

METAPHYSICS AND FAITH IN GABRIEL MARCEL

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Abstract

*The intention of this text is to show the image the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel, has in the modern philosophy, given that his search was conducted effectively as magnetized by the Christian data. What is fundamental in this marcelian search is the binding of the existence by otherness and the priority of communication with each other and the Divine Presence. Gabriel Marcel is the French philosopher who translated, in the best way possible, the dramatic feeling of human existence. The existence, as the author of the work “Journal metaphysic” considers, can’t be seen as a **demonstrandum**, as a finish point, as an end. The marcelian intercession reminds the man that he/she is nothing else but a guest with limited right of residence on earth. The transcendence allows the man to see the incapability, the limit, the strength and culpability which characterizes the very being, it is the spiritual answer given to the limit of human power. According to Marcel, the existence shouldn’t be treated like a problem which finds its solution working on a desk but something which involves me because, I, the one who put the question, am alive, exist, feel the very life running through my veins. For the French philosopher, the existence is not a problem but a mystery, an enigma. The act of faith is indivisible; the faith of other people pays no interest to me.*

Keywords: being, existence, problem, mystery, faith, love, metaphysics, comprehension, reason, transcendence.

Foreword

The activity and work[1] of Gabriel Marcel[2] are significant for the "religious existentialism"[3], which is based on trying to support a theory of existence and value and on the reinterpretation of the concept of transcendence. Gabriel Marcel is undoubtedly the French thinker who translated the most directly the dramatics of human existence[4]. Marcel expected from the one philosophizing with him, to be constantly linked to his experience, the experience of a reality put under scrutiny. The spiritual dimension of life, the nature and its conditions of possibility, are best described in the language of subjectivity. The French philosopher believes that everything evoking the idea of system[5] is intolerable, preferring the name of "Christian socratism", which better names his method of perpetual replay. Marcel's works are successive meditations on various topics that meet only in their effort to reveal the human condition.

Throughout his career, Gabriel Marcel has adopted a fundamentally Christian vision of the world, his main ideas being compatible with a religious - Christian perspective, all his work offering the expression of his experiences regarding the divine transcendence. In this section we intend to explore one of his central themes that constitute the metaphysical development subject elaborated by Gabriel Marcel. His approach helps him show what Brendan Sweetman[6], in his book, *The Vision of Gabriel Marcel*[7]

considers to be "a unique approach to the problematic of the existence of God". The analysis of faith in the Marcelian sense[8] requires discussions about: The status of the philosopher who tries to question faith, The relationship with the divine - between participation and invocation, About prayer and the presence of grace. Difficulties in asking questions about faith lived and in answering them, The problem of coexistence in believers and unbelievers. Without claiming to question all these discussions, we will track how the French philosopher presents faith as a centralizing role of being, as focus of the essential energies in a transcendent center. Also, our goal in this section is to show how Marcel sees the philosopher's function when reporting to the existential meaning of the faithful life, the relationship that is established between the metaphysical thinking and the Revelation.

Metaphysics and Faith in Gabriel Marcel

The controversies and debates on the correspondence between reason and faith have existed since the ancient world, being understood in this sense that philosophy is born in Greece and its main source is religious. We can say with Etienne Gilson[9] that any field of the Western culture history begins with the Greeks. This is true of the philosophical notion of God as well, as in the case of logic, science, art, politics, etc. There are arguments that allow us to consider that there are sufficient similarities between the definition of a Christian God and Plato's definition of *Good*. The idea of Good in the Platonic sense "should be seen as reason for everything that is right and beautiful; it conceives in the visible the light and its lord, and in the intelligible it prevails, producing truth and intellect; and again I think that who wants to do something cherished in his private or public life, has to contemplate it"[10].

