

A Marcelian Appraisal of Technology for the 21st Century

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Abstract: This article is concerned with the nature of Gabriel Marcel's existential philosophy, with a special focus on technology. Part I begins with an overview of the phenomenological aspect of Marcel's approach to philosophy and how it flows into a traditional understanding of *teleology*. Part II focuses on the sacral dimension as key in understanding the scope to Marcel's critique of technology. Part III then examines the role and usefulness of technology in light of the human person's need to maintain their ontological dimension. Part IV culminates in the concrete exchange between Marcel and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and examines whether or not modernities pursuit of technology is justified in the 21st century.

Introduction

Gabriel Marcel's critique of modern technology is somewhat typical of the critique by philosophers in the existentialist tradition of the twentieth century, in that it seeks to demonstrate the risks associated with the influence of technology in shunning the personal and subjective affirmation of the human person. However, there is a spiritual dimension to Marcel's thought that sets it apart (somewhat) from the other existentialists. What sets Marcel apart from the others, I contend, is that his critique is bound intimately with key themes in the rest of his philosophy as a whole. His philosophy in its entirety is made up primarily of a series of phenomenological reflections that seek the dimension of the concrete human person in his or her full personality; that is, they seek to reflect on the dimension of experience that is discoverable in our most unmediated state, i.e., in a state prior to abstraction or compartmentalisation. In order for us to achieve this discovery, we must come to terms with the fact that philosophical inquiry proper is *vocational* in its essence and stems from the innate need of the human person, and as such seeks a dimension of truth in experience that is irreducible to conceptual analysis.¹ The uniqueness of Marcel's approach to philosophy is evident by the fact that it is deliberately unsystematic, meandering, and wonderful; but not irrational or incoherent, because "it is after all essential," Marcel reminds us, "for philosophers to think their thoughts in a connected fashion."² Otherwise, the mind cannot be satisfied. The manifestation of the systematic spirit, mainly amongst the generation of post-Kantians, "went much too far and thus ran the risk of overlooking certain important aspects of reality."³ In contrast, Marcel's thought is intimately tied to the realisms of human experience, engaging them with a perceptiveness that is useful and helpful when considering the issue of technology in the 21st century.

I will attempt to explain the major thrust of Marcel's philosophy of technology by focusing on the following quadratic sequence: 1) the natural trajectory of his philosophy in general outline; 2) the main concern of his intellectual task; 3) the role and purpose of technology as conceived by him; and to bring his philosophy of technology to culmination by

¹ See Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. 1, trans. G.S. Fraser (Chicago, IL: Regnery, 1951), pp.20ff.

² Marcel, "Reply to Hans A. Fischer-Barnicol," in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, eds. Paul A. Schilpp and Lewis E. Hahn (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1984), p.455.

³ *Ibid.*, p.455.

examining it alongside a real-life issue, 4) his critique of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Ending with a brief discussion of Marcel's dialogue with de Chardin, I hope to demonstrate, that the insights of Marcel's philosophy are deserving of more consideration by philosophers of all varieties (including non-professional academics).

I: The Nature of Marcel's Philosophy

Marcel's philosophy is quite elusive in comparison to other more well-known thinkers, and, I think, a greater challenge to deal with. The challenge posed by Marcel has been a factor in his lack of recognition in contemporary philosophical discourse.⁴ Marcel's phenomenological reflections are circumspect and full of diversion. The reader is forced (for lack of a better word) to endorse a perspective that is highly sensitive to the varieties and complexities of living. Without such a perspective, the reader cannot have access to the profound insights discoverable in Marcel's *concrete* philosophy. "No concrete philosophy is possible," he writes, "without a constantly renewed yet creative tension between the I and those depths of our being in and by which we are; nor without the most stringent and rigorous reflection, directed on our most intensely lived experience."⁵ And of course reference to "our most intensely lived experience," implies that we realise a transcendent or spiritual reality at the heart of our existence.

