

Authentic Mode of Existence

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Thus far in my reflective engagement with the history and traditions of religious thoughts, I realize that such comprehensive attempts to relate human life to that which is conceived as the ultimate reality, supreme being, ubiquitous knower, controlling power, greater self, or absolute thou worthy of our highest devotion fundamentally bear witness to humanity's perennial concerns of achieving an authentic mode of existence. The potential exigence to experience wholeness remains to be a healthy phenomenon of conscience as well as the essential project of *dasein*.

A specific type of being, human being, referred to by Heidegger as *dasein*, literally meaning “being-there,” is by no means a mere designation of static phenomenological status in the mundane order of existence but an active pursuit of creative *telos* to gain ontological significance and eternal validity. *Dasein* is a uniquely human existence which projects itself forward in time to a point of possibility. An individual is a never finished product: human existence is, by definition, open-ended. Therefore, the finite's existential openness to being in the supreme act of faith implies both the capacity for infinite receptivity and to evolve into fullness. Another property of *dasein* is its thrownness, by which Heidegger means that “existence for every individual involves being thrown into a world whose structure had long since been established. I am thrown into a nature, and the nature appears not only as outside of me, in objects devoid of history, but it is also discernible at the center of subjectivity.”¹

At this juncture, our inherent quest for authenticity embedded in the very core of our human potential for higher evolution ought not to be construed as distinct from the universal phenomenon attributed to “religious consciousness.” The dynamic dialectic of the finite-infinite experi-

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Collin Smith (London: Routledge and Regan Paul, 1986), 346.

ences within the aggregate of moral agents interacting immanently while projecting their process of becoming transcendentally signifies the unique scope and complex ramifications of philosophy in dealing with the concepts of religion. The historical search for Sophia (speculative wisdom) and Phronesis (practical wisdom) reveals the indispensable necessity for transcendence and the human inability to capture the profundity and depth of key human experiences.² The main aim of philosophical inquiry is the attempt to discover the most basic truth about the human condition and its necessary connections which constitute an approach to epistemology. Religiosity is a dynamic interplay of our consciousness of the human inner constitution and the intuition of the “beyond.” Thus, philosophy of religion is not a body of knowledge to be investigated or method of inquiry to be mastered, but rather the dynamic history of a mystery which reveals itself through the power of a question: the question of the meaning of life.

The prevailing experience of despair in a macrocosm of reality lies in the fact that emptiness is the natural result of individual self-concept and public consciousness of one’s being as just an agglomeration of functions. However, the lingering agony of angst precisely is a spiritual condition of alienation from the ground of one’s being. Such adverse conditions are what Karl Jaspers called “the boundary situation,” the shattering of being in everyday life. In this process we are confronted with a reality far greater than ourselves. It points to the possibility of salvation. Through transcendence, we move beyond our own finite nature to that which is unconditional. Despite observable nuances of prescribed ways of understanding ourselves and in relating with the divine, common to all the great world faiths is a “soteriological structure,” and they each offer their own approach to obtain conciliation—through faith in response to divine grace or through total self-giving to God. Without some ground in an absolute or unconditional there cannot be any meaning.

I want to emphasize two emerging representative traditions as specific responses to philosophy’s inquiry into the domains of religious phenomena.

² Brendan Sweetman ed. *A Gabriel Marcel Reader* (Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press, 2011), 1.

1. Onto-theology, like the traditional metaphysics, conceives that the essent as such in general is the very foundation of the universal unity and totality on which all beings can be subsumed. The *a priori* intuitive abstraction of the supreme being becomes the basis of all unity. We have not recognized God because instead of conformity to the image of God which is an appropriate act intended by the creator, we created Him in our own image. We should have the attitude of openness to discover reality. When Dr. Hornedo visited St. Mary's Seminary for some speaking engagements, somebody had been given the task of meeting him at the bus terminal. Unfortunately, the man sent by the Seminary failed to recognize him due to the inconsistency between the prior descriptions and the present reality. The man was looking for Hornedo who was described as an individual with flat top haircut, but the actual person at that time had grown long hair.