The known phrase, usually attributed to Origen[11] "believe not investigate", emphasizes the primacy of faith in its report with reason, in the act of knowing God. This report appears subversively in the Middle Ages, but not limited to, being an intensely discussed topic even today. This problem could not remain foreign to Augustine, that who in the Middle Ages will strengthen the idea that reason is not contrary to faith by assertion „*intellige ut credas, crede ut intelligas*” (I understand that to believe, I believe that to understand). Kierkegaard is given the authorship of all the philosophies of existence[12], he would be the truncated "existential tree", and the first one which opposed the Hegelian rationalism, also the first one who proclaimed that the truth is in subjectivity, that the individual, the existence is not a paragraph in a system. One of the essential features covering all existentialism, said Mounier E., is that: "all existentialism is first a philosophy of man before being a philosophy of nature"[13]. Pascal and Kierkegaard "were considered as witnesses of the Christian evidence, an evidence that is communicated by confession rather than by reason"[14]. The Kierkegaardian protest has inspired and even "caused most existential philosophies[15] today; first those of Heidegger and Jaspers that, on the one hand, have generalized it and completed it with data of the husserlian phenomenology and the Nietzschean oracles, but on the other hand, have limited it by eliminating its religious appearance. Then those of Berdyaev, Sestov, Soloviov, Landsberg, Unamuno, who in contrast have highlighted this religious message of the Kierkegaardian message and, in this measure, have been here much richer than the two great German philosophers, as to not forget, Kierkegaard did not want to be a philosopher, but above all else a religious man, an authentic Christian, recalling to his brothers the terrible exigencies of the faith. The sense of the divine history is to reconcile man with himself and with nature. For Christians our

lifetime "is a fatal failure before the door of death. Death, for them is not an end, but rather it is the only beginning"[16]. The act of thinking is a mystery, is not entirely clear in mind. Marcel is in the bosom of the Christian doctrine, seeing in love the act of freedom, and this vision, we can say, coincides with the essence of any true religion that puts love in the center.

Gabriel Marcel[17], is positioned in the existence philosophies[18], and operates his reflection independently of the Danish pastor, even if, as Michael Bernard says, by his reaction against Hegelianism the author of the *Metaphysical Journal* "made in his own way the same road as Kierkegaard, or rather that he lived inside, by moving his own thinking, a philosophical experience in some degree analogous to the latter"[19]. There are differences between Kierkegaard and Marcel, but what brings them closer is that the two center their reflection on faith or on the relationship of existence with the Transcendence. In this sense it is legitimate, as Michael Bernard[20] suggests, to place Marcel in the Kierkegaardian descent. The Kierkegaardian thinking was determined by the acknowledgment of the authentic Christianity requirements, as the early Christians have lived it: "above all, it was to the Danish minister, to be a saint and to call others to holiness"[21]. Gabriel Marcel has often been classified (by Sartre, among many others) as a Catholic existentialist. But, as he himself repudiated the label, is best abandoned.

For the author of the "*Metaphysical Journal*" when speaking of philosophy, the result, if we can use the word, is inseparable from the research or investigation process leading to it. The philosophical exploration is for Marcel something intensely personal; and we cannot simply separate the result of exploration and pass it as an impersonal truth. But this is only a matter of participation in the actual process of philosophizing. And if objected that, in this case, philosophy implies a starting point repeated again and that there can be no set of results proven or verified, which can serve as a foundation for reflection, Marcel's answer is: "this perpetual beginning again is an inevitable part of all really philosophical works". Ever since the preparation of the *Metaphysical Journal*, Marcel was concerned about the existence of faith before which the rationalist claims that want to reduce everything to the demands of logic are prevented. The French philosopher became a Catholic in 1929; and is truer to say that his conversion was part of the general development of his thought than to say his philosophy was the result of conversion. His accession to Catholicism confirmed, undoubtedly, his belief that the philosopher should pay attention to certain issues, but the reflection on religious faith is an important feature of his work.

In Marcel's case we are dealing with a radical rejection of the alternative proposed by Brunschwig between "to believe" and "to verify", he opted for faith's inability to be verified. The accession to faith is possible only as existent, never as thought in general. The experience of faith, in a marcelian sense, concerns a reality that belongs to the mystery, or to that non-objective world we live in, in which we are engaged and which is beyond question: "the metaphysical". This intimate relationship of existence and faith in Marcel's acceptance involves, in many commentators views, many pitfalls. A first objection would be that "the marcelian attempt to link the metaphysical to the religious exposes the philosophy to the risk of losing any specificity, becoming nothing more than a pure Propedeutic to theology"[22]. As Pietro Prini said in the work[23] dedicated to the marcelian thought: "Gabriel Marcel's philosophy forms a real and proper unverified methodology, able to rewrite the outdated assumptions of rationalism"[24]. Faith is not a matter of believing that, but believing in; and God is for Marcel, as for Kierkegaard[25],

