a previous stage of his development. It does not summon man back to dependency, awe, and religiousness. Rather it is a call to imaginative urbanity and mature secularity. It is not a call to man to abandon his interest in the problems of this world, but an invitation to accept the full weight of this world's problems as the gift of its Maker. It is a call to be a man of this technical age, with all that means, seeking to make it a human habitation for all who live within it.[1]

In considering the position of Harvey Cox as delineated above one must constantly be reminded that all he says is to be placed in a theological framework, not a sociological one.

> If one assumes The Secular City to be a sign pointing to an analysis and description in sociological or historical modes, he will be misconstruing Professor Cox's announced intention. Cox's primary interest is not in actual cities, a utopian city, or exclusively in 'urbanism as a way of life.' The crucial phrase in the subtitle 'in theological perspective' decisively qualifies both 'urbanization' and 'secularization.' Within his theological perspective Cox is working in an economy of symbol management.[2]

The respected sociologist Andrew Greeley strongly suggests that Cox, the theologian, is outside his field of competency when dealing with sociological concepts.

> So by all means let there be a dialogue between sociology and theology. But if theologians are to make use of sociology in their speculations, then let it be the most recent and the most factual and the most sophisticated sociology and not the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 72-73.

[2] Ruel Tyson, "Urban Renewal in the Holy City," in The Secular City Debate, ed. by Daniel Callahan (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), p. 46.

popularized, romanticized, sentimentalized sociology of the college sophomore.[1]

First of all, Cox could be charged with the over-simplification of the subject at hand. In reality, is any city totally secular? Or does secularity exist in any city to such a degree that it could rightfully be called the secular city? One cannot presume this to be the case for, "The city is a dynamic balance of the anonymous and the tribal, the sacred and the profane, the secular and the unsecular, the rational and the traditional, and the balance does not seem to be a very precarious one."[2] The question does not seem to be whether the unsecular city is better than the secular one but whether the secular city and the secular man actually exist, or is very common. Secularity is not the only major dimension to be dealt with, for unsecularity is equally important.

Perhaps the most serious accusation that can be brought against Cox and his approach to the glorification of technopolis is that his whole case is a matter of begging the question. He assumes as a basic premise that the progressive secularization and urbanization of the world is the logical outcome of Biblical religion and therefore a necessary good. All that one need to do is to embrace it, as such, and seek those values to be found therein. Technology

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[1]Andrew Greeley, "An Exchange of Views," in The Secular City Debate, p. 108.

[2]Ibid., p. 107.

is consequently the blessing which enables man to dwell successfully under modern circumstances. Of course Cox asks one to accept in premise-form what he is seeking to prove in his conclusion. No doubt his argument would be much more appealing to thinking people if he were to examine the urban situation and determine whether or not it is to man's advantage or disadvantage (as a person) to live under such circumstances.

Marcel continues to observe the effects of collectivism on man by noting that mass production insists on a rigid uniformity of desire. A common market must be created to sustain the economics of mass production. Man and his desires must be standardized through advertisement and propaganda in order to provide this common market. Furthermore, the technology emerging from industrial society is based on standardization of method and precision of measurement. The whole system is based on the theory of the greatest production at the least cost. Of necessity this demands uniformity of product. In turn, this requires robot-like performance from the worker. No room is left for creativity, imagination or pride in personal craftsmanship. Man becomes little more than another arm of the machine with a predetermined method of operation--his freedom gone he is little better than a slave. In demanding uniformity, mass production requires a technology that is equally rigid and devastating to the creativity in man.

> But it must be added at once--that technology looms as more and more indispensable to the realization of the design of increasing uniformity, variations from which can only become progressively ineffectual.[1]

Some may think that uniformity of habit tends to produce some kind of unification of mankind. Marcel has a word at this point while discussing the matter of the increase in perfection of the system of communication:

> In other words, this perfecting of communications is achieved everywhere at the expense of an individuality which is tending today more and more to vanish away: and we are thinking here of beliefs, customs, traditions, as well as of local costumes, local craftsmanship, and so on. If we were taking a quite superficial view of human psychology and history, we might be tempted to say that this elimination of the picturesque is the unavoidable price that we pay for a greater good; for this reduction of habits to a general uniformity might, of course, be the beginning of a genuine unification of mankind.[2]

There is nothing to support the view that uniformity thus produces unification, but on the contrary it seems to develop in mankind narrow loyalties of the more aggressive sort and to set competing groups against each other.

The masses also exist and develop at a low level, following purely mechanical laws. "Because the masses partake of the human only in a degraded state, they are themselves a degraded state of the human."[3] Marcel adds,

> One mark of that state is that the masses are of their very essence--I repeat, <u>of their very essence</u>--the stuff of which fanaticism is made: propaganda has on them the

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[1] Marcel, <u>Human Dignity</u>, p. 159.

[2] Marcel, <u>Man Against Mass Society</u>, p. 86.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 10.

> convulsive effect of an electrical shock. It arouses them not to life, but to that appearance of life which particularly manifests itself in riots and revolutions.[1]

Effects of Atomization on Man

The forces at work in an industrialized society have an ambivalent effect on man. As has been seen in the foregoing section on collectivism, there is a reaction on the part of men to be amalgamated into the ambiguous and universal man, thus losing their individuality, identity, and uniqueness. But in contrast to this tendency to merge, men under the same pressures simultaneously react by erecting walls about themselves to preserve their individual ego and self autonomy. This latter response initiates division, segmentation, isolation, and atomization. So the pressures from industrialization are both those which force men into mass-man as well as those which isolate and alienate them from each other. Marcel speaks quite revealingly to this point in his chapter on "A Broken World":

> The truth of the matter is that, by a strange paradox and one which will not cease to exercise us during the course of these lectures, in the more and more collectivized world that we are now living in, the idea of any real community becomes more and more inconceivable. Gustave Thibon, to whom I referred just now in connection with Nietzsche, had very good grounds indeed for saying that the two processes of atomization and collectivization, far from excluding each other as a superficial logic might be led to suppose, go hand in

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[1] Ibid., p. 10.

> hand, and are two essentially inseparable aspects of the same process of devitalization.[1]

Marcel concludes that one lives in a world in which the preposition "with," or Whitehead's noun "togetherness," seem to be gradually losing their meaning. The very idea of a close human relationship such as exists in a family or between friends and neighbors is hard to put into practice and is even being disparaged. Individuals have experienced the loss of "life's old intimate quality."[2] Because of the growingly complex organization, socialization and industrialization of life, man has been treated as a unit of production. His worth has been equated with his work. No longer is he viewed as a living, valuable being. He has a number, fills a slot, performs a function. As a unit he is a thing. He is isolated, segregated, and alienated from himself, others, and even his God.

> The mechanization of life is the mill which grinds the individual down into atomized masses. Where human beings are concerned, the whole organization of technology achieves nothing but the acceleration of this grinding down of the individual into the mass.[3]

Juenger, in the above quotation, accurately describes the predicament in which man finds himself, ground down into atomized masses. This depicts both the segmentation and the collectivization--paradoxically--at the one and the same time.

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 34.

[2]Ibid., p. 34.

[3]Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 156.

Marcel sums up his appraisal of this matter by saying,

> We have to reject the atomic just as much as the collective conception of society. Both, as Gustave Thibon has so pregnantly remarked, are complementary aspects of the same process of decomposition--I would say of local mortification.[1]

Now the spotlight is turned on the paradoxical effect of atomization found in these agglomerate cities, cities which have grown with no sense of community. These cities become mere collections of humanity drifting in and out according to the demands of labor and with no sense of organic wholeness.

> Following out this line of thought, we should be forced to ask ourselves whether technical progress does not run the risk of having, as one of its consequences, a kind of return to nomadism.[2]

One can note something of this sort among many of the unskilled workers who have the tendency to take root nowhere. They carry with them an understandable resentment against the growingly inhuman conditions of life about them. Keen observes that a society in which nomadism is the outgrowth of technological demands will produce standardized but isolated persons.

> Such a society will be, as Dostoyevsky foresaw, an ant heap and not a community. Its individuals will be isolated atoms with no strong sense of identity or of belonging with others. Atomisation and collectivisation

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 267.

[2] Ibid., p. 93.

> go hand in hand, for it is only faceless and isolated individuals who can be formed into a mass.[1]

In densely populated areas, individuals can be so crowded that the only sense of privacy comes as a result of their inward withdrawal. Crowdedness is a powerful segmenting force and works toward the granulation of the mass. Coming from many sections of the country, these urbanites bring their many differences with them. These in turn become barriers which tend to isolate and alienate them from one another. These are the uprooted ones--uprooted from their home communities throughout the country. "What we said of agglomerations replacing cities is relevant: an agglomeration is, as it were, the very embodiment of uprootedness."[2]

A vivid example of this atomization brought about by the forces of industrialization can be seen in the mass transfers of populations which have taken place in the totalitarian countries. The predicament of these masses may well become the general rule once the vital link is broken between man and his environment. This problem is increased where persons are viewed as mere units of production, as machines which are needed here or there for the fulfilling of the demands of the general economy and whose individual feelings are of not the slightest interest to those in control. Under these circumstances dehumanization takes place

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 12.

[2]Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 17.

more rapidly than usual. These kind of effects are seen in man, though on a less alarming scale, even in non-totalitarian but industrial countries.

> The automatism in which man is trained and drilled day in and day out not only inures him to perform without a will of his own his mechanical operations; it also breaks down certain resistances in his personality by depriving him, under guise of a new order, of that self-reliance which alone can halt the inroads of chaos.[1]

An interesting facet of the whole problem of industrial atomization is to be found in the group cleveages appearing on the contemporary scene. "It would seem at present that each man intends to constitute . . . with those whom he still calls his own people--a sort of island of autonomy."[2] The development of trade unions would be a case in point. Men who do the same kind of work day in and day out tend to become narrowed in their interests. Specialization of skill also makes for isolation among men. Men of common skill generally form exclusive interest and trade groups. Hocking observes that

> Industrial functionalism today rings with the metallic clang of group-egoisms, now well armed with 'rights,' in almost profitless collision. Freedoms and equalities within the momentum of vast industrial mechanisms begin to appear abstractions such as men are tempted to trade away in exchange for deceptive economic security in dictatorial states.[3]

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[1]Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 156.

[2]Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 159.

[3]Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 463.

So it appears that in such an amassed urban society, fragmentation is encouraged by the multiplication of small interest groups, most often without any attention being given to geographical proximity within the agglomeration called city. Intense loyalties develop within many of these groups who in the course of time become aggressive. In many instances competing groups are set against each other to their own hurt, furthering the atomizing process.

Andrew Greeley does not hesitate to set forth an opposing concept concerning atomization as such.

> The Chicago school of sociology, to its credit, never did buy the mass-society theory. Since Robert E. Park took his first hard look at Chicago it became clear to this school that metropolis was not anomic but symbiotic, that the city was made up not of atomized individuals but of hundreds of tightly organized and competing local neighborhood communities.[1]

Greeley apparently refuses the idea of collectivism insofar as it would indicate the formation of the masses, but would embrace the idea of tightly organized communities. This seems to be an oversimplification, for even a simple examination of the modern metropolis would reveal the presence of mass activity whether it be on the basis of race, economic, political, or some other line. In addition, there is much evidence as he suggested of small group activity be it family, union, or tightly-knit neighborhood groups.

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[1]Andrew Greeley, "An Exchange of Views," in the Secular City Debate, p. 104.