2. Fideism can be defined as an “exclusive or basic reliance upon faith alone, accompanied by a consequent disparagement of reason and utilized especially in the pursuit of philosophical or religious truth.” Correspondingly, a *fideist* is someone who “urges reliance on faith rather than reason, in philosophical and religious” matters and who “may go on to disparage and denigrate reason.”³

These two traditions represent the endless debate between faith and reason. The issue has never been resolved and it will continue *ad infinitum* without understanding the dynamics of human faculties in developing the synthetic creativity of wisdom.

The death of God case, which is initially Hegelian, renders here an appropriate example of philosophical ambivalence in the faith-reason controversy. A rupture in the transmission of faith between generations: the act of faith itself seems no longer necessary for life and meaning.⁴ Likewise, the widespread phenomenon of the 21st century is the disappearance of the “enchanted world,” an eclipse of God in our civilization, and the

³ Alvin Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God,” in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 87.

⁴ Regina Schwartz, ed., *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.

eviction of transcendence from the public sphere.⁵ “The Death of God” was the first philosophical articulation in Hegel’s philosophy in the 1802 publication of *Faith and Knowledge*. He writes, “Formerly the infinite Grief existed in the feeling that God Himself is dead.”⁶ “The God of the Enlightenment was precisely a God who does not manifest himself in knowledge and so a God totally abstract and unrelated to life—dead.”⁷

According to Hegel, then, the unbridgeable gap between sighing subjectivity and the God for whom it longs was established in order to ward off the risk that knowledge, in the act of comprehending its object, will reduce God to the level of man—or worse, that of a mere thing. God was removed from finitude so that his transcendence might be preserved. Religion, on the other hand, was located in the finite, more precisely in a finite and limited subjectivity yearning for the infinite that transcends its grasp. “Religion, as this longing, is subjective; but what it seeks and what is not given to it in intuition, is the Absolute and the eternal.”⁸

The pursuit of authenticity, within the bounds of time, context, interiority, and relationship with the other, unfolds before us the fact that existential meaning is attributed to a spectrum of dynamic perspectives. Thus, let us consider three vital approaches when we think of the validity of religious consciousness whose various combinations serve in some cases as heuristic structures in philosophy, phenomenology, and epistemology. Through this analysis, we can perhaps gain viable insights that can assist us in formulating a sound philosophy of education.

Objective Lifeworld

The subject person is fundamentally an embodied being-in-a-situation and he/she is always located in a specific context. The concrete human situa-

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶ George F. Hegel. *Faith and Knowledge: An English Translation of G.W.F. Hegel’s *Glauben und Wissen**, ed. Walter Serf and H. S. Harris (New York: State University of New York Press, 1977), 190.

⁷ Jeffrey L. Kosky. “The Birth of the Modern Philosophy of Religion and the Death of Transcendence,” in *Transcendence: Philosophy, Literature, and Theology Approach the Beyond*, ed. Regina Schwartz (New York: Routledge, 2005), 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12–13.

tion represents the immediate world of meanings. Thus, any kind of multidisciplinary investigation ought to begin with the concrete human experience. As it is always stated in educational methodology, we have to intuit the unknown by initially accessing the known.

We have here the dominant notion of *Lebenswelt*, the “lived world.” Human development should come from the *Lebenswelt*. Phenomenology, a philosophical method founded by Edmund Husserl in the first two decades of the 20th century, seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of the objective world as it appears to the subject. Rather than engaging in metaphysical questions, phenomenology describes “phenomena.” Husserl’s phenomenology favors an analysis of the constructs of everyday consciousness, the *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) of the perceiving subject. The lifeworld is the frame of subjectivity through which the individual apprehends and interprets the external world.

Perception is the acknowledgement of the object’s uniqueness in terms of the givenness of the world to consciousness as well as the ability of the consciousness to verify the object of sense. Objects do not exist for themselves, but they exist for the senses. The economic unity of the senses and the objects is possible because of intentionality. Intentionality is not a singular system; it involves the given and the receiving. It is the metaphysical sociality by beings and the interconnectivity of things in the whole structure. The result of intentionality is relationship. Our embodied presence phenomenologically constitutes the intentional arc. The gist of Merleau-Ponty’s critique of pure empiricism is specifically directed against the fragmentation of the primordial unity or integration of an object and the partitioning of our human faculties that function to experience the wholeness of reality.⁹

Furthermore, perception is knowing in a very radical phenomenological way. Our body is no mere physical body. We learn with our whole body as it is oriented toward the world (intentionality). Can you play a guitar without moving your fingers? In *The Primacy of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty asserts that our primary device for phenomenology is our self. The body which stands between the interior consciousness and the natural world is a tool of knowing. The body is a milieu empirically exposed to

⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 346.

the lived world limited by space and time but it belongs to the transcendental reality that interprets what it is receiving. If the world is God's utterance and a code to be deciphered, then our perception is a direct encounter with the cipher. Knowledge is a kind of deciphering sensation.