the absolute You. God is absolute presence, and he can be addressed through intersubjective relations, such as creative love and fidelity, which are supported by and show him. A man can meet with God through worship and prayer, through invocation and response. There are ways to experience the divine presence. Gabriel Marcel was sure that truth existed, which by definition is universal, but the only way opening up to this universal is possible only based on individual situations. Evidence of an authentic religious attitude is the opening to the universal and its search: "Now is very necessary to reconvene the path opened up by the highest philosophical thought from Socrates and Plato on the one hand and the highest religious preaching on the other hand: without falling into an imprudent syncretism, we may even be required to waive certain revealing consistencies among superior religions. Any prophet who speaks against the universal is a false prophet"[26].

The marcelian metaphysical search concerns the recognition of the ontological mystery, the reflection on existence, the disclosure of a personal God. Marcel's thinking was concerned by the reflection on the purpose of our experience, that which is subject to recognition of the transcendental plane, thus paving the recognition of the revelation, without being able to substitute it. The existence of the given Christian, the philosopher considers, has the role of a "fertilized principle"[27], and that makes possible "the birth of certain ideas to which we did not have access without it". Marcel believes in the eschatological triumph of goodness; and recognizes that an optimistic outlook can be maintained for religious reasons, meaning in the light of the faith. For him, the claiming and refusal were always two possibilities for people and always will be. The path chosen by Marcel[28] is one of mystery, following in his path "the crossing from the empirical world of objectivity, in the intelligible world of intersubjectivity and, from there, in the mystery of transcendence"[29]. "The transcendence magnetization" appears in Marcel's case from the years preceding the war in 1914, the philosopher being constantly concerned with the existence of God at that time. All these issues do not come amid a religious training, but on the contrary, as the author tells us: "I had not received any religious training and had been living in an environment where free thought was the rule"[30]. The discovery of faith was for Marcel the great achievement, enabling the flourishing of all his philosophical themes.

The marcelian approach rising from a thorough reflection of the existential situations of man "is open to the mystery of a transcendent Being, of an Absolute You ensuring human love its sustainability"[31]. The philosopher forced himself, throughout his entire life, to answer "that call of transcendence" which, he says, he perceived since childhood through an early pain (maternal death), but also through the grace of music. His life was illuminated by the idea that any serious philosophical reflection should lead to transcendence. From the "*Metaphysical Journal*", Marcel seeks to explain to himself the existence of faith in face of which the rationalist claims that reduce everything to the logical requirements of thinking falter. The effort of his reflections in the years immediately following the 1914 war refers to the study of the metaphysical conditions of faith. The anxiety resulting from that experience of human suffering compels the French philosopher to "dig" this unknown field of inexhaustible wealth that is the concrete and personal existence of man.

The focus of the marcelian metaphysics implies the relations of existence with faith, they meet "in the absolute point of convergence of the metaphysics and the religious"[32]. This meeting point of the metaphysics with the religious becomes a true community, and

this fact corresponds to the order of mystery, or that inobjectible world that I live. Marcel's perspective indicates an intimate relationship of the existence with faith, a *nexus* of the existence and faith, despite the fact that for many commenters this nexus involves many dangers, in many ways. The biggest objection that is submitted claims that the marcelian attempt to link the metaphysical to the religious exposes the philosophy to the risk of losing any specificity by becoming nothing more than a pure Propedeutic for theology. In the case of the marcelian thinking, as Ricoeur says, it is about introducing the faith in philosophy, using an experience of transcendence. The presence of God in the philosophical marcelian itinerary forces us to examine what he has to say about faith as the foundation of this inter-relationships. The question regarding the act of faith makes the philosopher ask himself questions about freedom, about values, about immortality, about the participation in existence. The reflection on the intelligibility of faith is linked to reflections on: "faith and the existence of God, faith testimony, reflections on grace, conversion, love, desire, religious history, etc." [33]. Praying, says Marcel, is the only way to think of God.

