

Experimenting on Gabriel Marcel's Idea of 'Creative Fidelity' in A World of Brokenness and Fragmentation: An Appraisal

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Abstract

This work is expository and evaluative in its methodology. It aims at offering a critical assessment of the claims of Gabriel Marcel on *Creative Fidelity*, in order to ascertain whether or not such claims are philosophically robust, sustainable and realizable, or merely deflationary and idealistic. Gabriel Marcel's work on *Creative Fidelity* does not only deal with perennial themes of faith, fidelity and belief, incarnate being and participation, but also discusses religious tolerance and orthodoxy. Creative fidelity refers to the tenacious, constant desire to elaborate who we are. To have a greater sense of being, we need creative fidelity. For Marcel, to exist only as body is to exist problematically. To exist *existentially* is to exist as a thinking, emotive, being, dependent upon the human creative impulse. He believed that, as soon as there is creation, we are in the realm of being, and also that, there is no sense in using the word 'being' except where creation is in view. Thus, we become creatively faithful when we bridge the gap between ourselves and others by making ourselves present to them, and so defy absences with presence. Thus, it is not enough to be constant, since constancy is tenacity towards a specific goal, which requires neither presence nor an openness to change. If the creative *élan* is a move away from the objectification of humanity, it must be essentially tied relationally to others. Creative fidelity, then, entails a commitment to acts which draw the subject closer to others, and this must be balanced with a proper respect for the self. Self-love, self-satisfaction, complacency, or even self-anger are attitudes which can paralyze one's existential progress and mitigate against the creative impulse. To be tenacious in the pursuit, the *fidelity* aspect is the most crucial part of the creative impulse, since creation is a natural outflow of being embodied. The central argument of this work is that "creative fidelity," as theory, is quite captivating and fascinating, and seemingly realizable in a *possible world* of altruistic human beings. However, in practice, it seems unattainable or unrealizable, especially in a *concrete world* that is populated by self-serving, fragmented and broken human beings.

Keywords: Creative, Fidelity, Interrogating, Notion, Thought, Rethinking.

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

It is commonly held that existentialist philosophers dwell a great deal on those dark aspects of the human condition such as death, absurdity, nothingness, meaningless, despair and similar these which are often the undesirable aspect of the human condition. The notion of "creative fidelity" as expounded by Gabriel Marcel seems to take a different route from the depressing themes of existentialist philosophers [1]. In the first place, his notion of "creative fidelity" finds a strong basis in his conception of the human person as an incarnate being and inter-subjective substance (or an inter-subjective existent). The notion of the person as incarnate being is perhaps

Marcel's most original and significant contributions to philosophy. By incarnation, Marcel means that a person is a being present in a situation, a being in the world through the body and not a self-closed ego. Marcel's doctrine of incarnation is an attack lunched against Plato's dualism and the Cartesian doctrine of the *cogito [2]*. For him, there exists an intimate and fundamental, not accidental, union between the self and the body. Thus, one's body and self are not tantamount to instrumental duality. Whatever man does, he does as an incarnate being; the body participates in the world, and so it should not be seen as a tool, an apparatus, or a personal possession which can be dispensed with, as

¹Clyde Pax, (1975) "Marcel's Way of Creative Fidelity," *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 1. No. 25: 12-16.

² William Barrett (1947) *What is Existentialism?* (New York: Grove Press), p. 76.

one pleases [³]. Marcel sees the self as embodied, immersed in space and time in the physical world, and thus, not simply prone to the influences of the physical world, but also creates itself by interacting with it. Consequently, the embodied selves, that is, human persons, are capable of interacting with other selves and bodies not only physically, but also spiritually [⁴]. In this interaction with other selves, man is engaged in a relationship of inter-subjectivity, that is, a relationship in which he sees himself as a subject capable of seeing other human persons as subject and relating with them on the level of subjects. For Marcel, we are fundamentally inter-subjective existents and not solitary or isolated egos [⁵].