Part of the challenge in understanding Marcel requires that we participate in a *spiritual reality*, in a reality that is not solely subject to technical analysis or proof. This spiritual reality that he calls us to *participate* in requires an attitude of consciousness that is not always easy for the human person to awaken too, especially if his/her essence has been subordinated and blinded by the immediate success of technics. This spiritual reality which seeks the ontological dimension to our most profound experiences is a meta-problematical reality that cannot be reduced into syllogistic logicisms, and subsequently, is outside the scope of scientific proof.⁶ But, for Marcel, since there is an element in high tech scientific research that is, in-itself, reliant on expert interpretation and phenomenological experience on the part of the human being who conducts the experimentation, there remains a possibility for us to attain the ontological dimension on the one hand, and rest convinced in its reality without a need to subject it to a logical proof on the other hand. In other words, experiences that are naturally geared towards reflecting on its non-conceptual dimension, can be accepted as objective and universal, that is, real as a cognitive reality, in similar fashion to how scientific discoveries are accepted even if they require an element of personal interpretation that is, strictly speaking, outside the scope of irrefutable logic.

In addition, it must be stressed, Marcel's reflections are pitched towards elucidating or revealing the ontological dimension to our everyday experiences using ordinary language; not succumbing to the need to create esoteric terms or concepts that lie beyond relatability. Heidegger, for example, is famous for coining foreign terminology to make philosophical points that are, perhaps, possible to explain in common parlance without reducing their substance or depth. As such, Heidegger's critique of technology "is developed at such a high level of abstraction," writes Andrew Feenberg, "he literally cannot discriminate between

⁴ For example, Heidegger was obviously the more influential philosopher, but in this paper, I wish to extend more acknowledgement to Marcel and encourage contemporary philosophical circles to consider Marcel in more detail.

⁵ Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, trans. Robert Rosthal (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1982), p.65.

⁶ See Marcel, "On the Ontological Mystery," in *The Philosophy of Existentialism* (New York, NY: Citadel, 1984), pp.9ff.

electricity and atom bombs, agricultural techniques and the Holocaust.”⁷ In other words, for Heidegger, these different expressions of technology are merely just that – “different expressions” – which we are called to transcend by levelling out the playing field, so to speak. And of course, for a sensitive personality, this abstract scheme of reflection does not suffice. “Heidegger rejects technical regression while leaving no room for a better technological future.”⁸ But, in order to reveal the concrete depth of Marcel’s critique, more explanation is needed in discerning how Heidegger’s critique *precisely* leaves us no room.

At first glance, Heidegger’s critique of technology from an ontological perspective seems quite comparable to Marcel’s critique from an existentialist perspective.

In his essay *The Question Concerning Technology*,⁹ Heidegger argues that the true nature or essence of technology, that is to say, its highest purpose, serves as a way for humankind to understand their world as that which ought to be brought under order and control. For Heidegger, technology is not a mere tool or instrument for us to enjoy for its own sake, i.e., for the pursuit of comfort or pleasure, and as such modern technology – due to its complexity and need of integration with modern science – reveals the world or our existence to us as a “standing reserve.” And for Heidegger, the precise meaning of “standing reserve” implies that everything in nature that provides the necessary resources and conditions for our technical pursuit is there ultimately for our manipulation and exploitation. This inevitably brings us to understand technology as something which engulfs our understanding of the world – Heidegger adopts the term “En-framing” (*Ge-stell*) to express the effect of technology on our perception as something which forces us to grasp everything within the scope of the controllable and measurable.

In similar fashion to Marcel, Heidegger warns that the consequences of the dominance of technology in our lives, brought about by understanding reality in too much of a mechanistic way, inevitably shuts out our ability to appreciate the good, the true, and the beautiful. As a solution to our predicament and over reliance on technology, Heidegger invokes the need for a shift of attitude and focus to art, since art in-and-of-itself encourages creativity against a purely mechanistic relation to the world. At the end of his essay, he writes:

Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other hand, fundamentally different from it.