Metaphysics is concerned, according to the French philosopher, by the analysis of mysteries not of problems. The secondary reflection [34] and the religious contemplation are terms used synonymously by Marcel. The fundamental concern of the metaphysical research, is the ontological status of the person most intimately involved (myself), but it should be seen in terms of the relationship with God in the brotherhood of being (ontological community) in which I and the other beings participate. Marcel agrees with St. Paul's axiom: "You are not your master," which he considers to be endowed with ontological and concrete significance. The being is the example par excellence of the ontological mystery, the being is a mystery, not a problem. The absolute mystery is God himself. It is wrong to speak of God's problem, according to the marcelian vision. Once we put forward the question of divinity, we realize that no objective criterion can be applied to it, we realize that all the data is violated. This is the motivation behind Marcel's objections to the arguments (proves) of the existence of God. God's existence does not admit evidence, any attempt to find evidence remains problematic at primary reflection level. All that means embracing the mystery of being is given to us in a sacred way. Marcel criticizes the rationalists for the naivety of not having understood that "there are categories of life that cannot be renewed by any scientific discovery, be it of Einstein himself" [35]. "The transcendence exigency" must be located "in relation to life as is lived in a concrete way, and not to define it in the attenuated ether which is that of pure thought" [36]. This report also justifies the marcelian approach that "means invariably, as you realized already, to climb from life to thought and then to come down from thought to life to try to clarify the latter" [37]. Marcel speaks of "the transcendence exigency" saying about it: „Notons en premier lieu que l' exigence de transcendance se présente avant tout, qu' elle est éprouvée avant tout -comme insatisfaction. Mais la réciproque ne paraît pas être vraie, il ne semble pas qu' on soit en droit de dire que toute insatisfaction implique l' aspiration à la transcendance” [38] (Let us first note that the transcendence exigency is presented above all as dissatisfaction. But the reverse seems not to be true, it does not seem that we have the right to say that any dissatisfaction involves an aspiration to transcendence). The dissatisfaction is based, says the French philosopher, on the absence of something that is outside the person.

In the case of the French philosopher, the distinction between existence and objectivity is very important, the existence not being able to be treated as a

demonstrandum. What Marcel highlights is the fact that God cannot be treated as an object. The famous phrase "When we talk about God we do not speak of God" can be interpreted as negative theology. For the Christian philosophers, God is not the God of the philosophers, but the God whose features relate sanctity: He is Deus Sanctus. The philosopher stresses that true philosophy must be found in dialogue and that our relations with others are essential. The marcelian dialogical approach on the Mystery of Being leads in its perspective to a full awareness of the Mystery of God, all its philosophy actually being an approach of the Mystery of Being.

Like any man, the philosopher is a *homo viator*, he is always looking for the final enlightenment, which only apparently can be found in the "other realm". The Christian faith is able to fill the void created by the exercise of reason, "to open our perspective of a reality *au delà de toute réalité subie ou connue...*"[39].

Conclusion

The great religious thinkers have told us that when we talk about God, we do not know of what or who we speak of. It is easy to talk, because such a language was formed over centuries and settled in our cultural layers, but a moment's thought is enough to realize that unfortunately we do not really know of what or who we talk about. Faith[40] is a central theme for Marcel's metaphysics, this constituting the object of his first questions. Marcel's search effectively ran as magnetic by the Christian data, because his vision of man integrated the transcendence and the encounter with God. What is fundamental in this marcelian search is binding the existence to otherness and the priority of the communication with each other. The meeting of "I" and "you" makes possible to flourish in experience of a lived fullness, which causes a metaphysics of "we are", accessible only through love, hope and faith and belief. The inter-subjectivity is essentially openness to another and asks for a reciprocal opening. The world where each deals only with his own interests appears for Marcel as a broken world, a world that has lost its meaning and the interior unit. The sense of the world is given by the opportunity to return to ourselves, to ask ourselves about the being, to open ourselves to the other, through communication and communion. Its philosophy is based on the human existence, existence that has no consistency except through participation in the *Being*.

Life as lived by the philosopher was marked by the conviction of the need of understanding and closeness between people. This neosocratic (Christian socratism, which better names his method of perpetual replay, of second reflection), as he liked to call himself, learned from his master Socrates the lesson to call philosophy to the meeting with life. Despair, betrayal and suicide are, after Marcel, "the clearest expressions of a will of effective denial of being"[41]. The philosophical work of the French philosopher is based on several key concepts: meeting, presence, promise and commitment, availability, reliability and, above all, the self-realization with and through another[42]. The only legitimate philosophy, in marcelian understanding, is that generated by a "fecundant radiation of the revelation", a philosophy rooted in the "mystery of being" that makes possible "an encounter with a light that senses it, and whose secret stimulation and preventing heat discovers them in its depth."[43] Marcel stresses that the true philosophy of existence must be found in dialogue, with *telos* a full awareness of *God's Mystery*. His vision on man actually integrates transcendence and meeting with the Other.