One of the most alarming trends in an industrialized civilization is to be seen in the breakdown of the family group. Inasmuch as this is a genuinely personal and intimate group its decay is viewed with real concern. Marcel comments:

> As a simple illustration of what I mean by a barren world, take the family and the danger it runs in a technical milieu where the women work as well as men, the children are virtually left to themselves and there often arises between them and their parents a sort of mutual hostility. When I spoke of a world which is generously watered by life I was thinking particularly of the benefits of a strongly established family.[1]

Hocking, voicing an opposing view in some respects, observes that doing one's work and its attendant fighting under the hope of making the economic struggle with its mechanized functions a breeder of men, will add to the depth of all the more intimate human ties, including that of the family. "For love is deep in proportion to <u>that with which</u> one loves. It is the normal destiny of impersonal human relations not to clash with the personal but to enhance the personal."[2] He continues by saying that if there were a thoroughly technological society, whose existence is doubtful, then there could not be any genuinely personal or fraternal groups: in fact the family itself would be reduced to nothing more than a convenient economic arrangement. So the role of impersonal relations would be one of degrading

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[1] Marcel, <u>The Decline of Wisdom</u>, p. 12.

[2] Hocking, "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," p. 464.

rather than enhancing personal relationships. However, where a community contains families that keep their economic functions in their proper place, using them simply as a means to an end, the family's end, then the phrase technological society signifies a threat rather than an actuality.

> And if, with the family, there is also a vitality of the arts, of music and drama, or religion, of literature and philosophy, the danger that such a society should surrender to technocratic control would seem remote,--it would be remote were the world less subject to violent strains than at present, and had it not been visited with such dislocations and perversions that abnormalities now commonly thrust themselves forward as norms, even in the arts.[1]

Here Hocking appeals to that particular strain developed early in the life of Marcel; for, Marcel considers his family's interest in the arts, especially music and drama, a saving feature of his boyhood home. In such cases Marcel himself mentions that one must refer back to his childhood memories which "seem to me to play the part belonging to reminiscence in the philosophy of Plato."[2] He further adds that most individuals have been able to prove by experience the existence of the "family as a protective skin placed between himself and a world which is foreign threatening, hostile to him."[3] He testifies of how painful it is to experience the tearing away of this tissue by the sudden hand of death. Marcel is here alluding to the sudden death of his mother at an early age.

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[1] Ibid., p. 465.

[2] Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 77.

[3] Ibid., p. 77.

As Marcel comes to serious grips with the modern problem of the breakdown of family life he speaks of the primitive us, the privileged us, that is only realized in family life. "This us is in general inseparable from a home of our own."[1] The similes of nest, cocoon, or cradle most exactly illustrate the downy element of the family. All this seems to be bound up in principle, indissolubly, with the existence of the family both as a fact and a value. Inversely, one should recognize that all which tends to destroy the sense of habitation of a being in process of formation will contribute to the weakening of his consciousness of the family itself.

> In passing, I may say that I am convinced that therein lies one of the chief causes of the disappearance of family consciousness among the working population of the great industrial centres, where nomadic life, not of tent and caravan, but of lodgings and furnished rooms, is the order of the day. The family tends to become simply an abstract idea instead of the very essence of the atmosphere a human being almost unconsciously inhales, an essence which imperceptibly impregnates and saturates his thinking, his appreciation and his love.[2]

Mankind then has been devitalized by a tragic inner reality which has two phenomenal and inseparable aspects: on the one hand the depopulation of the country, and on the other the dissolution of the family. These two factors have united in the dehumanization of man.

> The inexpressible sadness which emanates from great cities, a dismal sadness which belongs to everything that is devitalised, everything that represents a

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[1] Ibid., p. 77. [2] Ibid., p. 78.

> self-betrayal of life, appears to me to be bound up in the most intimate fashion with the decay of the family.[1]

This sadness is a kind of sterility, it is a disavowal that is felt by the heart. This disavowal concerns the very conditions of life. It affects the very color of existence. Marcel then considers nothing less than tragic the atomization of the family brought on by the pressures of an industrialized and urbanized society.

The effects of the atomization of society include the tendency in man to isolate himself from others. This has probably encouraged the individual to look within, to become more introspective. In one sense it has accented the importance of the individual, so the whole process has not been without some value. In an age when objectivity and externality have been overaccented perhaps this effect of "atomization" is a healthy kind of development. Without doubt, as man turns his thoughts inward, he becomes more existentially oriented. In many cases one's value system changes. So in one sense at least the process of atomization may carry its own antidote with it. The importance of things may decrease while the value of persons increase.

But on the other hand, as one observes the isolating and insulating effects of atomization he is made aware of the fact that in such a society the loss of ontological exigence may tend to multiply. Isolated individuals do not

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[1] Ibid., p. 81.

participate in being. Communication, communion, and community become a thing of the past. Hence the dehumanizing power of industrialization and urbanization is again apparent in all of its devitalizing ugliness.

Effects of Mechanization on Man

When the term mechanization is used it generally indicates the change which takes place between hand-operated functions and those same functions operated by machine. In this closing section the term will be broadened to include that which has happened to man as a result of his being submerged in a world of machinery. As machines have gradually taken over certain functions which man once performed the status of man has comparably diminished. In addition to this loss man has suffered from becoming more mechanical himself. The value of man has experienced another drop as he is constantly being replaced with labor-saving devices. There is no question about the distinct advantage, work-wise, in the use of modern machinery; however, the time is far past when serious concern should surface in regard to its devastating influence on man.

A significant step was taken when machines and equipment became automatized. The labor and thought of man was further reduced as automatic controls took over the operation of the machines. These self-acting and self-regulating machines made the personal operator obsolete.

Automatization has had a singular history all of its own in the industrialization of America.

> It is exactly this automatism which gives its peculiar stamp to our civilization and sets it apart from the techniques of other eras. It is automatism by which our technology achieves its growing perfection. Its signature is the independent and unchanging repetitious operation of its apparatus.[1]

Not only have mechanical work processes grown immensely, both in number and scope, but it is apparent that their automatism, controlled and observed by man, in turn has had its influence on man. Often the power that man gains by his automatic tools ultimately gains power over him.

> He is compelled to give them his thought and his attention. Inasmuch as he works with automatic tools, his work becomes mechanical and repetitious with machinelike uniformity. Automatism clutches the operator and never relinquishes its grip on him. To the consequences of this we shall return again and again.[2]

In more recent times the machine has not only been enhanced by automitization but its productive power has been multiplied by combining electronic know-how with its total operation. Amazing speed, unbelievable accuracy, and breadth of programming have transformed the simple machine into a mechanical man with power and comprehension that staggers the imagination. In the field of data processing, equipment has become so complex and efficient that it reminds one of gigantic minds in operation. The simulation of

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[1] Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 34.

[2] Ibid., p. 35.

man's mind has become so realistic that certain philosophers believe man's mind to be nothing more than a complex machine which processes millions of stimuli and responses per day. Gilbert Ryle, in his popular book Concept of Mind,[1] strongly supports this view of man and mind. In fact, programmed computers in a totally predetermined manner seem to simulate thinking, selecting, choosing, and concluding.

From this glimpse into the process of mechanization one might catch an idea of how this technological "Frankenstein" developed. In the course of perfecting this monster, man has increasingly become its slave. In an industrial society the need for man and his labor at one level has decreased as sophisticated machines have increased in number and kind. Men now bow at the shrine of the mechanical gods of their own invention.

Marcel is genuinely concerned about the dehumanizing effects of mechanization. For a number of years this has been at the center of his thoughts. "To be men; to continue to remain men. These are the words on which I have concentrated unceasingly for twenty years."[2] His love of life, his respect for persons and his high regard for human values shines through all his work.

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[1]Gilbert Ryle, Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1949).

[2]Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 169.

For centuries men have maintained an intellectual fascination with machines. They tend to give a presentiment of the uncanny and sometimes an almost unaccountable feeling of horror. This is the same type of horror that seized men on their first viewing of clocks, water mills, wheels of varying complexity, in fact in the presence of any contrivance which acts and moves though it has no life of its own. The onlooker is not satisfied to study just the mechanical element nor to understand its operation; he becomes obsessed with mechanical action and at times even disquieted, for the motion produces the illusion of life.

> The machine, however, gives the impression that something lifeless penetrates into, and permeates, life. This is what the observer senses and what evokes in him ideas of age, coldness, death, akin to the awareness of a lifeless, mechanically self-repeating time such as clockwork measures.[1]

When one observes the industrialization of society which has transpired over the past decades he is actually thinking of the process of mechanization. So much of man's work is with automatic tools that his entire function can be characterized as repetitious, with machinelike uniformity. Following the same pattern day in and day out does something to him. His thinking and feeling gradually follow the same mechanical bent. His temperament often becomes machinelike. This mechanization of life is the mill which grinds the individual down into nothing more than part of a faceless mass.

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[1]Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 36.

Even the countenance of these people bear the marks of expressionless, emotionless robots. Marcel describes their daily setting as that of being

> --in a mechanized world, a world deprived of passion, a world in which the slave ceased to feel himself a slave, and perhaps even ceased to feel anything, and where the masters themselves became perfectly apathetic: I mean, where they no longer felt the greed and the ambition which are today the mainsprings of every conquest, whatever it may be.[1]

This is basically the hypothesis of those who imagine human society as transformed into nothing more than a sort of ant hill. Marcel feels that such a society is implicit in, and that its appearance would be the logical outcome of, certain given factors in the present society.

> There are sectors of human life in the present world where the process of automatization applies not only, for instance, to certain definite techniques, but to what one would have formerly called the inner life, a life which today, on the contrary, is becoming as outer as possible.[2]

In a mechanized world man soon loses his sense of imagination, initiative, and creativity. His thinking has become so routinized that he breaks its fetters with a great deal of difficulty. Over the years the vast reservoir of creativity in mankind has continually diminished. The personal touch has often been lost. Joy and pride in individual craftsmanship is nearly a thing of the past. Boredom is the end result. This is discernible on the faces of

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[1] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 30.

[2] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

those who trudge their weary way to and from work. In many instances modern man views himself as nothing more than a small cog in the industrial or commercial machine. His dignity and sense of worthwhileness is gone. His life is a monotonous routine. The zest for living has vanished. He truly has experienced the loss of ontological exigence. His whole life and temperament have become machinelike. He dwells amidst thousands of other robots who perfunctorily go through the motions of living. His schedules vary little from a programmed computer's. His automatic movements give evidence of the devastation wrought within. In some instances the dehumanization is so advanced that he is little better than a modern zombie.

One might think the above picture a bit overdrawn, yet it is practically warranted by the deep inroads made by mechanization in the lives of human beings. Marcel aptly adds,

> The human machine, indeed, is conscious of itself as a machine, and to that extent it is more than a machine, but there is no more real creation with one than with the other. I may add, to keep the thread of my argument clear, that any functionalized activity is manifestly the lowest depth of degradation to which creative activity can descend; and I cannot stress too emphatically that the word 'fulfilment' can take on a positive meaning only from the point of view of creation.[1]

One should be reminded of the fact that from the human hand all things originate and into it they all return. In the end

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[1]Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. II, p. 50.

all mechanisms have evolved from and are controlled by man. Nonetheless, these inventions of man have sometimes become his master and he their slave. Consequently the demand that all that can be mechanized must be mechanized is not always a valid call. The technician is intent however, on extending the dominion of the machine after this method. One might reduce his argument to absurdity by asking the simple question if pedestrians should be abolished because there are mechanical conveyances that relieves one of walking?

Concluding Statement

The dehumanizing effects of industrialization are hard and ugly facts with which to reckon. Not only individual man but society as a whole has been irreparably damaged. While Marcel does not give up all hope of recovery yet very realistically his outlook and mood are both one of foreboding. The development of industrial civilization with its technological accompaniment has confronted mankind with its most crucial spiritual test: how to preserve its sense of being in the midst of a prevailing materialistic philosophy.