Such a realm is art. But certainly only if reflection on art, for its part, does not shut its eye to the constellation of truth after which we are *questioning*. [Italics in the original]¹⁰

It is difficult to see what advantage there is to gain from Heidegger’s position, because it seems that it offers *only* a mere change in attitude or exercise (art) as its solution to our predicament. Marcel on the other hand, in order to make his argument accessible, sets proper limits to his critique, by considering both “the benefits and the shortfalls of technology.”¹¹ As

⁷ Andrew Feenberg, “Democratic Rationalization: Technology, Power, and Freedom,” in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition: An Anthology*, eds. Robert C. Scharff and Val Dusek (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), p.715.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.715.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2013), pp.3–35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.35.

¹¹ Bernard A. Gendreau, “The Cautionary Approach to Technology of Gabriel Marcel,” *The Paideia Archive: Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy* 39 (1998), p.2.

we will see, there are no rash conclusions to be found in Marcel's critique, because he sees technology as something that can be satisfactorily enjoyed for its own sake as long as it does not distort the true nature of a philosophy of *telos*. Heidegger rejects the purposeful aim of *telos*,¹² and as a result of his abstract understanding of technology as a pure means of order and control, he leaves the human person with no choice but to urgently seek out alternative practices (art) as a means of escape, all the while, when the alternative pursuit cannot guarantee man's attainment of authenticity.

Teleology as defined as far back as Aristotle, retains its essentiality in Marcel, especially when he considers the relation between Thought and Being. Before we clarify Marcel's position, it is worth revisiting one of Aristotle's conceptions of teleology as defined at the outset of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Every skill and every enquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims" (1094a).¹³ For Aristotle, there is a connection between Thought and the Good. Thought, if it is properly thought, cannot but be rational and geared towards the Good. And as we will see in Marcel, Thought cannot manifest itself as thought, that is to say, it cannot manifest itself beyond the pure immediate, unless it is geared towards the attainment of being, i.e., towards that which encompasses meaning (the good). Any thought, in so far as it seeks to transcend the realm of pure immediacy (the realm of no thought or manifestation of meaning), is a good in itself.

In *Being and Having*, Marcel writes: "Does our knowledge of particular things come to bear on the things themselves or on their Ideas?"¹⁴ Contrary to Kant's *noumenal/phenomenal* distinction, Marcel concludes: "It is impossible not to adopt the realist solution. Hence we pass to the problem of Being in itself."¹⁵ A little later on in this reflection, this concern about "Being in itself" takes a turn into an analysis on the very nature of "thought" itself. In other words, for Marcel, we cannot affirm Being as such, until we can affirm the reality of thought. He writes (worth quoting in full):

I do really assert that thought is made for being as the eye is made for light (a Thomist formula). But this is a dangerous way of talking, as it forces us to ask whether thought itself is. Here an act of thought reflecting on itself may help us. I think, therefore, being is, since my thought demands being; it does not contain it analytically, but refers to it. It is very difficult to get past this stage. There is a sense in which I only think in so far as I am *not* (Valery?), that is, there is a kind of space between me and being. But it is difficult to see just what this means. In any case, I do notice a close kinship between thought and desire. Clearly in the two cases "good" and "being" play equivalent parts. [Italics in the original]¹⁶

And towards the very end of this quotation, we witness a direct reference to teleology:

All thought transcends the immediate. The pure immediate excludes all thought, as it also excludes desire. But this transcendence implies a magnetisation, and even a teleology.¹⁷

¹² Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," p.8.

¹³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, revised edition, trans. Roger Crisp (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.3.

¹⁴ Marcel, *Being and Having* (London, UK: Collins, 1965), p.33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

To adopt a teleological position is, therefore, necessary and somewhat commonsensical, because without it, we run the grave risk of falling victim to pure unintelligibility and irrationality. Teleological thinking has also equipped man with the intellectual faculties to tap into the hidden powers of nature.

To think in terms of teleology is to seek the good (Aristotle) and to affirm the possibility of meaningful rational thought in the first place (Marcel). How man has understood the concept of teleology and his need for it over the ages, has given rise to incredible accomplishments in the realm of science and technology, as well as, conflicting existential dilemmas between *man* and his world, *nature*. To these arisen occasions we now turn.