The marcelian search concerns that "concrete universal", which means "the central reality", "an inexhaustible concrete", "something that's different from me, something that is much closer to myself than oneself." The greatness of the philosopher put in question is "to have continually maintained this basic trust, this default trust, that gives the man and the universe, to others and to God, and somehow radicals hope by rooting it into existence." [44]. We can say that there is in marcelian thinking a principle according to which man can be and remains free only as long as he remains linked to transcendence [45]. The care of the marcelian thought is to illuminate the mystery of communication and communion with the "absolute You", thus he approaches the philosophy of transcendence and the philosophy of dialogue. The being is a place of communion, a light irradiation - a divine environment. Marcel admits that once other people's lives come into contact with ours we can meet the transcendent spiritual reality which is in others. His philosophy is directed within the intersubjective dialogue, as Socrates, witnessing the birth of true ideas and of a good understanding of the nature of reality, that can improve people's lives. The French philosopher's method is a spontaneous use of the journal, of the example, of the common life, of the theater. Existentially speaking, in a Heideggerian sense, "man lives a life in which «es geht um sich selbst» (Heidegger), or is all about him and only him, which means that my life is centered on me" [46]. The transcendence philosophy of dialogue and reciprocity developed by Marcel, disagrees with Heidegger in this respect, but respects the authentic vision of the German philosopher of human (being - into - death), appreciating him as being the most profound philosopher of our time. By metaphysical faith, communion, love and proximity to others (coexistence), Marcel certainly is in line with Paul when he says: "Nobody ought to owe nothing, but love to one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" [47].

Faith is a theme that appears as a red thread in the French philosopher's metaphysics, which is Christian and turned against dogmatism. The final conclusion in the order of thought of the "*Metaphysical Journal*" author is that the divine cannot be proven rationally, but lived in the experience of faith. In Marcel's case, existence's relations with faith are obvious, "relations that tend to the limit, in the absolute point of convergence of the metaphysics with religion, to become a true communion" [48]. The key to his entire metaphysics, the marcelian thinking seal can be inferred from the statement: „Peut-être rendrait-on assez exactement compte de ce qui fut ma préoccupation métaphysique centrale et constate en disant qu'il s'agissait pour moi de découvrir comment le sujet, dans sa condition même de sujet, s'articule à une réalité qui cesse dans cette perspective de pouvoir être représentée comme objet sans jamais cesser pour cela d'être à la fois exigée et reconnue comme réalité. De telles investigations n'étaient possibles qu'à condition de dépasser un psychologisme qui se borne à définir et à caractériser des attitudes sans prendre en considération leur visée, leur intentionalité concrète. Ainsi apparaît la convergence absolue du métaphysique et du religieux qui se révèle dès mes premiers écrits" [49] ("Maybe it would give quite accurate account of what was my central metaphysical and constant concern saying that it was for me to discover how the subject, in its own condition as a subject, articulates to a reality that stops in this perspective to be able to be represented as an object without ever stopping for it to be both required and recognized as true. Such investigations were not possible unless to overcome a psychologism is merely to define and characterize attitudes without taking into account their specific intentionality. Thus the absolute convergence of the metaphysics and religious appears, that is revealed from my early writings").

Finding oneself does not happen in an existence which is delimited by others and by the divine transcendence, but in an open proexistence, both a giver and a recipient – in a communion, in faith and love. This is the marcelian metaphysics belief, that certainly fits the measure of our faith and freedom.