2.0: GABRIEL MARCEL ON “CREATIVE FIDELITY”

Marcel distinguishes two kinds of relationships: ‘I-Thou’ and the ‘I-It, She or He’ relationships. The latter kind of relationship is an inauthentic kind of relationship. It is characterized by egocentricism and pride. In this kind of relationship, I look at the ‘other’ not as a subject to be loved and cherished but as an object to be exploited, as a freedom to be possessed and appropriated. In this relationship, I am not present to the other, I am closed off and indifferent to the presence he or she offers me; I keep the other at arm’s length but still within my grasp, to be used or manipulated. Also, I value the other based on his or her functions, on what he or she can offer. Marcel warns that this relationship is dangerous because when I treat the other as a ‘He’ or ‘She,’ I become incapable of seeing myself as a ‘Thou,’ since in depreciating the other, I depreciate myself; in dehumanizing the other person, I dehumanize myself” [6]. The first kind of relationship, the ‘I-Thou’ relationship, is an authentic kind of relationship which occurs between two subjects. For Marcel, it is only when I see the other as a “Thou” that I see him or her as a person. In this relationship, I become present to the other in a mutual openness and self-giving. In this, the two people involved in this relationship are no longer strangers waiting to plunder each other's freedom. No, they are intimately bound to each other and they discover their freedom by being

available to each other [⁷]. From this relationship, Marcel asserts, a new subject originates as “we.” This kind of relationship is marked by spiritual availability or receptiveness (*disponibilit e*), encounter, love, reciprocity, freedom, participation, presence, mutual openness, fraternity, communion and fidelity that is creative. It is around this kind of relationship, the ‘I-Thou’ relationship, that Marcel's notion of “creative fidelity” is woven.

A proper way of beginning a discussion on creative fidelity as expounded by Marcel is to re-iterate that Gabriel Marcel strongly held that, by nature, man ought to always be in communion with others, since a person is not a solitary being or an enclosed self, but one who is engaged as an open communicating being. He communicates with others and the world he lives in. These for their part make demands on him and he is free to respond to that demand in whatever way he chooses. One of such responses is his entering into a relationship of friendship. By that entry one must be willing to trust, to hope, and believe in the other person. It implies too that the other person must be respected and valued, rather than used. It also implies a recognition that another has a lien regarding me that can place a demand on my person, which I can disregard only at the risk of losing standing in my own eyes [8]. Thus, commitment becomes one way of adhering to the ruling principle of existence. This must be essentially tied relationally to others. Marcel argues that, “A really alive person is not merely someone who has a taste for life, but somebody who spreads that taste, showering it, as it were, around him: and a person who is really alive in this way has, quite apart from any tangible achievements of his, something essentially creative about him” [⁹].

In agreeing to enter into a responsible relationship (commitment) with the other, we, according to Marcel, make a commitment towards constancy (fidelity). It involves perseverance in friendship, in availability towards the person (that must be ceaselessly affirmed by the will) in opposition to everything which tends to weaken or obliterate my dedication. It requires a strong desire to rise above obstacles which tends to confront me in my dedication. Marcel describes ‘constancy’ as the rational skeleton of

³ David W. Rodick (2014) “Radical Empiricism, Intersubjectivity and the Importance of Praxis in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 40 (3): 289-292.

⁴Peter Gan (2021) “Hope and Death, Self and Other,” *Sophia* 60 (1):123-126.

⁵ Walter Kaufmann (1956) *Existentialism From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, (New York: Meridian Books), p. 64.

⁶Melvin Chen (2015) “Care, Narrativity, and the Nature of Disponibilit e,” *Hypatia* 30 (4):778-782.

⁷Chad Engelland (2004) “Marcel and Heidegger on the Proper Matter and Manner of Thinking,” *Philosophy Today* 48 (1): 94-97.

⁸ Clyde Pax, “Marcel's Way of Creative Fidelity,” *Philosophy Today* (1975) Vol. 1, No. 25:17-19.

⁹ Gabriel Marcel, “Reply to Gene Reeves,” In *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel: The Library of Living Philosophers, 17*, Edited by Paul Arthur Schlipp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1984), p. 66.