Marcel offers but one solution. The world, says he, is in need of the exorcising power that can only be found in love, love incarnate in man. "For to have exorcising power, action must be on the level of good will, that is to say,

love of one's neighbour."[1] So the problem simply stated is to know how one might struggle effectively against the crushing excesses of technology. Marcel feels that the only forces capable of checking this immense drift toward dehumanization, brought on by technological excess, are spiritual. "That these forces are spiritual nobody will deny."[2] In addition one should react with his whole strength against "that dissociation of life from spirit which a bloodless rationalism has brought about."[3] Reiterating his original approach to a possible solution for the ever-spreading virus of dehumanization, Marcel suggests,

> It is in gift, that is to say in grace, that there assuredly lies the only principle capable of breaking, I will not say the world of the techniques in so far as they are admirable means to be used for the good of all, but those superstructures which threaten in the long run to stifle their beneficent power, because they are ordained to the triumph of pride which ultimately encompasses the destruction of the proud.[4]

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[1] Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 20.

[2] Ibid., p. 19.

[3] Ibid., p. 19.

[4] Ibid., p. 20.

CHAPTER VI

THE ULTIMATE IN DEHUMANIZATION: DEGRADATION AND NIHILISM

With the emergence of the technological mentality, man has sustained a number of severe blows. As the techniques of scientific analysis were applied to him, he experienced the individual loss of ontological exigence. As industrial civilization developed it brought about societal decay and the further depersonalization of man. In fact the degrading effects of technomania have permeated nearly every area of life. "One must fear that wherever the technocratic attitude of mind gains strength, so will this evil of depersonalization."[1] Even though the dehumanizing results have been devastating in the normal course of life, yet the ultimate tragedy is usually observed during times of war and the following days of disillusionment. The depths to which the dehumanizing process can reach have been witnessed by those who experienced the degrading acts under the totalitarian regimes during and since World War II. The various

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[1]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, pp. 203-204.

techniques of degradation practiced with carnal skill during the past decades of war indicate the shocking limits to which the spirit of abstraction can lead. These evil workers utilized every possible means to degrade the person. Their goal was the complete degeneration of the individual being. Man as an object of manipulation has been reduced to little more than a beast.

The Basis of Degradation: The Will to Power

Throughout the preceding chapters reference has been made occasionally to such concepts as mental imperialism and the will to power. These have been considered in relationship to the technological mentality, that tendency to misuse legitimate technology by applying it to the realm of the personal. The technician seeks to have, to possess by his application of techniques. There is the ever-present temptation to discount the value of that which does not yield to his particular methodology. His contempt for the dimensions of concrete reality, which cannot be understood or controlled by his techniques, is a demonstration of the extension of the attitudes of imperialism to the mental plane. This however is not a mere intellectual process. Marcel maintains that the mistake involved in yielding to the spirit of abstraction and the resulting contempt of the concrete is of a passional nature. Here one sees a kind of reductionism, a devaluation of the real which apparently arises out of resentment.

"Whatever resists our mental and physical attempts at possession stands as judgment and a threat to the one whose life-orientation is toward having rather than being."[1] In using these techniques of degradation to manipulate the bodies and minds of men there is some evidence of the triumph of a will to power which can be put into operation only when one ceases to regard man as being created in the image of God.

> When man, under the Promethean impulse to possess and dominate the earth, ceases to use his technology under the guidance of charity and truth, human life is eventually degraded. It is to this situation that philosophy addresses itself in our time, with an aim to keeping human life human.[2]

With the advent of collectivized thinking in recent times, especially as it applies to political philosophy fired by the will to power, to possess, and to control, mankind has entered a particularly dangerous era. Unscrupulous men of power, aided by every kind of technique, have attempted to degrade those individuals who have come under their control. Not only as applied to political thinking and its implementation, but also as it is applied to the affairs of industrial civilization does the will to power appear as the chief motivation. "And we have seen that order, stability and truth are mortally compromised as soon as it is the will to power that predominates and turns the

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[1] Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 14.

[2] Ibid., p. 13.

world into a factory."[1] Following this it appears that the practical and the metaphysical problems merge into one.

So as modern man seeks to extend his power and control over other men as well as nature, he exemplifies what Nietzsche so vividly portrayed, the will to power.

> Do you want a name for this universe, an answer to all these urgent riddles, a light even for yourselves, you of the fellest darkness, you the most secret, the strongest the most intrepid of all human spirits? This world is the world of the Will to Power and no other, and you yourselves, you are also the Will to Power, and nothing else.[2]

Nietzsche does not hesitate to identify the will to power as that which permeates all of nature, all the universe! He further indicates that man, as part of this universe, is caught-up in this self-same spirit--he <u>is</u> the will to power. The moving power of the universe is to possess, to control, to dominate. Herein one finds the rootage of the techniques of degradation.

As this spirit penetrates the nations of the world the tendency is for them to unite in alliances in order to obtain what they want. Marcel questions whether this kind of unity could be considered a good, for as he views the world split into two opposing ideologies he realizes they both have the power to commit world suicide.

> There is every reason to suppose that the kind of unity which makes the self-destruction of our world possible

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[1] Marcel, <u>The Decline of Wisdom</u>, p. 55.

[2] Nietzsche, <u>The Will to Power</u>, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, <u>The Mystery of Being</u>, Vol. I, p. 32.

> (and by possible, I mean perfectly conceivable) cannot be other than bad in itself, and it is easy to perceive where the badness lies. It is linked to the existence of a will to power which occurs under aspects that cannot be reconciled with each other, and which assume opposite ideological characters.[1]

Marcel feels that from the philosophical point of view, the fundamental question is whether it is a mere contingent fact that the will to power always presents this discordant character, or whether there is a necessary connection between this discordance and the essential notion of the will to power itself. One should not be content with a mere analysis of the notion of the will to power, comparing that with the notion of discordance,

> . . . but to reflect in the light of history, whose lessons, in this instance, have a strict coherence, on the inevitable destiny of alliances, which, when they are instituted for purposes of conquest, are inevitably fated to dissolve and to transform themselves into enmities.[2]

Marcel suggests that history teaches one that when alliances are made for purposes of conquest (the will to power) they have always culminated in division and enmity. On the other hand he raises the possibility of a single conqueror gaining possession of the technical equipment capable of rendering rebellion and opposition futile. Based on slavery and terror it is conceivable that such a government might last for an indefinite period. Even so, he reflects, such a government would only be another form of the state of war and a very

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[1] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 29.

[2] Ibid., p. 29.

odious one at that. In fact the victor in such a case is always

> a certain group of men in the midst of whom there must always arise the same sort of rupture which, as we have seen, always menaces alliances; so that at the end of the day, it is still to war, and to war in a more obvious form than that of a perpetual despotism, that the triumphant will to power is likely to lead.[1]

His apparent conclusion is that the will to power always (necessarily) is accompanied by discordance, whether among allied countries or ultimately within the camp of a single conqueror. Therefore, the will to power when prompted by wrong motives always leads to discord and degradation. This seemingly holds true in the ordinary world (a world at peace) or in a world at war. In both instances there can be noted the "pillage which is inseparable from its reckless and ruthless squandering of men and material."[2]

It has been pointed out that the basis of degradation is found in the will to power. But one should realize that the will to power is simply the end product of the spirit of abstraction. When man is reduced to nothing more than an object of manipulation, whether by a technician or political leader, the process of degradation is well on its way. Coupled with evil design and a will to power the unscrupulous leader hastens the dehumanization of his subjects. Likewise the technician, driven by a strong desire to conquer all

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[1] Ibid., p. 30.

[2] Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 201.

before him by his abstractive methods of analysis, reduces man to the status of all other things. So a will to power both in men and nations ultimately leads to degradation.

Techniques of Degradation in the Ordinary World

In considering the various ways, methods, and means used by man to degrade his fellows Marcel has chosen the term technique to designate this action. In fact he has entitled a whole chapter in one of his recent books "Techniques of Degradation."[1] The term ordinary world as used in this section indicates the modern, industrialized world when not at war nor under the heel of a dictatorship. Marcel applies the word degradation to any result which tends to limit man in realizing his highest potential as a person. More particularly he uses it to indicate the most extensive degree of personal deterioration found in modern man. So one can see that it may be applied to the depersonalizing aspects of the ordinary world as well as to the dehumanizing effects as seen under totalitarian regimes and the world at war. In the less intense use of the word as applied to the ordinary world Marcel suggests,

> Where there is creation there can be no degradation, and to the extent that technics are creative, or imply creativity, they are not degrading in any way. Degradation begins at the point where creativeness falls

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, Chap. III.

> into self-imitation and self-hypnotism, stiffening and falling back on itself.[1]

On the other hand, when Marcel uses the term degradation in the stronger sense of the word he is referring in part to the type of philosophy espoused by Sartre.

> I have recently surprised and even scandalised some of Sartre's followers by classifying his philosophy among the 'techniques of vilification,' by which I mean techniques which result, whether deliberately or not, in the systematic vilification of man.[2]

Superficially, this seems to be a paradox for does not Sartre constantly exalt man and his freedom in the face of the radical absurdity of the universe? One must not forget, however, that the Fascist dictatorships, whether in Germany, Italy, or elsewhere, similarly exalted the people and offered them a cheap adulation filled with a hidden contempt. This can be seen in the abject depth to which they ultimately reduced many of their citizens. Etymologically, to vilify a thing means to destroy its value, and this is precisely what Marcel means when he speaks of degrading man in the strong sense of the term.

Fully recognizing that one observes the techniques of degradation in their most obviously shocking aspects in totalitarian states and during times of war, Marcel further concludes, "we shall have to push our analysis much farther

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[1] Marcel, Existentialism, pp. 33-34.

[2] Ibid., p. 85.

if we are to recognize how firmly these techniques have taken root in our ordinary world today."[1]

In fact, Marcel believes that one extremely general fact appears to dominate the contemporary situation. Men have entered what he calls the eschatological age. By this term he simply means that man is in possession of the power whereby he can commit racial suicide if he so desires. He feels that the atom bomb is a "symbolic summary of a given state of affairs."[2] These words not only signify the portentousness of world-wide, total war, but also a situation in the ordinary world wherein man has been captivated by his own techniques. In spite of the many desacralizing tendencies today, man has maintained a healthy reaction against the horrors of personal degradation witnessed in two world wars and the uneasy peace following. This indicates a deep and spontaneous sense of piety towards life, which is indeed hopeful in spite of the multitudinous acts against its sacredness as seen in time of war. Unfortunately, these acts against man himself are not confined to war times, but are to be seen in varying, if less intense, forms in ordinary life.

> The situation of the worker is signalized by his dependence on machinery and organization. It is signalized by the absence of reserves on which he could fall back. He is reduced to the sale of his bare

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 49.

[2] Ibid., p. 76.

> working capacity, and he must sell it unceasingly and unstintingly if he wants to live. He has no funds to guarantee him peace of mind, leisure, or even an extended vacation. This already existing pattern of so-called normal, civilian life, simply gets incorporated into the pattern of total war.[1]

Moreover, on the everyday scene, there is a concrete relationship which develops between technical processes and human beings. Since a technique is something that one can acquire it can be compared to a possession like a habit, which is basically a technique. "And we can at once see that if a man can become the slave of his habits, it is equally probable that he can become the prisoner of his techniques."[2] Oftentimes for the man who invents the technique it becomes more than just a means to an end. He can become so absorbed in it, obsessed by it, that it becomes an end in itself. All technical progress implies a certain moral and intellectual outlay which betrays itself by a feeling of power or pride. Such feelings are the natural accompaniment of inventive activity.

> What we are noticing here is the passage from the realm of the technical, properly so called, to that of a kind of idolatry of which technical products become the object or at least the occasion. And if we follow out this line of reflection, we can see that even this kind of idolatry can degenerate into something worse; it can become <u>autolatry</u>, worship of oneself.[3]

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[1] Juenger, <u>The Failure of Technology</u>, pp. 180-181.

[2] Marcel, <u>Man Against Mass Society</u>, p. 83.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 84.