II: Marcel's Intellectual Task

One may argue that the very limit ascribed to Marcel's philosophy of technology is both a strength and weakness. Its *weakness* may lie in the fact that its "main concern and analysis does not deal primarily, as it is the case with many others, with the positive and negative effects of the incessant and inevitable progress of technology in our society."¹⁸ For example, Marcel's analysis does not find itself dealing with the problems associated with the day-to-day running's of the industrial complex, the laboratory or factory, nor does it concern itself with economic practices or political structures and religious institutions across the local, national, and international sphere. Instead, Marcel "understands his intellectual task as a philosopher to be in a different perspective with a different emphasis."¹⁹ In other words, Marcel is aware that his vocation as a philosopher necessarily entails the maturity to confine his critique to the realm of expertise that is inherent for philosophy and to not widen his scope too wide, to avoid falling prey to unprofessional, incoherent, prideful, arrogant or nonsensical comments in fields outside his expertise.

For Marcel, the philosophical critique of technology should confine itself to matters of spirituality, to remind the human person that the spirit of technology can (and often does) become detrimental to the spiritual essence of the human subject. If the human subject necessarily, in virtue of being a human being, requires access to the transcendent in order to fulfill his or her vocation as a human being, then a cautionary diagnosis of the nature and role of technology becomes vital in order to preserve the human person from becoming a slave to technics; reducing their essence to a mere function by plummeting the significance of local custom and tradition (Not sure what this last phrase means). It is in the spiritual acuteness of the critique that its *strength* is to be found.

III: The Role and Purpose of Technology

Marcel defines technology as "a specialised and rationally elaborated skill that can be improved and taught to others."²⁰ This specification in-and-of-itself should be enough to sense that Marcel does not deny the positive value of technology, admitting "only a lunatic would deny that."²¹ Marcel admits quite forcibly that technical progress can extend beyond mere utility and penetrate (however slight) into the spiritual realm. But as far as Marcel is concerned, whatever organic spiritual benefit is gained from technical development, it can

¹⁸ Gendreau, "The Cautionary Ontological Approach to Technology of Gabriel Marcel," p.2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Marcel, "The Sacral in the Era of Technology," in *Searchings* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1967), pp.42–43.

²¹ Marcel, "The Limitations of Industrial Civilisation," in *The Decline of Wisdom*, trans. Manya Harari (London, UK: The Harvill Press, 1954), p.8.

only come from the creator themselves and not from the consumer as such. “There is no doubt that in applying a technique which he has mastered,” writes Marcel, “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.”²² We can sense some echo to God’s commandment in Genesis to Adam, that He created man to rule over the earth. What is it exactly about technology or technics that is of concern for Marcel, if technology in itself is not an intrinsic bad?

For Marcel, contra Heidegger, “technology is not a unity we can amass.” He continues: “It [technology] is human reason insofar as it strives to manage, so to speak, the earth and everything living within it.”²³ So far so good! But as soon as man’s understanding of technics and relationship with it gives rise to an anthropocentric worldview, we are in danger of becoming enslaved to technology as we leave ourselves no choice but to understand our full essence in terms of it. Marcel writes:

To maintain as I do that man is being misled to understand the world and himself in reference to technology, postulates that man is under the impression he can modify the world methodically by his own industry in such a way as to satisfy his needs in an increasingly perfect manner.²⁴

But since physical nature has an inherent structure in itself, man cannot always (nor easily) manipulate reality to his direct designs and purposes. Therefore, for both Aristotle and Marcel, a correct understanding of teleology is paramount to salvage man from abusing his rational faculties, because the pursuit of technics should work organically with nature, so as to not hinder it but cultivate it.²⁵

Anthropocentrism inherently disguises itself in a false sense of security because its very intention to root man solidly in the earth, so he can live in comfort and prosperity, has paradoxical implications. Technical pursuits, pursued within this frame of reference, inevitably uproot man from his local custom and traditions, leaving little to no room for contemplation, inter-personal relationships, and ultimately the mysterious and divine. In *Man Against Mass Society*, Marcel writes: “Can we really say, in fact, that technical man is becoming more and more strongly rooted in the earth? It does not seem so. Rootedness seems to imply a grafting on to the local scene, a local individuality of custom.”²⁶