fidelity [10]. As the rational skeleton of fidelity, constancy is also the problem posed by fidelity. Thus, the question is posed as follows. How are we able to remain *disponible* over time? How can we provide a guarantee of our "belief in" someone? Perhaps the best way to address this complex idea is to address its constituent parts: the problem posed by fidelity and the answer given by creativity. The extension of credit to another is a commitment, an act whereby I commit myself and place myself at the disposal of the other [11]. In extending credit to the other I am also placing my trust in him or her, implicitly hoping that he or she proves worthy of the credit I extend to her. However, we sometimes misjudge others in thinking too highly of them and at other times misjudge by underestimation. How can I assure that I will remain faithful to my present belief in the other? Like the question of conviction over time, my present fidelity to another can be questioned in terms of its durability [12]. Though I presently feel inclined to credit the other, to put myself at her disposal, how can I assure that this feeling will not change tomorrow, next month, or next year? Furthermore, because I have given myself to this other person, placed myself at his or her disposal, when he or she falls short of my hopes for her, hopes implicit in my extension of credit to him or her, I am wounded. However, Marcel maintains that the failure of the other to conform to my hopes is not necessarily the fault of the other. My disappointment or injury is frequently the result of my having assigned some definite, determinate quality to the other person or defined him or her in terms of characteristics that, it turns out, he or she does not possess. However, by what right do I assign this characteristic to him or her, and by what right do I judge him or her to be wanting? Such a judgment drastically oversteps, or perhaps falls short of the bounds of *disponibilite* [13].

In doing so, it demonstrates clearly that I, from the outset, was engaged in a relationship to my *idea of the other*, which has proved to be wrong rather than with the *other himself or herself*. That is to say that this encounter was not with the other, but with myself. If I am injured by the failure of the other to conform to an idea that I had of her, this is not indicative of a defect in the other; it is the result of my inappropriate attempt to

determine him or her by insisting that he or she conform to my idea. When I begin to doubt my commitment to another person, the vulnerability of my "belief in A," for instance, in relation to these doubts is directly proportional to the residue of opinion still in it [14]. Nevertheless, practically speaking, there are innumerable times when my hopes for the other are not in fact met, when my extension of credit to the other which is nothing less than the disposability of myself, results only in a demand for "more" from the other [15]. Such situations invariably tempt me to re-evaluate the credit I have put at the disposal of the other and to reassert the question of durability concerning the affective element of my availability to the other. Thus, again, the mystery of fidelity is also the question of commitment, of commitment over time. Furthermore, Marcel insists that, if there is a possible "assurance" of fidelity, it is because "disposability and creativity are related ideas" [16]. To be disposable is to believe in the other, to place myself at someone else's disposal and to maintain the openness of *disponibilite*. "Creative fidelity" consists in actively maintaining ourselves in a state of openness and permeability, in *willing* ourselves to remain open to the other, and open to the influx of the presence of the other.

The fact is that when I commit myself. I grant in principle that the commitment will not again be put into question. And it is clear that this active volition not to question something again, intervenes as an essential element in the determination of what in fact will be the case...it bids me to invent a certain *modus vivendi*...it is a rudimentary form of creative fidelity [17].

The truest fidelity is creative, that is, a fidelity that *creates* the self in order to meet the demands of fidelity. Such fidelity interprets the vicissitudes of "belief in..." as a temptation to infidelity and sees them in terms of a test of the self rather than in terms of a betrayal by the other. So, if fidelity fails, it is my failure rather than the failure of the other. However, this merely puts off the question of durability over time.

¹⁴ Gabriel Marcel, "Autobiographical Essay," In *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel: The Library of Living Philosophers, 1*, Edited by Paul Arthur Schlipp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1984), p. 95

¹⁵ Gabriel Marcel, *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 78

¹⁶ Elliot W. Strauss, and Marcos Antonio Machado, "Marcel's Notion of Incarnate Being," In *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel: The Library of Living Philosophers, 17*, Edited by Paul Arthur Schlipp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1984), p. 77

¹⁷ Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity* (New York: Noonday Press, 1970), p. 72.

¹⁰ Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, (New York: Noonday Press, 1970), p. 153.

¹¹ Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 57-59

¹² Otto Friedrich Bollnow, "Marcel's Concept of Availability," In *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel: The Library of Living Philosophers 17*, Edited by Paul Arthur Schlipp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1984), pp. 82-83.