So technology can assume the character of technolatry, and as such it can easily degenerate into an idolatry of the product it creates. This may be seen as man worshiping his own man-made gods, the elevation of gadgetry to the status of the divine. Man thus becomes degraded to nothing more than a subject or slave. Perhaps self-enslavement is of the lowest kind. The transformation that takes place in this area seems to have deep metaphysical significance for in worshiping the products of his own hand, man has experienced a comparable weakening of the sense of the sacred.

It appears quite obvious that there is no technical process which is not either actually or potentially at the service of some human desire or fear. "We can say that all techniques exist in relation to man, in so far as man is moved by desire or fear."[1] Marcel hastens to say that this world of desire and fear is that of the problematic. At this point he is interested in reinstating the notion of mystery in opposition to the notion of problem. In contrast to the world of the problematic which is wholly apart from a person and in front of one, the world of mystery is the place of one's total commitment.

> As soon as we postulate the notion of mystery, we abolish that frontier between what lies in the self and what lies before the self, a frontier which, as we saw just now, could be thrust back or restored to a former position, but without ever ceasing to reconstitute itself at every moment of reflection.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 89. [2] Ibid., p. 90.

These observations are very germane to the problem at hand. For the inroads made in these days by techniques cannot fail to suggest for man the obliteration and the progressive effacement of his world of mystery which is at once a world of presences and of hope.

> It is not sufficient merely to say that, at the level of mystery, man's desires and fears, which lie behind his technical achievements, are lifted up beyond any assignable limit; we must add that human nature is tending to become more and more incapable of raising itself above desire and fear in their ordinary state, and of reaching in prayer or contemplation a state that transcends all earthly vicissitudes.[1]

The term earthly here is significant and revealing. For the perfecting of techniques is apparently making man more and more earthly. And the more he becomes riveted to the earth, the more of a tendency he will have to multiply his techniques so as to assure him a better grip upon it. The more earthbound he becomes the less appreciation he will have for persons and things spiritual. The more abstract-oriented he becomes the less he will tend to seek the concrete values of life. Such is the degrading pattern he follows as he pursues the world of technical processes.

As Marcel contemplates on these distressing developments he notes a number of ensuing results which are quite disturbing. First, but not necessarily foremost, is the loss of feeling for living reality as seen in the lowering birth-rate in all countries of so-called advanced civilization.

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[1] Ibid., p. 92.

The excessive development of techniques in these countries is tending to superimpose on life an almost factitious superstructure, and this superstructure is becoming for men in general the familiar background that they cannot do without. If one is to understand the gap which has developed between the generations he must take note of the fact that life is being less and less felt as a gift to be handed on, and more and more felt as a kind of growing calamity like a flood, against which dykes should be built.

> There is nothing really ridiculous in the assertion that the growingly general use of techniques of birth-prevention is only one aspect of a very widespread impingement of techniques upon realms from which, until recently, they were almost shut out.[1]

Marcel feels that a technical world with a negative attitude toward life, is heading for sure despair. For by the very nature of such a world it can offer no help where techniques are useless--such as the problem of death. For such a world, the appearance of death could be little more than the "flinging on the scrap heap of a being that has ceased to be of service--and that no longer is anything, the moment it is no longer of any use."[2] This now brings one to the nub of Marcel's argument. It is now possible to understand how techniques, which to start with seemed neutral in relation to human values, can become techniques of and for sin. In fact, Marcel would call them techniques in the service of sin.

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[1] Ibid., p. 94. [2] Ibid., pp. 94-95.

Man appears to be proceeding on a direct road toward the laying utterly bare of his human condition and all its implications. This human condition, whatever may be the foundation on which it ultimately rests, seems to be dependent on the manner in which it is understood. It is becoming more and more obvious.

> . . . that when man seeks to understand his condition by using as his model the products of his own technical skill, he infinitely degrades himself and condemns himself to deny, that is, in the end to destroy those deep and basic sentiments which for thousands of years have guided his conduct.[1]

Perhaps an explanatory word should be given in reference to Marcel's use of the term sin in the foregoing paragraphs. His use of it is not to be construed in its theological sense, but in a broader philosophical perspective. In this light Marcel would consider any act or acts against the sacredness of life as <u>sin</u>. This could include anything from the technician's gradual erosive work on the being of man to the indiscriminate bombing of innocent women and children during war. Regardless of the method or means, that which tends to degrade the sense of being in man is to Marcel a sin.

It is from this extremely general and even metaphysical point of view that one must view the problem of the relationships between technical progress and sin, between technical progress and the degradation leading to the

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 98.

dehumanization of man. Perhaps the excessive development of techniques during the last century is accountable in part at least, for the degradation visited upon man, culminating in the widespread dehumanization observed in the ordinary world.

Techniques of Degradation in the Totalitarian World

In the foregoing section an attempt was made to give a meaningful definition of the word "degradation" in its less intense usage by Marcel. This is the sense in which it is used when applied to the ordinary world. Now as the discussion focuses on the world of totalitarianism and later on the world at war, the more intense usage of the term degradation is signified. Marcel clearly delineates the meaning of the term in this stronger sense:

> Perhaps it might be useful here to make a sort of preliminary attempt at definition: in a restricted sense, I understand by 'techniques of degradation' a whole body of methods deliberately put into operation in order to attack and destroy in human persons belonging to some definite class or other their self-respect, and in order to transform them little by little into mere human waste products, conscious of themselves as such, and in the end forced to despair of themselves, not merely at an intellectual level, but in the very depths of their souls.[1]

When the term totalitarian is used it signifies the forming into one mass all the segments of a given group. More particularly, in the last few decades its use has been somewhat limited to a given approach to government which encompasses all departments in one. This type of government

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[1] Ibid., p. 42.

is highly centralized, under the control of a political group which recognizes no other political parties, and is typified by such national governments as in Fascist Italy or Germany under the Nazi regime. The concept of totalitarianism can be seen in the all-embracing and undisputed rule of one political party. In this instance the state becomes the party. This particular form of government tends to be dictatorial, arbitrary, severe, and makes a god out of the state itself.

A totalitarian regime can only be formed from faceless and isolated individuals. Its individuals are similar to isolated atoms with no strong sense of identity. They enjoy no feeling of belonging. The group has been atomized. No participation in being or community are experienced. Under dictatorial regimes of this type one can easily note the systematic effort of the government to reduce the person to a manipulable unit. Under these circumstances the masses can be formed.

> But in point of fact the masses exist and develop (following laws which are fundamentally purely mechanical) only at a level far below that at which intelligence and love are possible. Why should this be so? Because the masses partake of the human only in a degraded state, they are themselves a degraded state of the human.[1]

In line with Marcel's thought one ought to dismiss any idea that the masses are educable. This is a contradiction in terms. Only an individual is educable, or more precisely a

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[1] Ibid., p. 10.

person. Individuals in this mass state of abasement and alienation cease to think as individuals. On this level they are subject to training only. Regimentation is the order of the day. Individual thinking is submerged in the mass mind.

> One mark of that state is that the masses are of their very essence--I repeat, of their very essence--the stuff of which fanaticism is made: propaganda has on them the convulsive effect of an electrical shock. It arouses them not to life, but to that appearance of life which particularly manifests itself in riots and revolutions.[1]

It is quite common on the occasion of riots and revolutions for the very dregs of the populace to rise to the surface and take command of the situation. Mass impulses to violence crystallize on the lowest levels in such a society.

It is enlightening to note the connection which technical development bears to the totalitarian movement. The spirit of abstraction is basic in the causal relationship which exists between advancing techniques and the developing octupus of totalitarianism:

> I wish only to draw attention to the inevitable effect of all this upon mental attitudes. I admit that it is difficult to judge with certainty of a process which is still developing. But in observing those around us it is hard not to conclude that, as I have tried to show elsewhere, the spirit of abstraction is gradually taking hold of human beings and alienating them increasingly from the sense of life and living realities, while at the same time it makes of them a field which is dangerously favourable to the growth of totalitarian ideologies.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 10.

[2] Marcel, The Decline of Wisdom, p. 47.

Marcel points out that the spirit of abstraction, in which the concrete values of life are absent, provides a ready field for the inception of totalitarian seed. Technology binds and sets free at one and the same time. It tends to emancipate human thought from most transcendentals, but at the same time it confines this thought to that which is practical and mechanical. One might say, with some accuracy, that technological thinking tends to be collectivistic. But collectivistic thinking presupposes the individual, those who are freed and cleansed from conflicting considerations so that they will give themselves unreservedly to the collective. "Technology has no objection to the individual as such, so long as he surrenders unconditionally to the technical organization."[1]

> With every act of mechanization, technology drives the wedge of its causal mechanism deeper into the state. Every expansion of technology drives the wedge of its causal mechanism deeper into the state. Every expansion of technology brings new infiltrations of mechanistic thought that change the very essence of the state.[2]

In totalitarian governments, those who are grasping for power make it their aim to utilize the power demonstrated through technology. Marcel speaks directly of this unholy partnership in stating that there is "a tendency for a sinister alliance to be concluded between the masters of

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[1]Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 105.

[2]Ibid., p. 106.

scientific technique and the men who are working for complete state-control."[1]

What happens to the individual person in such a state? Marcel suggests that the human powers that make up one's life no longer sustain any practical distinction between the person and the abstract individual whose particulars can be listed on the few sheets of an official dossier. This strange reduction of a personality to an official identity must have an inevitable effect on the way one is forced to grasp himself. Under these circumstances, what happens to one's inner life? In what way does a person think of himself after being pushed around from pillar to post, ticketed, docketed, and classified? Perhaps he experiences a social nudity, a social stripping, in effect a dehumanization. Marcel observes that one might compare the state of a man in his social nakedness, stripped by society of all personal protections, to that of a man who finds himself thus exposed to the observation of an omnipresent and omniscient God of evil intent:

> This comparison is all the more necessary and important because the Moloch State of totalitarian countries does tend to confer on itself a sort of burlesque analogue of the Divine prerogatives. Only the essential is lacking (that is to say, the State is not in fact God, or a God), and this fundamental lack lies at the basis of the evils from which any society must suffer that seeks to enchain itself by submitting to the yoke of the Moloch State.[2]

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[1] Marcel, The Mystery of Being, Vol. I, p. 41.

[2] Ibid., p. 37.

He concludes by stating that the common factor in the two different types of nakedness--nakedness under the eyes of the State, nakedness under the eyes of God--is without question fear. In the presence of God, this fear has a note of reverence, sacredness, and adoration. This kind of an emotional response can do nothing but ennoble and upgrade man. However, in the case of nakedness under the eyes of the state, true adoration is impossible unless it attaches itself to the person of a leader and then it is pure fanaticism. A clear example of this can be recalled in the hysterical cult which surrounded Hitler, making him the fanatical center of attention.

Furthermore, it is all too clear that the state of continuous registration from birth to death can only be realized in the bosom of an anonymous bureaucracy. Such a bureaucracy cannot hope to inspire any other sentiment than a vague fear, similar to that which grips many individuals as they are forced to deal with some impersonal government official who identifies himself with his job. The workings of this administrative machine is better felt than contemplated.

> Thus it is quite natural that, in countries where a bureaucratic system prevails, there should be a tendency towards the general bureaucratization of life; that is to say, really, towards the abandonment of concrete and creative activities in favour of abstract, depersonalized, uncreative tasks and even--one could illustrate this

> point easily--an active opposition to all kinds of creativity.[1]

When the Moloch state is looked to in the sense of an all-powerful being, a god, who is the dispenser of all good, it is asking to be treated as a creator or father. Marcel, in using the term Moloch has introduced a graphic representation of the state. Moloch was a Semitic deity whose worship was accompanied by human sacrifice. To this he likens the totalitarian state that demands all from its subjects.