Anthropocentrism places man in a position that makes his desires and fears too acute, to the point where he feels it necessary to quench them for control via the rapid and aggressive pursuit of technics. But since technics are never ending in their potentiality and remain, by definition (according to Marcel), in the realm of the impersonal, man’s existential substance cannot be satisfied by them, no matter how much progress is made. The only way man can transcend his obsession with controlling his desires and fears is to reflect and contemplate on the deepest mysteries of life, i.e., love, hope, and inter-subjective presence, and experience them accordingly.²⁷ This approach by Marcel is in contra-distinction to Heidegger’s plea for escapism to art, as we need not view technology in contradiction to the pursuit of our deepest longings but rather criticize the spirit of the technical mindset.

²² *Ibid.*, p.8.

²³ Marcel, “The Sacral in the Era of Technology,” 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See Emmanuel G. Mesthene. “The Social Impact of Technological Change,” in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition*, p.681.

²⁶ Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), p.93.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, pp.76ff.

In today's world, there are of course highly specialised technologies that require, out of practical necessity, strict control via centralized social and political structures.²⁸ This necessity gives easy rise to superstructures and superpowers who are in danger of distorting the implementation of technology at the expense of the wants and needs of the individual members of society. In other words, not all technologies are necessary for the service of the greater good because they create unnecessary problems and difficulties. According to Jacques Ellul, this deterministic outlook is inherent in modern technology, and as a result, man is in a predicament to attain his freedom by transcending the dualism between *free will* and *determinism*.²⁹ If things in nature (including technology) are deterministic, man has no choice but to master technics. Ellul, like Marcel, is a critic of modern technology. However, contrary to Marcel, he forms a false dilemma and dualism.

Instead, Marcel's critique is centered around a reflection that not only seeks to understand the benefits and shortfalls of technology for man and his life, but seeks to proclaim the message that man *does not* have to transcend the realm of determinism, because in fact, such an attempt is not only impossible and full of hubris, its implications, as we have seen, are paradoxical and detrimental in giving man a false sense of security and hope. In other words, I argue, Ellul's position is misguided and lacks the phenomenological perceptiveness that is in Marcel, partly due to its lack of a proper sense of Aristotelian teleology.

IV: Marcel and De Chardin

In 1947, a debate took place in Paris between Gabriel Marcel and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The focus of the debate was centred around the question: "To what degree does the material organisation of humanity lead man to the point of spiritual maturation?"³⁰ The crux of the debate boiled down to the value of technology for culture and humanity at large, and the fabric of the organisations who are responsible for its management. As we will see, this debate (and question) has not lost its significance for our own time.

For de Chardin on the one hand, the incredible advancements of technology over the last century point to a true growth of the essence of humanity in its totality; and for Marcel on the other hand, technological development of whatever kind or success is of no value to the overall true essence of the human person or to the purpose of life. De Chardin says: "To begin to know a thing in its entirety is to move from material to the spiritual."³¹ Marcel's response to this is: "An anti-Christian concept which leads us back to Promethean man!"³² There is, therefore, to add to the complexity of the debate, two distinctly opposed mindsets between both thinkers, even though they are both Christian and religious.³³

²⁸ See Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition*, p.674. Due to the advancement of highly specialised and complex technologies, the need arose for greater and wider implementation to the point of catering for the international community in order to ensure sustenance. This phenomenon arose during the Neotechnic Phase. See Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilisation* (London, UK: Routledge, 1946), pp.212–267.

²⁹ See Jacques Ellul, "On the Aims of a Philosophy of Technology," in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition*, pp.205–209. For a good critical account of Ellul's position, see Mary Tiles and Hans Oberdiek, "Conflicting Visions of Technology," in *ibid.*, 249–259.

³⁰ Michael J. Latzer, "The Marcel–Teilhard Debate," *New Blackfriars* 82, no. 961 (2001), p.132. Latzer's article has proven to be most useful for the information obtained in this section of the article. I could not get my hands on the original debate (I am not sure if an original transcript even exists).