¹³ Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), pp. 100-102

Where does one find the strength to continue to create oneself and meet the demands of fidelity? The truth is that, on the hither side of the ontological affirmation, and the attendant appeal of Hope, fidelity is always open to doubt. I can always call into question the reality of the bond that links me to another person, always begin to doubt the presence of the person to whom I am faithful, substituting for her presence an idea of my own making [18]. On the other hand, the more disposed I am towards the ontological affirmation, to the affirmation of Being, the more I am inclined to see the failure of fidelity as my failure, resulting from my insufficiency rather than that of the other. It is not enough to be constant, since constancy is tenacity towards a specific goal, which requires neither presence nor an openness to change. Rather, if it is true that faithfulness requires being available to another even when it is difficult, then creative fidelity implies that there is presence. Interestingly, Marcel's notion of fidelity means more than someone's merely not being unfaithful. A spouse, for example, might not physically cheat on her husband, but on Marcel's view, if she remains unavailable to her partner, she can only be called "constant". She cannot be called "faithful". In effect, for Marcel, presence transcends physical proximity. It creates a bond between persons and it is this bond which can be maintained in spite of the obstacle of physical presence. Hence, I necessarily need not be in the presence of the 'thou' to know that he loves me or that the 'thou' is faithful to me. Fidelity is the active perpetuation of presence, that which incites the couple to be creatively faithful." While constancy entails persevering in a certain goal, presence involves a certain state of ongoing renewal which eliminates staleness and rancidity [19]. Apparently, there is a similarity between constancy and presence. But a rather thin distinction which Marcel makes is that while constancy may involve just an individual, presence involves another person. It can be said that, to an extent, "I am constant for myself, in my own regard, for my purpose, whereas I am present for the other, and more precisely: for thou." Going on further, Marcel warns that presence is not to be construed as mere external manifestation. Rather, it should be seen as a quality which although difficult to describe in objective terms, makes one aware that the other is with him or her. This is unlike constancy which, in some sense could make one force himself not to change, when he or she knows that he or she is being counted on [20]. Presence is even more binding when it is a presence of love and it is love

which overcomes the distance caused by death [21]. Furthermore, love is realized through the presence of one for the other. It is not simply an intellectual act whereby we see the other as an object, rather it is that through which we have an existential union of subject and subject. Love is therefore sustained in seeing in the other the richness of the 'thou' and a pledge of fidelity, even when situations change between both parties.

3.0: HOPE AS THE ULTIMATE GUARANTOR OF FIDELITY

Creative fidelity, as espoused by Marcel, invariably touches upon hope. The only way in which an unbounded commitment on the part of the subject is conceivable, is if it draws strength from something more than itself, from an appeal to something greater, something transcendent and this appeal is hope. Can hope provide us with a foundation that allows humans, who are radically contingent, frequently fickle, and generally seek to make a commitment that is unconditional? Perhaps, it should further be said that, in fact, fidelity can never be unconditional, except where there is Faith that it aspires to unconditionally [22]. Hope is the final guarantor of fidelity; it is that which allows me not to despair, that which gives me the strength to continue to create myself in availability to the other. But this might appear to be nothing more than optimism, frequently misplaced, as events too often reveal, that things will turn out for the best. Marcel insists that this is not the case. Following some familiar distinctions, he makes a differentiation between the realm of fear and desire on one hand, and the realm of despair and hope on the other. Fear and desire are anticipatory and focused respectively on the object of fear or desire. To desire is "to desire that X " and to fear is "to fear that XH ." Optimism exists in the domain of fear and desire because it imagines and anticipates a favorable outcome. However, the essence of hope is not "to hope that X ," but merely to hope. The person who hopes does not accept the current situation as final; however, neither does he or she imagine or anticipate the circumstance that would deliver her from her plight, rather she merely hopes for deliverance. The more hope transcends any anticipation of the form that deliverance would take, the less it is open to the objection that, in many cases, the hoped-for deliverance does not take place [23]. If I desire that my disease be cured by a given surgical procedure, it is very possible that my desire might be thwarted. However, if I simply maintain

¹⁸Luc Bovens (1999) "The Value of Hope," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 59 (3):667-671

¹⁹Jack Coulehan (2011) "Deep Hope: A Song without Words," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 32 (3):143-147.

²⁰Gabriel Marcel, (1955) *The decline of Wisdom*, (New York: Philosophical Library), p. 87

²¹Martin J. Loneragan, "Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy of Death", in *Philosophy Today* (1975) Vol. 25, no. I, pp. 24-25.

²²Gabriel Marcel, *Perspectives on a Broken World*, trans. Katharine Rose Hanley (Marquette University Press: Milwaukee, 1998) p. 46-47.