In the perspective of Biblical realism, Grider considers "nature as the locus of grace." The natural order, including human physical existence, is the residence of grace. We celebrate our bodily constitution which links us with nature. The act of Christological incarnation validates the principle of sacramental world: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the [One] full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 NKJV). We can view things eucharistically because it is indeed a residency of grace.¹⁰

Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* envisions the integral human person—body, soul, and spirit. The physical human body ostensibly signifies specific meanings pertaining to our fundamental questions about life's purpose, sacred vocation, relationship, reality, and God based on Scripture. As a person with a body and soul made in the image and likeness of God, we find the meaning of life through finding out what it means to reflect God and what our bodies have to do with it. We are not only living as a visible representation of God to the world through the gift of free will, but also through being in communion with others. "To be human means to be called to interpersonal communion."¹¹

One of the serious platonic errors linked to Christian moral thinking was centered on one fundamental aberration, "the flight from existence."¹² From the source itself down to various ramified interpretations subsequently, there consistently appears a radical separation of "being" in the realm of essences and "becoming" signified by the world of changing sense experiences. The Platonists elevated intellectual knowledge above

¹⁰ J. Kenneth Grider, *Wesleyan Holiness Theology*, fore. Thomas C. Oden (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 42–44.

¹¹ Brooke Williams Deely, ed., *Pope John Paul II Speaks on Women* (Michigan: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 131. For a more profound reflection on the intrinsic value of human body, see John Paul II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1997).

¹² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 39.

the domains of sensible objects and according to them, the superiority of reason to intuit the changeless eternal principle supersedes the faculty of human sensation.

On the contrary, Aquinas employed Aristotelian categories in explaining experiences in the light of hylomorphic reality which is based on a metaphysical assumption that all things are composite of form and matter, essence and existence. He advances his “this worldly” epistemology into the form of a philosophical dictum, “We have no knowledge of essences except through the gate of sense experience.”¹³ We are indeed a psychosomatic unity. Knowing is mediated through the world of sense experience. Every agent by its action teleologically intends the actualization of potential as precisely the fulfillment of *Imago dei*.

What then is the implication of this discourse to theological education? In searching for the rationality of meaning, there is always room for what Marcel calls, “primary reflection.” It is ordinary, everyday reflection, which employs conceptual generalizations, abstractions, and an appeal to what is universal and verifiable. Primary reflection is also the level of objective knowledge. This is because the concepts employed at the theoretical level are objective in two key senses. First, they represent essential features of the objects of experience (at an abstract level) as they really are in the objects. Second, these essential features are also objective in the key sense that they are understood by everyone in the same way.¹⁴ Primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience. It forces one to take up an attitude of radical detachment, of complete lack of interest. However, human beings are not *tabula rasa*. We have with us the basic intellectual orientation, cultural and mental baggage, and even spiritual divine image.

Objective knowing in terms of epoch or reduction is to behave like a little child taking events one item at a time without presupposition, anticipation and structuring.

A father was trying to read the newspaper, but his little son kept pestering him. Finally, the father grew tired of this and, tearing a page from the newspaper—one that bore a map of the world—he

¹³ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 144.

¹⁴ Sweetman, *Marcel Reader*, 4–5.

cut it into several pieces and handed them to his son. “Right now you’ve got something to do. I’ve given you a map of the world and I want to see if you can put it back together correctly.” He resumed his reading, knowing that the task would keep the child occupied for the rest of the day. However, a quarter of an hour later, the boy returned with the map. “Has your mother been teaching you geography?” asked his father in astonishment. “I don’t even know what that is,” replied the boy. “But there was a photo of a man on the other side of the page, so I put the man back together and found I’d put the world back together, too.”¹⁵

We assemble facts intellectually according to how the objects unfold themselves to us just as they are. Going back to the things themselves constitutes a presuppositionless mode of approaching what has been presented to us. Such a method of epistemology is objective cognition without employing colors of interpretation.