³¹ *Ibid*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ For a good account and comparison which brings out the acute differences in their sensibilities, see Frederick Copleston, "Chapter XV: Two Religious Thinkers," in *A History of Philosophy: Volume IX Maine de Biran to Sartre* (London, UK: Search Press, 1975), pp.318–339.

What is the correct Christian approach? Do we accept the Baconian position (de Chardin) or a perspective that is somewhat more in tune with that of the Ancient Sceptics (Marcel)? What is of upmost interest here, and in this essay at large, is that there are grounds to suggest that God has given us the capacity to manipulate nature for His greater glory (Bacon), or to suggest the sacredness of nature should not be interrupted by modern technics because they drive us away from the will of God (Aristotle?). Like Carl Mitcham, I am suggesting an alternative viewpoint that does justice to both the optimistic and skeptical positions.³⁴ By postulating Marcel's cautionary approach to technological progress as the best possible way for us to approach the future, we do not have to ignore the obvious benefits of modern technics.

De Chardin suggests, that the goal of technology is to reveal the hidden consciousness that lies deep within matter. This consciousness hidden in matter reveals both the psychic and social dimension necessary for humanity to attain its *telos*. In other words, unless we move from a mere material understanding of all things in reality to a spiritual understanding, we cannot reach our goal, designated as the "Omega point." The Omega point "is the teleological apex of evolution."³⁵ No amount of technological progress or discovery of the extra-terrestrial energies hidden within the natural organism of the world (in plants and trees) can guarantee that man will achieve spiritual maturation. For Marcel, this kind of teleological thinking is dangerous, because its abstract tendencies significantly enhance our capacity to justify violence. In other words, if we infer the inevitable progress of technology as essential for fostering the conditions that are necessary for humanity to achieve its final end (its ultimate *telos*), then there is nothing to stop us from concluding that mass scales of violence, including war and cultural destruction, are determinate and are a mere stumbling block to some greater attainment of consciousness.

Whatever we may think, Marcel teaches that we cannot idolise ideas and theories that are too far removed from the complexity of the issue at hand, and subsequently, from the complexity of the human person's existential condition. For example, we cannot rest content in a hypothesis, idea or theory that justifies evil and suffering for the sake of some higher good at the expense of ignoring not only the immediate agony and suffering of the victim(s) at hand, but the very psychological offence that the theory itself manifests, even if – and this is the key point – the theory is founded upon an optimistic metaphysical framework.

Conclusion

In order for Marcel's diagnosis on the impact of technology and its denigrating impulses to be subverted by the collective efforts of humankind, without, at the same time, diminishing the obvious benefits of technical enquiry, we "first have to dismantle the barriers that obstruct authentic understanding"³⁶ of our human condition. In this article, I have attempted to highlight two of these barriers.

The first of these barriers include a proper understanding of the concept of teleology. For Marcel (and Aristotle), teleology applies only to the realm of things in nature and not to man-made artifacts that are necessary in the realm of technics. Technology is, therefore, not solely geared towards organisation, control and order, but useful to some degree for its own sake, and as a result of its incapacity to dominate nature completely, it maintains the intrinsic quality of space to allow the human person to utilise it for cultivation rather than mere subjugation, allowing us (if we choose) to find the means for true fulfillment in

³⁴ See Carl Mitcham, "Three Ways of Being-With Technology," in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition*, pp.523–538.

³⁵ Latzer, "The Marcel-Teilhard Debate," p.133.

³⁶ Marcel, "Science and Wisdom," in *Searchings*, p.40.

intersubjective relationship with others. The second of these barriers include the illusion that technology is necessary for spiritual maturation. By being sensitive to these barriers, it remains possible for us to utilise our rational capacities to sustain our comfortable standard of living throughout the 21st century without making comfort (or mechanistic order) itself a true end. This way, we may attain the consciousness to understand that our true end is not to be found in technology as such, but in the mystery of the ontological weight of our existence.