References

- [1]. Main works: *Journal métaphysique* (Première partie: 1914; Deuxième partie: 1915 – 1923; *Être et Avoir* (1935); *Du Refus à l'Invocation* (1940); *Homo Viator* (1945); *Le Mystère de l'Être*, (I – II, 1954); *Les Hommes contre l'Humaine* (1951); *L'Homme problématique* (1955); *Le Déclin de la Sagesse* (1954); *Fragments philosophiques* (1962).
- [2]. BORCHERT DONALD M. (electronic edition), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd edition, 9 volume, 2006 Thomson Gale, a part of the Thomson Corporation, pp. 699 - 700: „Gabriel Marcel, the French philosopher, dramatist, and critic, was born in Paris. His father, a highly cultured man, held important administrative posts in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Musées Nationaux. Marcel's mother died when he was four. Raised in a home dominated by the cultured agnosticism of his father and the liberal, moralistic Protestantism of his aunt, and nurtured in a scholastic system concerned only with intellectual achievement, he later sought refuge in a modified type of idealism. The shaking experiences of World War I, during which he was an official of the Red Cross concerned with locating missing soldiers, brought home to him the failure of abstract philosophy to cope with the tragic character of human existence. His conversion to Catholicism in 1929 did not substantially alter the direction of his thought, although it intensified his conviction that the philosopher must take into consideration the logic interior to faith and hope”.
- [3]. Gabriel Marcel, *Dialogues with Pierre Boutroux*, translation by Aurelian Crăiuțu and Cristian Preda, with a foreword by Mihai Sora, Bucharest, Publishing Anastasia, 1996, p. 104: "It should be noted that G. Marcel tolerated the phrase of "Christian existentialism" without too much irony, for a short time: "I was saying to myself in the background, the philosophy of existence, as I conceive it, is an open philosophy that cannot be closed to me as with all the <<isms>>, whatever they may be. I thought that any <<ism>> involves, in relation to that which adheres to it, a relationship that was not the one I could maintain on my condition".
- [4]. J. Lacroix, *Le socratisme chrétien de Gabriel Marcel*, in J. Lacroix, *Panorama de la Philosophie Française Contemporaine*, Paris, Ed. Presses Universitaires de France, 1966, p. 124: „Je demeure persuadé disait-il, que c'est dans le drame et à travers le drame que la pensée métaphysique se saisit elle-même et se définit in concreto”.
- [5]. The system, considers Marcel, implies possession. But it is not to "possess" the truth, but to "be possessed" by it. The philosopher does not trust the abstract idea of truth: he prefers the spirit of truth.
- [6]. Professor of philosophy at Rockhurst University, Kansas City, MO, USA, President, Gabriel Marcel Society, Kansas City.
- [7]. Sweetman Brendan, *The Vision of Gabriel Marcel. Epistemology, Human Person, the Transcendent*, Amsterdam – New York, Editions Rodopi, 2008: p. 69: „His approach leads him to present what I regard as a quite unique approach to the question of the existence of God. It is an existentialist approach, to be sure, yet it is not simply based on a faith commitment to God, as we find for example in Kierkegaard, whose view emphasizes the affective and volitional nature of our relationship with God at the expense, many would argue, of any rational approach to the question. There is a clear rational structure to Marcel's approach to the topic of God and religious experience (...)”.
- [8]. Plourde Simonne, *Vocabulaire philosophique de Gabriel Marcel*, Paris, Editions Du CERF, 1985, pp. 260-270.
- [9]. Gilson Étienne, *God and Philosophy*, translated by Alex Moldovan, Targu-Lapus, Publishing Galaxia Gutenberg, 2005, p. 23.
- [10]. Platon, *Republica*, 517c, edition maintained by Constantin Noica and Petru Cretia, foreword by Constantin Noica, translation, interpretation, preliminary clarifications, notes and Annex by Andrei