Subjective Faith

Much of Kierkegaard’s critique of the “present age” is a confrontation of a passionless *zeitgeist* manifesting itself in the deprivation of inwardness. The “present age” is an age without passion, and Western thought has lost its sense of inwardness. Its tendencies can also be observed in any age such as; people tend to identify themselves with the collective, to see themselves as just products of their time and place, to allow them to escape taking personal responsibility for their actions; people are afraid to make a passionate commitment to anything, particularly without guarantee, hesitating to take a leap of faith; the tendency to reduce people to the lowest common denominator, to discourage greatness and uniqueness, they prefer to live in the cellar; people want the comfort that religion can bring, without exerting effort; people fundamentally want an easy, secure life.

On the contrary, “Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion, and in its maximum

¹⁵ Paulo Coelho, *Stories For Parents, Children and Grandchildren*, Volume 1 (Electronic Edition: <http://www.feedbooks.com>, 2008), n.p.

an infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness."¹⁶ Subjectivity is not selfishness or eccentricity, but it is rather genuine "inwardness" involving commitment, passion, and decision. Subjectivity means a concrete being developing because it is the being's creative counterpart to personal truth. Knowing is an existential reality rather than a purely cognitive and epistemic one. The condition of knowledge is ontologically built in to a person as he/she discovers being. Authentic Christianity therefore is conformity to Christ and becoming like Him. Truth is not a unity of all attributes or ideas constituting a person. The truth is the total person.¹⁷ Subjectivity, however, "culminates in passion, Christianity is the [absolute] paradox, paradox and passion are a mutual fit."¹⁸ If such is the case, only subjective faith and nothing else can deal effectively with the absolute paradox.¹⁹

The notion of paradox in Kierkegaard's existential thought renders two main uses such as, in broad sense, the contrasting relation between logical evaluation of faith and its psychological character, and in the descriptive narrow sense, subjective faith encounters the Absolute Paradox, the Logos embodied in human form.²⁰ The paradox of God's revelation by its nature is offense to human reason, and only to be grasped through infinite passion of faith.²¹ Paradox is a logical problem with no rational solution—the case of incarnation is a total contradiction. Kierkegaard advo-

¹⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), 33.

¹⁷ Florentino H. Hornedo, "The Philosophy of Soren A. Kierkegaard" (Lecture, University of Santo Tomas, May 2010).

¹⁸ Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 206.

¹⁹ "Paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion: a mediocre fellow. But the ultimate potentiation of every passion is always to will its own downfall, and so it is also the ultimate passion of the understanding to will the collision, although in one way or another the collision must become its downfall. This, then, is the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think. This passion of thought is fundamentally present everywhere in thought." Søren Kierkegaard, Howard V. Hong, and Edna H. Hong, *Philosophical Fragments: Johannes Climacus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46.

²⁰ S. Heywood Thomas, *Subjectivity and Paradox* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 103.

²¹ A. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology: Schleiermacher to Barth* (London: Collins, 1937), 217.

cated the principle of parsimony or economy that entities must not be multiplied without necessity because existence is unsystematic, fragmentary, and sometimes absurd; thus it cannot be reduced to a certain thought-bound philosophic system, likewise, the incarnation as the absolute paradox. God is “totally Other” at the same time not totally Other. Contemporary disciples failed to see Christ’s divinity in the human. Faith is an act of the will by accepting the non-cognitive truth. God is the very other, thus we cannot be united with Him. Communion is possible through the incarnate Christ representing both human and divine. The acceptance of grace gives us the privilege to participate in the life of God called redemption.²² Incarnation is not only contrary to rational evidence but is even self-contradictory on rational grounds.

Kierkegaard’s contribution is unparalleled in the history of philosophy for he is not especially concerned with knowing the truth but rather with being in truth or doing the truth. Truth is to be acted upon, an affirmation in a more personal way than epistemological in nature. Faith is a happy confrontation by setting aside reason and its structures in favor of the revelation contained in paradox. Faith is not putting aside reason but it is the equilibrium of faculties. Authentic faith is openness to the divine personal revelation and not just an organ of human knowing. Likewise, entering a marriage covenant is not the result of a logical conclusion; indeed you are not marrying a thesis or an excerpt but a mysterious presence.