> It is true that the State in our time, even in countries where it has not reached the totalitarian phase, has become more and more the engrosser and dispenser of all sorts of favours, which must be snatched from it by whatever means are available, including even blackmail. In this respect the State <u>is</u> properly comparable to a God, but to the God of degraded cults on whom the sorcerer claims to exercise his magic powers.[2]

In such a totalitarian state certain techniques of degradation must be used by the leaders to control their subjects. One of the most oft-used and effective such tools is that of propaganda. Perhaps one should say the misuse of propaganda. Marcel agrees that the term propaganda should not have an evil or derogatory connotation. Modern use of the term tends to color it with evil motivations, and not without reason. But in the strict sense of the word, propaganda indicates any organized or concerted group effort to disseminate doctrines or information. As such, it is a perfectly legitimate pursuit and ought not to be classified among the techniques of degradation. There is, however, a

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 38-39. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 39.

close kinship between propaganda and the techniques of degradation. Of its very nature it is easily corrupted. Moreover, in recent times propaganda has become a method not only of persuasion but sometimes of seduction as well. As long as one employs propaganda for a good cause and in a forthright manner he cannot be guilty of seduction or corruption. But when the cause is backed by an evil purpose and the methods become underhanded then the misuse of propaganda is immediately in evidence.

> But we get a much more dangerous situation when propaganda moves out of its original orbit; when it ceases to be exercised on behalf of a number of competing movements and parties within the State, and instead is taken over by the State itself; when the State, in short, begins to behave as if it were itself a movement or a party.[1]

Recent history bears out the fact that the scourage called the single party prepares the way for the further application of state propaganda. The single party appears to be the common root from which modern dictatorships spring and from which they flourish. Marcel's comment is in order when he suggests that "It is in this connection, I think, that the kinship between propaganda and the techniques of degradation can be seen most clearly."[2]

There are those who might raise a voice of objection by saying that propaganda does not aim at degrading those on whom it has its effect. Perhaps this is true up to a point,

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 50.

[2] Ibid., p. 50.

but in spite of everything that can be said to the contrary, as misused by dictatorships, "is not the real and deep purpose of propaganda after all that of reducing men to a condition in which they lose all capacity for individual reaction"?[1] The indication is that such propagandizers hold in basic contempt the individuals under their control. Dictators presume they can think for the masses while in effect they are usurping the rights of the individual. What greater miscarriage of justice can be found than that of a leader controlling, managing and censoring public information before it reaches the people. One must hold a cheap if not degraded view of man to thus participate in such a misuse of propaganda.

> If we really attach any value at all to what a man is in himself, to his authentic nature, how can we assume the responsibility of passing him through the flattening-out machinery of propaganda?
>
> What we ought to enquire into, however, is the nature of this contempt. There are, of course, fine shades of distinction that analysis ought to bring out: but is there any essential <u>difference</u> between the attitude of someone like Goebbels, for instance, and that of a chief of Communist propaganda?[2]

In such cases as have been cited one is faced with a radical and cynical refusal on the part of leaders to recognize the competence of the individual's judgment. And one might add that the sense of truth is gradually destroyed in those who assume the task of manipulating opinion. No doubt it would require a high degree of simple-mindedness in a professional

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 50. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 51.

propagandist for him to continue to believe that his truth was the whole truth. This kind of naivetĕ is to be found in a fanatic or renegade, or both. Thus when playing his role the propagandist of evil intent is not so much interested in the truth as he is in exploiting the weaknesses of others.

> Effective propaganda, in short, is a matter of reconnoitring and exploiting as skilfully as possible the weaknesses of the enemy's position, while at the same time as little as possible giving the enemy the feeling that he <u>is</u> an enemy, that one is fighting him.[1]

Another technique of degradation often used by totalitarian governments, but not exclusively by them, is blackmail. Marcel sees this as being closely associated with propaganda. For example, when one government allows the results of its research in the field of extremely toxic substances to be broadcast, implying that the world's population could easily be wiped-out with a few pounds of the same, then there appears to be real purpose in the release of such facts. Marcel insightfully concludes,

> Its purpose, in a word, was intimidation. We are in the presence here of blackmail on a world scale.
>
> It may be said that such blackmail is obviously a reaction to blackmail from another quarter: blackmail more veiled possibly, but just as threatening.[2]

The use of blackmail and intimidation on a world-wide scale is reprehensible, but when utilized to keep one's own populace in fear it becomes a greater crime. Under such circumstances the individual loses his own dignity, begins

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 52. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 78.

to question his own activity and loses faith in his fellow man. The degradation of the individual is thus accelerated.

Marcel feels that one ought not to close his eyes to certain disturbing occurrences of the past. He points to the experiments that numerous Nazi doctors made with live prisoners as a case in point. These doctors made use of human merchandise which their tyrants made available to them. Being a researcher does not exclude such frightful and sinister practices. While one might console himself that at least in the world today scientists tend to foreswear such aberrations, yet no one can predict what might happen tomorrow. For example,

> The population development might possibly lead to a radical degradation of, and disregard for, human existence; the latter could become so devaluated that people might consider it superfluous to surround it with precautionary measures and the respect it now enjoys.[1]

The history of the recent past is replete with the facts that totalitarian regimes have been wracked with government inspired violence. Purges have been the order of the day, developing from mistrust of one's own colleagues. Leaders have been so depraved and degraded as to plan and execute their own best, but rival, friends. The lust for power and wealth has completely obliterated the value of the person. Intrigue and murder have been the expected. These methods have been turned on the population as a whole and

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[1] Marcel, Searchings, p. 37.

they have consequently lived in constant fear of torture and death. The despicable and degrading methods of the German Gestapo as well as the Communist MVD are cases in point. The value of the person under these regimes is next to nothing. Individuals are often relegated to the class of merchandise. Whole blocks of minority groups have been marked methodically for extermination. Tyranny and servitude follow in the wake of such activity. There is a reciprocal effect on both the master and slave. Both become less than human in the degrading process. Under such circumstances how can man maintain a sense of being, of being a person? The answer is all too obvious, he cannot!

One cannot overemphasize the fact that the crisis which Western man has undergone and is undergoing today is a metaphysical one. It will be necessary for more than some readjustment of social or institutional conditions to mollify the disquiet which rises from the very depths of man's being. The problem is multiplied in totalitarian countries. There, all the techniques of modern man are joined by the evil designs of corrupt leaders to bring about the complete dehumanization and thus subjugation of man.

Techniques of Degradation in a Warring World

In all probability, the depths to which human degradation can reach were thoroughly explored during and since the last two World Wars. The extent to which man is capable

of going in his carnal manipulation of the bodies and minds of fellow human beings is well nigh unbelievable. The planned attempts to bring man to the level of beasthood proved all too successful. The concentration camps of World War II stand as evidence of the degree of degradation and depersonalization that man can be driven by the carnal skill of evil leaders.

While the techniques of degradation can best be observed in their intensity as used against the condemned minorities in World War II, yet their widespread effects can best be seen in the wanton bombings of countless thousands of innocent women and children during the hostilities. War is a kind of racial madness or insanity. It is an irrational approach by leaders who desire to bring under their sway the masses of people and wealth of the earth. Of course there remains the exception of those persons who are attacked by aggressors and are fighting a purely defensive battle. The matter of what consists a purely defensive struggle may be debatable. The massive power which dictators and other warring leaders are able to bring to bear against their opponents has been made possible through modern technology.

> Technical progress and conduct of war today are merging. We have reached a state of affairs where the technical potential of a state is the determining factor in the event of war. Superior technology means victory, inferior technology means defeat; that is the briefest

> possible formula to which a definite phase of technical progress can be reduced.[1]

This equation forces all modern states to support, speed-up, and push relentlessly their program for technical perfection. The modern state, for its own self-preservation, must subject everything else to technical automatism. The term modern state is primarily used in reference to the world powers. Lesser nations must look to them for protection, which in turn rests on sophisticated equipment developed through scientific technology. Since the technical potential is decisive in war it is now considered a form of armament. "Technically organized work becomes preparation for war; its connection with war becomes constantly more unmistakable."[2] Even political propagandists make it their task to incessantly point to the war-making potential contained in their technological laboratories.

Marcel exhibits a deep concern lest the lessons of the gruesome past be soon forgotten. Lest man, insulated by the passing of time, forgets the perilous possibilities within himself to destroy his fellow beings:

> Speaking in the most general fashion, I do think that after the terrible events which have been devastating our human world it is absolutely necessary to draw up some sort of human balance sheet. With this purpose in mind, we should put to the best use the sort of uneasy truce which is now all that is left to us; a

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[1] Juenger, The Failure of Technology, p. 181.

[2] Ibid., p. 182.

> truce for that matter which perhaps cannot be maintained for very long.[1]

From this statement by Marcel one can quickly catch the sense of apprehension with which he views the present status of world affairs. He feels that the present period of uneasy peace among the world powers is but a breathing spell, a forerunner, of further acts of violence of man against man. This is to say in a tragic sense that history itself is but "a way of forgetting, or, to put it more flatly, of losing that real contact with the event for the lack of which historical narrative so often reduces itself to a simple abstracting naming of events."[2] He continues by expressing astonishment at the extraordinary reluctance men show to learn from the lessons of the past.

Marcel insists that the philosopher has a special function in times like these,

> I think that one of the duties of a philosopher, if he shows himself worthy of his vocation to-day, is to attack quite directly those dissimulating forces which are all working towards what might be called the neutralization of the past; and whose conjoint effect consists in arousing in contemporary man a feeling of what I should like to call insulation in time.[3]

Especially since the turn of the past century a growing war mentality has gripped the nations of the world. It appears that the leaders, more particularly those of totalitarian governments, have come to the conclusion that

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[1] Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 38.

[2] Ibid., p. 38. [3] Ibid., p. 39.

the problems of the world can only be settled by armed conflict. Threats, ultimatums, international intrigue, and blackmail seems to be the order of the day. Perhaps the possession of new powerful weapons coupled with the imperialistic designs of growing nations can account for part of this approach.

Juenger graphically describes the situation thus:

> Titanic elemental forces captured in marvelous engines are straining against pistons and cylinder walls as crankshafts are moving and deliver an even flow of power. All the elements are racing and raging through the jails of man-made apparatus . . . And all these noises are malignant, shrill, shrieking, tearing, roaring, howling in character. And they grow more malignant as the technology approaches perfection . . . as do the siren, those sirens whose mighty mechanical screams announce the approach of bombers.[1]

If this description of World War II horror is frightening, what might it be in this age of gases, germs, drugs, guided missles, and multiple hydrogen warheads?

Juenger further observes that there is an alliance between perfected technology and government-organized war:

> Technology, indeed, is willing, it is even eager to serve for destruction because it itself is brimful with destructive forces. Once we have grasped the fact that mechanization has its counterpart in the invasion of our civilization by elementary forces, the constantly closer connection between government by technology and government-organized war becomes quite clear.[2]

Marcel points to the innumerable crimes of which the wholly innocent were victims during the last war, of the

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[1] Juenger, The Failure of Technology, pp. 123-124.

[2] Ibid., p. 128.

children who died in concentration camps and in bombing raids, of the needless slaughter made possible by block-busting bombs. "To me, it seems very difficult to find any sort of sort of argument that can even attempt to excuse this general crime against human life."[1] Marcel concludes that the evil propensities within man plus the technical skill to implement and actualize his evil thoughts make for an apocalyptic world-outlook.

The growing notion that human life is cheap and expendable fits in with the traditional German view that might makes right. The Nazi war machine of World War II is an illustration in point. Something is drastically wrong with any value system when the death of an individual or the merciless torturing of the same goes by unnoticed. Marcel believes that the technological notion of the world leads people to arrogate to themselves the right to manipulate life since it doesn't have those sacral qualities one discovers through a theocentric perspective. Since life is expendable, one can extinguish it like a candle with little compunction of conscience. Even murder is gradually losing the stigma attached to it in the Ten Commandments. "Doubtless we can trace the trend to the terrible mass murders that were perpetrated during the two World Wars and the pogroms."[2] Thinking in this vein Marcel mentions that one is tempted to

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[1]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 79.