- Cornea, collection maintained by Idel Segall, volume V, Bucharest, Publishing Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1986, p. 316.
- [11]. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, 9, as cited in Adrian Muraru, *Believe and not investigate – notes on the margin of a classic text*, in the magazine „*Ideii în dialog*”, III year, no. 1 (16), January, 2006, p. 24
- [12]. Mounier Emmanuel., *Introduction aux existentialisms*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1962, (édition électronique) pp. 7-8: „À la rigueur, il n'est pas de philosophie qui ne soit existentialiste. Pour elle, non pas tant l'existence dans toute son extension, mais l'existence de l'homme est le problème premier de la philosophie. C'est l'appel de Socrate opposant aux rêveries cosmogoniques des physiciens d'Ionie l'impératif intérieur du « Connais-toi toi-même »” (On rigor, there is no philosophy unless existential. For this philosophy, the human existence is the main problem of philosophy. This thinking can be characterized as a reaction of the human philosophy against excessive philosophy of ideas and things. We can say that is the call of Socrates - 'Know thyself', against the cosmogonist reveries of the physicists from Ionia).
- [13]. *ibidem*, p. 28 : „Tout existentialisme est d'abord une philosophie de l'homme avant d'être une philosophie de la nature”.
- [14]. *ibidem*, p. 10
- [15]. Hossu Andrei Iustin, *French existentialism*, Iasi, Publishing Institutul European, 2006, p. 13: "The Christian existentialists postulate the primacy of human salvation through the faith religious fervor on the work of theoretical knowledge and socio-historical practice. Thus, the Christian existentialism is presented as a new way to speak of Christianity".
- [16]. Mounier E., *Introduction aux existentialisms*, ed. cit. pp. 42-43: „mais comme un échec fatal jusqu'à la porte de la mort. La mort, pour eux, n'est pas une fin, bien au contraire, elle est le seul commencement”.
- [17]. Marcel says that: "Kierkegaard's immortal glory may be essentially revealed, not by arguments but by his life, through his work, that a philosopher worthy of the name is not, can not, must not, be a man of Congress or a mere instrument of proclaiming official truths likely to rally the votes of all" See Gilson Etienne et al, *Existentialisme Chrétien*, Paris, Plon, 1947, p. 315.
- [18]. This existentialist philosophy is essentially a dialectical philosophy (vide E. Mounier, *Introduction aux existentialisms*, ed. cit., p. 33).
- [19]. Bernard Michel, *La philosophie religieuse de Gabriel Marcel*, étude critique, Le Puy, Cahiers du nouvel humanisme, 1952, p. 7.
- [20]. *ibidem*, p. 9: „En ce sens, il semblerait donc logique de ranger Gabriel Marcel dans la lignée kierkegaardienne”.
- [21]. *ibidem*.
- [22]. Bernard Michel, *La philosophie religieuse de Gabriel Marcel*, ed. cit., p. 13: „tentative marcellienne de relier de métaphysique au religieux expose la philosophie à perdre toute spécificité en ne devenant qu'une pure et simple propédeutique à la théologie”.
- [23]. Prini Pietro, *Gabriel Marcel et la méthodologie de l'invérifiable*, Paris, Economica, 1984.
- [24]. Reale Giovanni ;Antiseri Dario, *Il pensiero occidentale dalle origini ad oggi*, volume terzo, Brescia, Editrice la Scuola, 1983, p. 471: “la filosofia di Gabriel Marcel si configura come una vera e propria metodologia dell'inverificabile, capace di circoscrivere le pretese smodate del razionalismo”.
- [25]. Marcel's ideas on this subject were formed before reading Kierkegaard. In reading he recognized certain points of similarity. We also draw attention to the affinity of Marcel and Martin Buber, regarding the I-Thou relationship.
- [26]. Gabriel Marcel, *Le mystère de l'Être*, II, Association Présence de Gabriel Marcel, 1997, p. 90: „Sur ce point, il est de toute nécessité de rejoindre le chemin qui a été frayé par la plus haute pensée philosophique depuis Socrate et Platon d'une part, la plus haute prédication religieuse, d'une part, sans donner dans un syncrétisme imprudent, nous avons le droit, il même l'obligation, de relever certaines concordances révélatrices entre les religions supérieures. Tout prophète qui parle contre l'universel doit être regardé comme faux prophète”.
- [27]. Gabriel Marcel, *Location and specific approaches of the ontological mystery* in Gabriel Marcel, *Dialogues with Pierre Boutang*, ed. cit, 1996, p. 203.
- [28]. Marcel Gabriel, *Testament philosophique dans Presence Gabriel Marcel (Cahier 4). Gabriel Marcel et les injustices de ce temps. La responsabilité du philosophe*, Paris, Aubier, 1983, p. 129: „On m'a parfois qualifié, non sans justesse, de philosophe itinérant. Je n'ai jamais cessé de me considérer comme «étant en route», comme étant, pour parler comme l'un de mes personnages «en marche vers un but que tout ensemble nous voyons et ne nous voyons pas». (I have sometimes been described,