Faith is the soul’s logic to the unknown, an inner intuitive wisdom. Faith then, according to Wesley, implies both “supernatural evidence of God and the things of God, a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof.”²³ It is also an act of our totally integrated human faculties. Tillich argues that faith, as being ultimately concerned, is a centered act of the whole personality. It is also a leap of constant becoming. In faith a mystery of self-transcending dynamic participation of the human spirit in the divine nature can be affirmed which leads into the fulfillment of our infinite value.

²² Hornedo, “Philosophy of Kierkegaard.”

²³ John Wesley, “The Scripture Way of Salvation,” in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 374.

Faith, according to the tradition of inquisition, is the affirmation of proposition. It emphasizes the preciseness of the statement. But faith is also the fullness of truth in giving the whole being, the totality of surrender to the will of God. The incarnation is not only the infinite taking human flesh, but also we, the finite will, become like Christ. Faith is a phenomenon of life, not a path of consciousness.

The paralysis of human understanding when confronted with existential questions reveals the utter impotence of rationality in the Hegelian sense to richly capture the sense of authenticity subsequent to the realization of a projected *telos*. Faith is therefore what the Greeks called the “divine madness.”²⁴ Pascal insists that faith can nevertheless be rational in the absence of proof—i.e., that it is rational in a prudential rather than an epistemic sense. Kierkegaard’s priority of the subjective dimension of faith vividly attributes it as the “objective uncertainty along with the repulsion of the absurd held fast in the passion of inwardness, which precisely is inwardness potentiated to the highest degree.”²⁵

The “Ultimate” discloses itself only to the passionate person, the one who allows oneself to be grasped by the ultimate. “Subjectivity is a passionate concern for one’s being. At every moment of living in whatever [one] is doing a subjective individual is absolutely interested in his eternal happiness... absolute *telos*.”²⁶

In the realm of mystery, the distinction between subject and object breaks down through secondary reflection which restores such unity. According to Marcel, secondary reflection is essentially recuperative. The most basic level of human existence, being-in-a-situation, or situated involvement, is the level at which the subject is immersed in a context, a level where the subject does not experience “objects.” This realm of human existence is best described as “mysterious,” from the philosophical point of view, because it cannot be fully captured and presented in ordinary conceptual knowledge. It is not an unknowable realm, but a realm

²⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Sickness unto Death*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 11.

²⁵ Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 540.

²⁶ F. Russel Sullivan Jr., *Faith and Reason in Kierkegaard* (Washington, DC: University of America, 1978), 92. See also Herbert M. Garelick, *Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 19–20.

which is beyond conceptual knowledge and must be experienced to some extent to be truly known.²⁷ Subjective faith as a new dimension of knowing allows us to access the realm of being, understand the Absolute Paradox, and experience the unity of our being. It is also the dynamic structure of integrated knowing because our human faculties are united in the mystery of total involvement.

Intersubjective Truth

Marcel's most seminal formulation is the notion of ontological intersubjectivity, achieved through concrete approach to being and experiential thinking, as the basis of establishing a fraternal society. Searching for the meaning of being in humanity's specific mode of existence only occurs by opening ourselves up to other people whom we conceive as "thous," which in turn affords us the possibility to participate intimately in the grand mystery of being. Being is meditatively recovered by the restorative power of secondary reflection, that is, participation or a new immersion into being. Life devoid of personal engagement has become a widespread phenomenon in the postmodern technocratic milieu where the computer-generated dream world threatens to dehumanize and reduce us into systems of functions. The reification of human person is "a pitiless sacrilege to treat God's image merely as a factum."²⁸

The unfolding truth of being can only be realized through our mutual participation in humanity's meaning as we are all journeying together to achieve existential wholeness. To be a subject, to be a person, is to be with. A symphonic truth is experienced by the distinctively unique participation of each instrument to produce a beautiful harmony of the orchestra under the common inspiration of music. The multidimensionality of truth makes us aware that no individual, race, or civilization has the monopoly of truth, and in order to achieve it we need to engage ourselves in personal communion. Truth in phenomenology is not hypostatic, substantive or objective. It is like gestalt, mosaic, harmonic, and participatory. Essential fragments create the whole image. The position of each fragment

²⁷ Sweetman, *Marcel Reader*, 5.