[2]Marcel, Searchings, p. 49.

speak in stock market jargon about a "devastating 'drop' in the price of life."[1]

Marcel relates the incident of a famous French palaeontologist while dilating on his confidence in world progress was confronted with the fact of the millions of wretches slowly dying in Soviet labor camps. His comment was blasphemous: "What are a few million men in relation to the immensity of human history"?[2] Commenting further on this statement Marcel adds,

> Thinking in terms of millions and multiples of millions, he could no longer conceive, except in terms of 'cases', of abstractions, of the unspeakable and intolerable reality of the suffering of the single person--a suffering literally masked from him by the mirage of numbers.[3]

It appears that in the European countries which have stood the ravages of two World Wars as well as numerous revolutions with their fearful consumption of human lives, a devaluation of life has come about in somewhat the same sense that one might speak of a currency devaluation. Marcel speaks from his experience:

> I recall the comment of a well-known general, made in the presence of a relative of mine who was a General Staff Officer, on the day after a bloody offensive action during the first World War: 'Men are replaceable.' Scandalous, and even sacrilegious words, for in fact a human individual is precisely <u>that which is not replaceable</u>.[4]

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 49.

[2] Marcel, <u>Man Against Mass Society</u>, p. 264.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 264.

[4] Marcel, <u>Human Dignity</u>, pp. 138-139.

He speaks of a pervading materialism which has all but enveloped the present world culture. It is the same mental mood that has succeeded in introducing a merchandising distinction between wholesale and retail into the realm of human values, a domain from which it should have been forever excluded. The dehumanizing aspects of these degrading tendencies and their attendant implications for the future of man present a bleak picture indeed.

The lowest rung on the descending ladder of human degradation is now a matter of record. In the concentration camps of World War II systematic efforts took place to degrade man and reduce him to a condition where his animal instincts were in control. In this process one could witness "the most dramatic and demonic evidence of the disintegration of the substance of modern life"[1] to be found anywhere.

> We need not think only of the systematic horrors perpetrated by the Nazis and Communists on the souls and bodies of men with the aid of techniques of degradation developed to diabolical perfection, nor of the threat of a nuclear war which a torpid and thing-ified humanity fatalistically awaits, but of seemingly lesser yet omnipresent and insidious influences like the tides of propaganda by which all countries relentlessly subvert the minds of their subjects, or of the incredible sensationalistic trivializing and cheapening of life which is progressively produced by the mass media of every variety. When life is reduced to a dirty joke for masses of men, a concrete philosophy must testify for the universal which each man carries beneath the scoria of his outer existence.[2]

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[1]Kingston, French Existentialism, p. 12.

[2]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 129.

In referring to the Nazis concentration camps, Marcel clearly states, "We are here in the presence of the most monstrous collective crime in history; only poisoned and poisonous imagination could have conceived it in the first place."[1] Yet he is overwhelmed by the thought of the countless executive agents who were absolutely necessary as accomplices if the insane idea became a working reality.

Various and devious methods were used by the Germans to invade the privacy of the individual and to crush him as a person. The perverted use of surgery was a common practice on the victims of the camps.

> To realize this, we need only think of the experiments on the brain and of the psychic alterations they seem able to provoke. In such cases we are witnessing the constant and widespread violation of privacy which is without question one of the most alarming features of the present world.[2]

The widespread use of truth serum constituted another invasion of one's privacy. Through the manipulation of the human organism and its chemistry these beastly torturers proceeded to violate the sanctity of the person.

> We need only recall, for instance, the scandalous 'breaking and entering' which is involved in the use of what is contradictorily called 'truth serum'--as if truth in the pure and noble sense of the word had anything to do with the possible results of an injection of any kind.[3]

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[1]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 44.

[2]Marcel, Human Dignity, p. 165.

[3]Ibid., pp. 165-166.

Here a concerted effort is made to destroy the dignity, self-respect, and sense of decency in each person. The goal is to transform each individual, little by little, into human waste products, hating and being hated.

> 'The Germans,' writes Madame Jacqueline Richet about Ravensbruck, 'sought by every conceivable means to degrade us. They exploited every kind of cowardice, they excited every kind of jealousy and stimulated and encouraged every kind of hate. One had to make a daily effort to sustain one's moral integrity. The veneer of civilization soon rubs away, and one sees that society ladies are not the last among us to start behaving like fishwives'!![1]

Madame Richet continues by observing that a good education, a good background does not always guarantee against a shocking moral collapse under the pressure of hunger. Women willingly become the mistresses of beastly commandants, others laugh at the brutalities of S.S. guards in order to avoid being struck themselves. Spying and talebearing make life impossible.

> 'We had been condemned to perish in our own dirt, to drown ourselves in mud, in our own excrements; the point was to abase us, to humiliate our human dignity, to drag us down to the level of the beasts, to fill us with horror and contempt for ourselves and our fellow-suffers. That was the purpose, that was the idea of the camp! The Germans were perfectly aware of it; they knew that we prisoners had become incapable of looking at each other without disgust.'[2]

One can see, that for the torturers, it was not so much a matter of subjecting their victims in material circumstances

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[1]Jacqueline Richet, Trois Bagnes, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 42.

[2]Lewinska, Vingt Mois à Auschwitz, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 43.

so abject that they were bound to acquire the habits of animals; more subtly, it was a matter of degrading these persons morally by encouraging them to betray one another and by fomenting resentment and mutual suspicion; in short, "of poisoning the wells of human relationship so that a prisoner who should have been . . . a comrade and a brother, became instead an enemy, a demon, an incubus."[1]

> 'Human beings were inoculated quite consciously with the bacillus of depravity, so that they should be demoralized, slain morally and physically, as we destroy lice and noxious microbes; and, just like the lice which throve on our defenceless bodies, so the dregs of the camp, prostitutes, women thieves, offenders against the common law, penetrated into our social life: it was to these human dregs that the Germans had entrusted the task of watching over us and it was of them that they had made an elite under the name of 'camp functionaries.'[2]

It appears that one must lose all self-respect before he can treat others of the human race without fundamental respect. The persecutor sets out to destroy in another person the value he holds of himself.

> How does a Streicher or a Himmler fundamentally estimate the Jew whom he is persecuting? Apparently he looks on this Jew as the rubbish, the waste, the leavings of the human race. But is not this irrational contempt the inverted expression of a feeling which in reality is much closer to envy? Is not ambivalence of feeling here more or less the rule?[3]

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[1]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 44.

[2]Lewinska, Vingt Mois à Auschwitz, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, pp. 43-44.

[3]Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 46.

Drained of all self-respect, lowered to the level of a beast, human beings by the thousands experienced the ultimate in dehumanization in the concentration camps of World War II Germany. No doubt the greater share of the world's population didn't think modern man capable of treating his fellows with so little respect. Civilization surely had progressed beyond this state of carnal and enlightened savagery. Yet it did happen! The greatest tragedy did not consist of the physical suffering endured but the ensuing spiritual degeneration. Man became totally dehumanized--worse, in some instances, than animals.

Nonetheless, there are many today blindly following the path of abstraction and technolatry which ultimately consigns man to nothing more than thinghood. The overtones of this approach are indeed frightening. Though the final results may not be apparent, the tragic end is inescapable. Whether in a concentration camp or lost in a collectivized society, man tends toward dehumanization, thus losing his sense of being if not his soul.

The Logical Consequences of Dehumanization: Nihilism

While the extreme depths of dehumanization were experienced by countless thousands in the concentration camps, yet no mention has been made of the millions throughout the world adversely affected by recent wars. Displacement, disillusionment, and disorientation have followed in their

wake. Consequently, the dark cloud of nihilism has hovered over much the earth.

During the past century the term nihilism has generally indicated the denial of the worth of being or beings; however, a double meaning has emerged more recently:

> On the one hand, the term is widely used to denote the doctrine that moral norms or standards cannot be justified by rational argument. On the other hand, it is widely used to denote a mood of despair over the emptiness or triviality of human existence.[1]

This dual meaning appears to have arisen from the rapid growth of both atheism and moral relativity in the past decades.

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> For them nihilism is caused not so much by atheism as by industrialization and social pressures, and its typical consequences are not selfishness or suicide but indifference, ironical detachment, or sheer bafflement.[2]

The term nihilism, as used herein, denotes the feeling of utter worthlessness that possesses a human being upon the loss of his true sense of being. It is accompanied by a

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[1]Robert G. Olson, "Nihilism," Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1st ed., V, 514-517.

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Even though the tendency to associate nihilism with atheism continues to the present, yet during the course of the twentieth century the image of the nihilist has somewhat changed. This occurred with a corresponding change in the analysis of nihilism's causes and consequences. Oftentimes today the members of the younger generation tend to think of the nihilist not as a cynical or despairing atheist but as a robot-like conformist.

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mood of pessimism and despair over the emptiness and uselessness of existence. Meaninglessness haunts his path, nothingness pervades his future. In the backwash and aftermath of war one can always find such individuals, sometimes in the form of the refugee, the displaced person.

Marcel suggests that an interesting study can be made of this individual, the refugee, who has forcibly been cut loose from all his moorings. He takes as his own point of departure the remarkable analysis which was made by the German philosopher Hans Zehrer entitled Man in This World.[1] This author manifests an extraordinarily lucid awareness of the situation of contemporary man. He concentrates his attention first of all on what he calls the barracks man. Here a vivid picture is painted of dehumanized man, the typical refugee.

This man is about mid-forty. With graying hair and ironic smile he has experienced somewhat of a "freezing" of the traits. This man has possessed a family, house with furnishings, a farm with animals and chickens. Not only were his parents living, but he had a wife, children and close friends living in the neighborhood. But now, as he is observed, he possesses nothing but the clothes on his back. He works eight hours a day, repairs the same system of roads, returns to the same shelter at night and eats moderately good food. His life is a routine, his needs are met and he always

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[1]See fn. p. 172.

speaks with a reserve. He talks occasionally of his former possessions, his family and his farm. For a few short minutes he lives again. He becomes a human being in the present, whereas he was one in the past; again he falls into his stolid silence. But before he does he manages to ask a question, always the same, and not expecting to obtain an answer: Who am I? What am I living for, and what is the meaning of all this?

The State can furnish no answer to his question. The best it can do is speak of employment, social security and the like. Society has no answer. It can only speak of emergency relief and aid to refugees. Nothing but abstractions! In the universe in which he circulates, this man no longer presents a living reality. He is a number on a filing card with a corresponding folder containing a few more facts. Yet he is more than just that. He <u>is</u> a real human being, with a memorable past. He owned a certain house on a particular piece of land. He had a family of his own who were also individuals. He speaks of his animals each one of which had a name. And it is to all this that the man refers when he asks his unanswered question: Who am I? What is the meaning of all this? Others about him can only imperfectly understand his question, for who has lost country, home, and all that one has loved? The problem is multiplied when one is aware of the fact that the concern of this one individual is the same for all who live in the same

barracks-room. The question is like a cloud which floats above the entire camp, and other similar camps. In fact it hangs over the entire country.

Nothing prepared the barracks man for the asking of this question. Once upon a time he knew who he was and why he existed. But the years slip by, he continues to be tormented, he is disoriented, his mind is often a blank, he is worn down by this question without an answer.