- not without justice, an itinerant philosopher. I have never stopped to consider myself as "being on the road", as being, to speak as one of my characters, "on my way to a goal that we see and not see").
- [29]. Garaudy Roger, *Perspectives de l' homme. Existentialisme, pensée catholique, structuralisme, marxisme*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1969, p. 139 : „le passage du monde empirique de l' objectivité, au monde inteligibile de l' intersubjectivité, de là, au mystère de la transcendance”.
- [30]. Marcel Gabriel, *Testament philosophique*, ed. cit., p. 129: „moi qui n' avais reçu aucune formation religieuse et avais vécu dans un milieu où la libre-pensée était la règle”.
- [31]. Bernard Michel, *La philosophie religieuse de Gabriel Marcel*, ed. cit., p. 10.
- [32]. *ibidem*, p. 12.
- [33]. Plourde Simonne, *Vocabulaire philosophique de Gabriel Marcel*, ed. cit., p. 261: „La réflexion sur l' intelligibilité de la foi est liée aux réflexions sur: foi et existence de Dieu, épreuve de la foi, réflexions sur la grâce, la conversion, l' amour, la volonté, l'histoire religieuse, etc”.
- [34]. Marcel speaks of the recuperative power of the secondary reflection. The secondary reflection is raised to a higher rank, it is a reflection "on the second power". The primary and secondary reflection are not contrary, but between the two levels of reflection there is a complimentarily, each with its own field of action. The secondary reflection's purpose is not producing results, it is an exploration line of thought. For the purpose of Marcel, the primary metaphysical and ontological question, "What am I?", is an example of the need to move to a higher level of reflection, to move from the problematic to the metaproblematic.
- [35]. Gabriel Marcel, *Le mystère de l'Être*, vol. I Association Présence de Gabriel Marcel, 1997, p. 49: „existe des catégories du vécu qui ne peuvent être renouvelées par aucune découverte scientifique, serait-ce celles d' Einstein”.
- [36]. *ibidem*, p. 49: „par rapport à la vie telle qu' elle est concrètement vécue, et non pas la définir dans l' éther raréfié qui serait celui de la pensée pure”.
- [37]. *ibidem*, p. 49: „Ma démarche consistera invariablement, vous avez déjà pu vous en rendre compte, a remonter de la vie vers la pensée et ultérieurement à redescendre de la pensée ut ultérieurement à redescendre de la pensée vers la vie pour tenter d' éclairer celle-ci”.
- [38]. *ibidem*, p. 50.
- [39]. Stere Ernest, *Doctrines and trends in the french contemporary philosophy*, Iași, Publishing Junimea, 1975, p. 246
- [40]. Generally, in French, the word *faith* involves a personal relationship. The word *faith*, in turn, has a broader sense: one can speak of belief in the world's existence, in others existence, etc.
- [41]. Gabriel Marcel, *Location and specific approaches of the ontological mystery*, in Gabriel Marcel, *Dialogues with Pierre Boutang*, ed. cit., p. 185.
- [42]. Meeting with each other, says Marcel, is not possible through a "communication without communion". In this case, the other is interposed between me and my own reality, he makes me a stranger to myself, I cease to understand myself and finally to adhere to my own words.
- [43]. Gabriel Marcel, *Location and specific approaches of the ontological mystery*, in Gabriel Marcel, *Dialogues with Pierre Boutang*, ed. cit., p. 204.
- [44]. J. Lacroix, *Panorama de la Philosophie Française Contemporaine*, Paris, Ed. Presses Universitaires de France, 1966, p. 130.
- [45]. Marcel, G., *Metaphysical Journal*, translated by Dorin Stefanescu, Timisoara, Publishing Amarcord, 1995, p. 180: "(...) the belief in immortality, as faith in God, would be contained in the very act of our freedom”.
- [46]. Alexandru Dragomir, *Five departures from today. Exercise of phenomenology*, Bucharest, Publishing Humanitas, 2005, p. 194.
- [47]. *Rom.* 13, 8.
- [48]. Bernard Michel, *La philosophie religieuse de Gabriel Marcel*, ed. cit. p. 12: „rapports qui tendent, à la limite, au point absolu de convergence du métaphysique et du religieux, à devenir un véritable communion”.
- [49]. Marcel Gabriel, *Regard en arrière* dans Gilson Étienne et alii, *Existentialisme Chrétien*, ed. cit., p. 318.
- [50]. Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, translation by Ciprian Mihali, Cluj, Publishing Biblioteca Apostrof, col. Contemporary Philosophy, 1997;
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