²⁸ Vincent P. Miceli, *Ascent to Being: Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy of Communion* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965), 33.

determines the meaning. Even in scholarship, a similar principle applies. For instance, peer review in publication is a social confirmation of the greater possibility of being right.

Isolated entity may affirm itself but cannot explain itself. Meaning is a relationship, metaphysical in nature not empirical, not physically documentable. A concept must be understood in the context of its whole relationship. Gestalt-meaning is relatedness. Wholeness is the interrelation of parts, the perception of the interrelationship of the parts. Likewise, being is a community. The Trinity speaks loudly of this concept. Allah's essence is transcendental solitude. The living incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, is a personal being. Marcel expressed a crucial insight by employing Augustine's words: "To know the truth, we must be in the truth,"²⁹ intersubjective truth.

Marcel at one point in his philosophical engagement attempted to elucidate his concept of person as opposed to that anonymous and irresponsible element which is designated by the definite pronoun "one." This "one" is therefore, by definition, unable to be pinned down. Here is an example:

A rumor is circulated about a certain person. I ask, "Who says so? Who vouches for this?" I am told simply: "I can't tell you who, but one is or they are saying that it is true.... What is proper to the person is precisely [his or her] being opposed in a radical way to this illusive "one" or "they." It is essential to the person to be exposed in a certain way, to be engaged, and consequently, to be involved in an encounter.... Truth is itself only where it is spirit, not only a light, but an openness to light. And if truth is such, then one can understand much more easily how it is allied to love."³⁰

When Marcel emphasizes that our being is a being-in-a-situation, he is indicating that the only experience we have of existence is participating-in-existence. The crucial aspect of participated subjectivity is that it is never merely an experience of subjectivity. Every participation is a revelation not only of self, but also of other. If I were to divorce myself in

²⁹ Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer (Westminster, UK: Dacre Press, 1949), 113.

³⁰ Gabriel Marcel, "Truth and Freedom," *Philosophy Today* 9, no. 4 (1965): 232, 236.

thought from every mode of participation, what I would have left would not be a privileged self, but nothing at all. Apart from participation, the self is nothing but an abstraction; for the concrete self is *esse est co-esse*. To be is to be with. The question of truth becomes the question of the scope and depth of participation. Obviously, a participated datum is a datum in which my self is involved and from which I cannot separate my self. It is not something I have, but something through which I am. That is why in questioning the datum I call my self into question.³¹ Being is not an idea, but a presence.

We participate in the realm of humanity through freedom as well as in the infinite transcendent ground motivating our exigence for being. Human self emerges within an enfolding absolute presence, and one's thought, arising out of that self, is in contact at its source with the presence of being. The organ of ontological truth is freedom. Liberty, in turn, must be understood, not as an occurrence in the void, but as participation—as a response to the invocation of being. In affirming being, I affirm myself in a uniquely intelligible way. Apart from this self-affirmation, there is no possibility of affirming being or the truth of being. The instrument for the revealing of truth is nothing less than the intersubjective movement by which the whole self turns to the source from which all illumination proceeds.³²

Conclusion

Some objective thinkers, like the logical positivists, would claim that, outside empirical verification and falsification of scientific procedures and rational validity, any proposition is nonsensical. In the same way, phenomenologists suggest that we need to go back to the things themselves, the *Lebenswelt*, or lifeworld, to access the essence of things. Other contemplative people merely rely on the mystical phenomena of life and will only embrace faith as the only means to deal with the irony of existence. Many people extremely emphasize community-based undertaking in their search for truth. However, to have a balanced perspective in our religious

³¹ Kenneth T. Gallagher, "Truth and Freedom in Marcel," in *the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthus Schilpp and Lewis Hahn (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 1984), 375.

³² *Ibid.*, 378, 382, 386.

consciousness, the objective lifeworld, subjective faith, and the intersubjective truth should be taken into consideration as we engage ourselves in the grand enterprise of achieving what passionate thinkers in history called thus far, an “authentic mode of life.”

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