> That it arises before the obscure abyss of nothingness, before the absolute void, this is his destiny. A strange and incomprehensible power has stolen from him everything which constituted his home, everything which permitted him to take on form.[1]

But this man is not simply there on his own account for he represents a multitude, a particular era in the course of Western thought: "He is also the last link of an historical development. He marks its ultimate possibility. For thirty years this question has been in the making for a whole continent, and soon for the entire planet."[2]

And so Marcel has graphically depicted the growing plight of all men by the plight of the displaced person in the aftermath of war. Cut loose from all his moorings the refugee drifts aimlessly on, not able to reestablish his self-identity. Uprooted from his former setting he no longer recognizes his self-image in an entirely alien land. His physical uprooting typifies the more serious and genuine

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[1]Marcel, Problematic Man, p. 20.

[2]Ibid., p. 21.

inner uprooting experienced by countless thousands in recent years. Both kinds of severance bring men face to face with an enervating nothingness and a bland meaninglessness. This is the logical consequence of the dehumanizing process. All appears hollow and paltry in the presence of this end.

> Why have I thought it necessary to reproduce in its broad lines this analysis which, at a superficial glance, seems to concern but an extreme case, that of the unfortunate whom one designates by a rather irritating euphemism as displaced persons? It is because in reality, in a situation like that of our world today, nihilism is contagious, and it is precisely upon this contagion that we have to concentrate our attention.[1]

If one really finds himself in the presence of the barracks man, faced in his imagination with the same concrete conditions out of which arise these basic questions: Who am I? What am I living for? he cannot escape feeling inwardly affected and in the end addressed by such questions himself.

First of all, one must realize that this extreme outcome might be his tomorrow. He is made to realize the precarious and contingent character of the conditions which constitute the framework of his own existence. He recognizes that there is no guarantee of absolute continuance of his present, normal surroundings as he so often assumes. The physical pilgrimage on which the refugee has entered prefigures the earthly sojourn of Marcel's homo viator:

> One can say, in short, that meaninglessness is spreading before our eyes. A strange inner mutation is thereby produced which takes on the aspect of a

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[1] Ibid., p. 21.

> genuine uprooting. Entirely new questions are being asked, they insist upon being asked where one hitherto seemed to be in an order which contained its own justification; it is the very order to which the barracks man belonged in the days when he was still a living being, when he was in the present.[1]

In returning to the question of the barracks man, one is reminded that no real answer is forthcoming from the Marxist nor from any similar atheistic movement. On the contrary it is in the name of Marxism "that countless beings have been placed in conditions which strip them of all concrete reality."[2]

> It seems that, on the whole, a certain bleeding heart of the human being, of human existence, has been laid bare in our time, under conditions which render profoundly suspicious, for a lucid mind, any attempt to cover it up again, to dissimulate it.[3]

Seeing one's own personal condition through the eyes of the barracks man makes him realize that taking his own conditions of existence for granted appears to be a mere impudence. As he becomes detached from these conditions which he spontaneously treated as self-evident, the consequence of this detachment is that suddenly, he too, no longer <u>knows who he is</u>.

What historical events led to the transfers of population or the massive deportations which have resulted in the development of the barracks man?

> But one can certainly remark that there occurred in the nineteenth century a conjunction of nationalism

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 22.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 24.

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 24.

> on the one hand, and of the industrial revolution on the other, whose effects have been extremely harmful to man.[1]

One could not stop here, for it would be necessary to investigate how nationalism and industrialism developed conjointly, and also what consequences they have had for the image which man has formed of himself. Later, with the accent on reason and individualism, an accompanying devitalization of religion occurred. Liberalism, Marxism, and Socialism followed in the ensuing years ultimately eventuating in wars that played a role in further weakening the sense of personal dignity in man.

Marcel, however, feels that the essential is elsewhere. "I will dare to say, for my part, that the process which results in the barracks man and in the anxious questioning around which all these reflections gravitate, is a genuine necrosis whose principle is metaphysical."[2]

> In a general way, if we consider the historical and sociological evolution such as it has taken place for the past two centuries, it seems that man has lost his divine reference: he ceases to confront a God as His creature and image. Might not the death of God, in the exact sense that Nietzsche has given to these words, be at the origin of the fact that man has become for himself a question without an answer?[3]

Marcel thus points-up the exact source of man's trouble, his self-alienation from God. From his characteristic stance he views man as a displaced person in reference to his original

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[1] Ibid., p. 27. [2] Ibid., p. 29.

[3] Ibid., p. 29.

position before God. He is a spirit in a materialistically-oriented world. He seeks his homeland, the spirit world. His alienation from God is a result of his own rebellion. He no longer needs God. He has repudiated him as his Creator. As far as man is concerned, God is dead, and man has helped to kill Him! Nietzsche notes the futility of it all in The Will to Power:

> The nihilist is the man who, regarding the world as it is, judges that it should not be, and regarding the world as it should be, judges that it does not exist: from them on, empirical reality has no meaning.[1]

Cut off from hope, facing despair, experiencing alienation from God, himself, and others, modern man withers on the vine, for his source of life has been severed. It is but natural for him to face a great nothingness. Life devoid of purpose, design, and the personal care of the Creator holds but bleak prospect.

> Nihilism should thus be seen as the end of a process of decomposition which takes place from the moment when, in one way or another, the original plenitude of past experience has fallen apart; and we should think here of withering and death, for it is therein that we find the most visible, the most significant expression of this process.[2]

This is the end of the road for the dehumanized soul. With all demand for being gone, participation in communion with others a thing of the past, modern man has reached the level of meaninglessness. He no longer recognizes himself since

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[1]Nietzsche, The Will to Power, quoted in Gabriel Marcel, Problematic Man, p. 33.

[2]Marcel, Problematic Man, pp. 41-42.

the self is constituted by others. There are no thou's remaining in his life, only it's. Becoming an island unto himself he deteriorates slowly, but ever so surely as a person. In a very real sense the remainder of his days is nothing but a hopeless marking of time. This is the logical consequence of dehumanization.

Man, trapped in the throes of an industrialized and materialistic society, does not present an encouraging picture. He struggles on, remembering the satisfactions of a better day. Most modern philosophers and psychologists agree with Marcel that there is a basic restlessness in man. He is a nostalgic being, longing for a fulfillment which constantly eludes him. Anxiousness pervades his being for he is ill at ease with himself, forever seeking to transcend his estrangement. But what can be made of this ceaseless searching, this hunger for transcendence, this nostalgia for being? At this point the way divides with different modern philosophers choosing <u>different</u> forks.

> One way, that taken by Sartre, Camus and most of the influential contemporary thinkers, leads to an understanding of the restless longing of man as evidence for the absurdity of existence. Man has the desire for eternity in his heart. He longs for justice and fulfilment. But he lives, condemned to die in a world filled with injustice and tragedy. In spite of the absurdity of existence, man inevitably chooses to quiet his fears with dreams of hope. Hence, the only appropriate epitaph for man is that supplied by Sartre, 'Man is a useless passion.'[1]

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[1]Keen, <u>Gabriel Marcel</u>, pp. 16-17.

This first approach to man's predicament is the answer given by most nontheistic existentialists. Little wonder the prevailing mood among them is nihilistic. But there is an alternate route:

> The other path, taken by religious thinkers of all ages, is the way taken by Marcel and the so-called 'theistic existentialists.' This way leads to an understanding of the nostalgia for being as a token, a foretaste, an earnest, of man's participation in an eternal order in which tragedy is no longer the rule of life and in which death has no dominion. To belong in promise to this order is to remain a wayfarer in time, a homo viator: wondering as we wander, yet daring to have faith that the mystery of being intends fulfilment and not frustration as the ultimate destiny of man.[1]

Each man in his day and his way must choose which path to follow. His choice reflects not only his world view but also determines the atmosphere surrounding his earthly journey. The former Sartrean way is plagued by despair and absurdity, while the latter Marcellian path is laden with hope and meaningfulness.

Concluding Statement

From an apparently innocent beginning in the legitimate field of technology, through the gradual development of the spirit of abstraction and on to the implementation of the technological mentality, the modern technologist has often reduced man to a manipulable object. Man loses his freedom and dignity in the process of this abstraction. These techniques of degradation stem from a kind of mental imperialism,

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[1]Keen, Gabriel Marcel, p. 17.

the will to power, in which the technician seeks to possess and control other human beings. Unnoticed in the ordinary world, these techniques manifested themselves in the totalitarian regimes of recent years, revealing all their dehumanizing horror in the concentration camps of World War II.

Though not as extreme, yet more far-reaching are the dehumanizing forces of modern industrialism. Under these pressures men tend to lose their ontological desire. A further complication is seen in the fact that a materialistically-oriented science has loosed men from their moorings and many are adrift on the sea of atheism and doubt. Their horizons are bounded by alienation, despair, and nihilism. Troubled, fearful, and anxious they make their way toward an uncertain future. Sartrean-like they doggedly struggle on. Condemned to be free, they are aware of staggering responsibilities which they prefer to shun. Purposelessness and nihilistic forebodings characterize their existence.

Not so with the men of Marcel's world. Though living in the same world they have discovered purpose and meaning. Through sinuous paths they find encouragement by the presence of others. True identity is discovered by participation in being. A spirit of camaraderie is engendered as faith, hope, and fidelity fill their hearts. A pervasive oneness is evidenced by a deep sharing in the mystery of being. Thus,

homo viator presses on to journey's end, intractably drawn toward The Person in whom he finds fulfillment of his person.

VALUES AND INSIGHTS

In our study of Marcel's concept of the dehumanization of man a number of values have emerged and new insights have been gained. This closing section contains a brief recapitulation of the more significant results of the study.

The Magnitude and Contemporary Relevance of the Problem

One of the more distressing features of this investigation is the fact that the problem of dehumanization is of far greater magnitude than originally suspected. Apparently, this process has pervaded most nations where industrialization has taken place, the population has exploded, or war has ravaged the land. The more advanced nations, technologically, have tended to export their abstractive know-how to the developing nations of the world. The technological mentality has increasingly become a necessity in the fight for survival among the highly competitive community of nations. For example, the evidences of technolatry can be noted in the further industrialization of Japan since World War II, where these westernizing influences have threatened the loss of the distinctive, oriental culture.

The extent to which dehumanization has invaded even the privacy of the American home is typified in the detailed and private information demanded by the U.S. Census Bureau in its census-taking activity of 1970. Some forms require nearly an hour to complete and pose questions concerning intimate matters. All of these facts are demanded as needed statistics by a bureaucratic agency for future governmental planning. Fine and imprisonment await the uncooperative.

The ever-widening effects of the technological mentality are evidenced on every hand. Their presence can be detected in many of the pressing problems of the day. According to a recent publication, man is literally encompassed by this web of technology:

> The urge to manipulate others, whether to 'solve' a 'problem' or to build an empire, begins in the nursery. It becomes monstrous not only because of personal kinks in the parents' relationships but also because of the kind of world in which the parents live and the values they serve. It is affected by and affects every aspect of our existence, from the way we treat our school mates to the way we make love to the way we rear our children.[1]

Much of the protest and rebellion on college campuses can be traced to the impersonal and dehumanizing forces at work. In a recent, nation-wide survey made by the staff of a highly reputable news magazine, corroborating evidence of this fact was discovered:

> Basic point made by many students was that universities have become too big. Young men and women

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[1]George B. Leonard, "The Future of Power," Look, January 13, 1970, pp. 36-40.

> protested they had become numbers. They spoke of a sense of isolation . . .
>
> 'It is an impersonal school in an impersonal city. It's dehumanizing. No wonder students are rebelling--they want to live as human beings relating to their society, not as regimented numbers.'[1]

George Leonard recently wrote prophetically concerning the danger of boredom which accompanies the technological society: "Mass boredom holds a revolutionary potential greater than that now possessed by SDS, the Black Panthers and all other activist groups combined."[2] While it is not claimed that a technologically-based society is responsible in every case for all the troubles of the day, yet its powerful effects on man cannot be minimized. Consider the following reports:

> Riots and mass violence are erupting in one country after another, all around the world.
>
> In a single month of spring, more than a score of nations have been hit . . .
>
> Yet almost everywhere, the strategy of protest--against almost everything--is the same: violence.
>
> Officials in many countries are seriously concerned as to why--at a time of peace between most nations--people in so many places have fallen to fighting among themselves.[3]

True, these disturbing reports appear to be world-wide, coming from both the technical and non-technical nations. A close examination of some of the outbreaks seems to

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[1]"What's Really Wrong With Colleges," U.S. News and World Report, June 16, 1969, pp. 36-38.

[2]George B. Leonard, "A Place for Snakes," Look, January 13, 1970, pp. 80-85.

[3]"Why the Riots All Over the World," U.S. News and World Report, June 16, 1969, pp. 33-35.

suggest there is a relation between a high incidence of mass violence in a given country and the extent to which that country has been industrialized and technologically oriented. People tend to have a growing resentment against the dehumanizing forces which usually accompany industrialization.

The Importance of Secondary Reflection in the Cognitive Process

Marcel's unique contribution to the field of epistemology is found in his method of secondary reflection. This is the essential approach, to him, in the study of man. While science follows the path of primary reflection (i.e. assessing objects in the external world through sense perception), the nature of man can only be understood by one's participation in being. This requires an ontological humility which recognizes a depth in being which surpasses and includes the inquirer. It is the profound acknowledgment of finitude.

Marcel suggests that at the beginning of philosophical inquiry lies a blinded intuition, one that is little aided by formal reasoning, if at all. It is the native cognitive power of the spirit. Though it is prior to reason it is not anti-rational, simply preconceptual. Marcel's sinuous movement of thought is not a random deviation, for it contains the notion of a direction. While he feels that observation can acquaint one with the outer world of things, yet

participation in being is necessary for one to come to an understanding of man. In this respect, the methods of science are inadequate for the study of man.

In the Bergsonian tradition, Marcel emphasizes the intuitive nature of self-knowledge. It is accompanied by its own inner assurance, for outer verification speaks only of a world of sense perception. Marcel's approach, in a novel and crucial way, can be called Augustinian.

> The Augustinian experience is of a self whelmed in being and truth. Nothing could better express the central Marcellian insight than St. Augustine's 'To know the truth, we must be in the truth.' We might even attempt to sum up his essentially un-abbreviable method with this shorthand expression: to philosophize is to utter the being which is present unuttered. The cardinal point which Marcel does not cease to emphasize is that this utterance is an effluence of our liberty: being can only be attested freely.
>
> The indubitable presence of being, its free attestation--upon these two points hinges our understanding of almost everything in Marcel's thought.[1]

Perhaps knowledge comes only through the intuitive grasp experienced in participation of presence. Marcel intimates that intuition is possibly the language of the spirit, something like a sixth sense. It is not anti-rational, but rather suprarational. Through participation in being, presence, and communion the knowledge of self and others is attained. This is a creative and suggestive approach to the cognitive process.

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[1]Gallagher, The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, p. 8.

Marcel's Contribution to Personality Theory

Some contemporary theories of personality are predicated on the basis of man's being nothing more than a highly complex animal; consequently, many modern psychologists make no effort to define man as a person. Their efforts are directed to defining personality and to understanding its formation and function. Man, from this particular psychological viewpoint, is simply an organism functioning in a given environmental setting. His patterns of response to the stimuli received make up his behavior, the study of which is the study of personality. The person of man is hereby eliminated from any further consideration.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, when psychology became accepted as a science, the question of a psychic agent (or soul) which regulates, guides, and controls man's behavior has been repeatedly raised and discussed, only to be rejected as unscientific. Currently, it would be somewhat difficult to find a psychologist who would admit of an inner entity or soul which is the real self that directs the activity of the individual in a purposive way.

In the midst of dissenting views Marcel has set forth his concept of being, his theory of the person as a spirit created in the image of God, immortal, free, and of divine origin. The entire burden of his philosophical work rests on the value and potential resident in man, as a spirit, incarnate in a body. One of Marcel's key concepts

centers on the drive, thrust, hunger in man towards fullness of being, namely, the concept of ontological exigence. This exigence is experienced through participation in being with others. One of the confusing facets about Marcel's view of the self is due to his failure to make a clear distinction between the self as a person and the self as a personality. Marcel insists that the self (being), evidently as a personality in this case, is constituted by others. His accent on intersubjectivity in the development of the self has something in common with the interpersonal theory of personality as set forth by the noted psychologist, Harry Stack Sullivan.[1] Sullivan viewed personality as a hypothetical entity which could not be isolated from interpersonal situations. Marcel's view of personality involved the mutual enrichment (if not constitution) of the I and thou through faith, fidelity, and love. He further introduced the concept of disponibilité, which signifies openness and accessibility to others. As a major contribution to the field of personality theory, Marcel sets forth a philosophical justification for the existence of the person that is both intellectually respectable and psychologically sound.

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[1]See Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1957), p. 134.

The Interrelatedness of Philosophy and Theology

This study awakened a new interest in the interrelatedness of philosophy and theology. Marcel's early homelife was beset by conflicting ideas about religion. Even though he seemed temperamentally inclined towards religion, he avoided discussions of it throughout young manhood; however, his metaphysical speculations during these years gave evidence of strong religious interests.

Marcel has never manifested a hostile attitude toward theological speculation. Even his earlier writings do not accent differences between philosophical and theological thought. Instead, there is growing evidence of a congeniality between the two disciplines as viewed by him. His baptism into the Catholic faith in adulthood is somewhat indicative of the integration he had personally achieved in his thinking between the two fields. Philosophy and theology became complementary to each other, not competitive. Marcel views them as partners, neither one being master or slave. In his perspective each has a role to play. Philosophy performs its task by resolving the problems in the natural realm after a rational pattern. Theology follows the route of faith in discovering the truths of the supernatural world. Interestingly enough, he allows full play of intuitive grasp in both fields. Since Marcel is committed to the pursuit of truth, he welcomes its discovery wherever and however it is found.

The confluence of these two disciplines, philosophy and theology, affords mutual reinforcement in the development of basic concepts. The concept of man is a case in point. The Biblical approach to man emphasizes his God-like being, spiritual in nature and of supreme value. Man's potential for becoming a full and enriched being is constantly accented in the Scriptures. Marcel's philosophic approach to man closely parallels that found in the Bible. His major concern is for man to escape the dehumanizing effects of this world and to find fulfillment of being. Marcel's man inhabits a teleologically structured universe which gives evidence of plan and purpose. Absurdity and nihilism find no place in his world, for it is permeated with divine purpose.

A number of Marcel's philosophical views have been tinctured by his theological presuppositions. On the other hand, he carefully tests these presuppositions to see that philosophical evidence is at hand to warrant their acceptance. For example, with a broad understanding of the Biblical account of the Fall, he weaves this doctrine into his world view, for he finds the world, in all reality, to be broken. Man is consequently viewed as a pilgrim and wanderer in search of a fulfillment to be found in its entirety only in the world to come.

With the discerning eye of an Old Testament seer, Marcel notes, with a sense of foreboding, the apocalyptic

situation developing in this atomic age. His more recent writings give evidence of a sense of urgency, for the day is pregnant with the seeds of both utopian promise or hellish destruction. Man holds the key. Capable of approaching the situation from both vantage points, philosophical and theological, Marcel gains a fix that suggests the accuracy of a mariner charting his course on a troubled sea.

While Marcel began his philosophic quest many years ago, he was ultimately led by it to an examination of his theological views, and thence to his conversion. Philosophy was not cast aside at this point, but was accorded a place of greater importance as a supporting and purifying agent to his faith. He views the relation of these two great disciplines as simply different sides of the same coin. While this is not necessarily a new approach, yet it is particularly refreshing in a day when much is made of the incompatibility of faith and reason.

Emergence of Urgent Problems Calling For Study

In making an investigation of such a crucial problem as the dehumanization of man, one is impressed by the part it plays in other important issues facing modern man. The danger of specializing in the study of one particular problem often lies in the tendency to consider the part as the whole. When this occurs, the examiner usually loses perspective, failing to see the relationships which exist among the

several parts. In an effort to avoid needless constriction, the writer poses in this section a number of serious problems in which technolatry and the resultant dehumanization are vital factors. These interlocking areas of concern have surfaced during the preparation of this dissertation and suggest the direction which future research might take. Most of these problems are in urgent need of solution if the further deterioration of man is to be checked.

1. How can man deal efficiently with the rapidly growing masses without becoming abstractive in his relationships with individuals? As the population increases, both government and business must maintain ever-increasing files on persons. How can this abstractive and necessary file work be done without the spirit of abstraction permeating all other areas of personal contact?
2. What are the limitations, opportunities, and responsibilities imposed upon man by the vast network of interdependence created by modern technology? Science and technology have increased the need for specialization to the point of men becoming crucially dependent on each other's skill and services. People are tightly linked together, especially in metropolitan areas. What are the implications of this new, complex relationship?

3. How can man effectively manage the population explosion? Medical science has been so successful in lowering infant mortality, controlling disease, and extending life expectancy that the world's population has been increasing at a frightening rate in recent years. Dwindling food supplies and overcrowded conditions confront man with the simple choice: fewer births or more deaths. Could there be a relationship between overcrowded communities and a high incidence of neuroses, hunger, immorality, and crime?
4. How can an industrialized society live in its own polluted environment? Poisonous wastes fill the air, water, and land. Will man die, the victim of his own pollutants, or will ways be found to make him responsible for their proper elimination? The despoliation of the environment has created a tremendous ecological problem, the solution of which is the announced national concern during this decade.
5. What effective means can be implemented to control the proliferation of modern weapons of warfare? The more recent discoveries of science, combined with advanced technologies, have made possible tools of destruction nearly beyond the imagination. As these weapons increase in number the probabilities of their being used also mount. Is there a way to control this tendency towards mass suicide?

6. In the midst of dehumanizing forces, how does one go about rediscovering the value of man? The value of the whole man must be found--not of the intellect only, but of the heart as well. There is a great American need for passion and caring. There are ways to learn a life of vibrant awareness of others. A person robbed of his ability to feel deeply can never really care about others. The objective, non-involved approach of the past has made many into unfeeling machines. The next few years will certainly reveal that caring deeply for others is now as necessary as food, air, and water.
7. How does one recapture meaning and purpose in life? Only as man is restored to his proper place, sensing the dignity of being, will he lay hold of proper commitment to worthwhile goals. Nothing so corrupts the national life as the absence of compelling new visions of the good. With nothing really exciting to become and be, people can soon lose the will to save themselves. The loss of ontological exigence eventuates in meaningless living.

The Benefits of Close Study of Marcel

Indubitably one of the greatest values derived from this study comes as a result of living in the presence of Marcel these many months. Through the reading and reflection necessitated thereby, I feel that I have come to know the man better--a man of brillance and goodness.

Marcel exemplifies a balanced philosophic approach to life that is both wholesome and attractive. While he definitely accents the priority of intuition over reason in coming to an understanding of man, yet he proceeds to develop a concrete philosophy based on both reason and experience. To him, a genuine, intuitive sense of direction is verified in the actual experiences of life. Theory and practice find happy union in his approach; subjectivity and objectivity achieve a proper balance.

Disponibilité is the term which Marcel has chosen to describe the characteristic of being that always accompanies presence. It involves the openhearted giving of oneself to an other. Availability, invitation to communion, ready access, and a warm extension of understanding typify the disponible person. This is the pattern of Marcel's being which glows so unmistakably throughout his writings.

Marcel's life and spirit undergird his philosophy. Though not always in agreement with him, one tends to have the profoundest respect for him--a greathearted man in love with life, his brothers, and his God. Lingering in his presence evokes enrichment of being.

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