²³Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, translated by Emma Craufurd (New York: Harper Torch-books, 1962), p. 133.

myself in hope, no specific event (or absence of event) need shake me from this hope. This does not mean, however, that hope is inert or passive. Hope is not stoicism. Stoicism is merely the resignation of a solitary consciousness. Hope is neither resigned, nor solitary. Hope consists in asserting that there is at the heart of being, beyond all data, beyond all inventories and all calculations, a mysterious principle which is in connivance with me. While hope is patient and expectant, it remains active; and as such it might be characterized as an "active patience" [24]. No doubt, the solitary consciousness can achieve resignation (Stoicism), but it may well be here that this word actually means nothing but spiritual fatigue. For hope, which is just the opposite of resignation, something more is required. There can be no hope that does not constitute itself through a 'we' and for a 'we.' One may be tempted to say that all hope is at the bottom choral. Finally, it should be no surprise that "speaking metaphysically, the only genuine hope is hope in what does not depend on ourselves, hope springing from humility and not from pride" [25].

4.0: AN APPRAISAL OF GABRIEL MARCEL'S IDEA OF CREATIVE FIDELITY

Existentialist philosophers such as Marcel, Buber, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty join Kierkegaard in protesting the pre-designation of existence into categories and explanations. They hold that to categorize experience into rational idealistic classifications is to abstract the self from its concrete experience. When, for example, existence is classified in terms of subject/object categories, object and subject are necessarily objectified. From the idealist perspective subject and object are thought to be composed of essential preexistent categories. Depending on the way in which the particular philosopher defines what he takes to be imperative about the subject and the object, the interaction between knowing and knowledge is predetermined based on these expectations [26]. What takes place in actual experience is irrelevant; the focus is on predetermination, on what necessarily will happen. Phenomenologists do not disagree about there being some order to consciousness through which experience is interpreted yet they understand the process as an interaction between the self and the world

that is individually interpreted by the self who is experiencing and therefore not predictable. Admittedly, in the tradition of western philosophy often focused on in the perennial search for wisdom is the foundations of philosophy that have based ontology and epistemology on abstract systems of thought. In these systems, thought is considered in and of itself, not in terms of its interrelationship to feelings and actions [27]. These traditions of philosophy, founded on abstraction rather than on the concreteness of human experiencing, rarely touch the meaning of the questions, dilemmas, joys of being human. A void ensues in our understanding which both shapes and continuously reinforces existence thought of as thinking separated from feeling, mind separated from body and soul, and knowledge separated from being [28]. Throughout western philosophy, there have been thinkers who have resisted this thought that systematically divides and abstracts that about human experiencing which is interrelated and concrete. These phenomenological existential thinkers have sought and seek language that describes consciousness as the embodiment of mind, body, and soul and thus as the interplay between each of these dimensions. In this concept of embodied consciousness, thoughts are inextricably related to feelings, and thoughts and feelings to actions [29]. In this sense, intellectual and ethical concerns are grounded in questions of meanings that are aesthetic and spiritual. Indeed, there is an understanding that the primary fidelity Marcel hopes for humans is that individuals be present in patience, humility, and truth with one another, through both the stabilities and instabilities of shared and individual existence. However, the fact that we are occasionally unable to live in patience, humility, and truth with one another could be argued from the standpoint of the "voices" of contemporary tragedies [30]. Contemporary problems are symbolic of a void in trust and support between humans. Suicides, drug and alcohol addictions, obsessive television watching, destructive relationships are just some of the symptoms of our failings at meaningful, just relationships. It seems that our primary commitment is not to the multi-dimensional experience that comes from sharing life, side by side, but rather to perspectives that take control over the vicissitudes of human relationships and the avoidance of feelings that should be, ideally, desirable.

²⁴ Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, translated by Manya Harari (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1995) p. 28.

²⁵ Gabriel Marcel, *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*, translated by Stephen John and Peter McCormick (Publication of the Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, ed. John Wild, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973) p. 143.

²⁶ Gabriel Marcel, (1963) *The Existential Background of Human Dignity*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 66

²⁷ Gabriel Marcel, (1965) *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary*, (New York: Harper Torch-books), p. 120.

²⁸ Gabriel Marcel, (1967) *Man Against Mass Society*, trans C. S. Fraser, (Chicago: Gateway Edition), p. 45

²⁹ Gabriel Marcel, (1973) *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond*, trans. Stephen Jolin and Peter McCormick, (Evanston: Northwest University Press), p. 38

³⁰ Gabriel Marcel, (1984) "Response to Donald MacKinnon," in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company), p. 95

Existentially, human beings are in a crisis of truth. Truth is a complex term describing a quality present between human beings. Existential truth is truth based on the dialectic between the set ontological and the "moving" texture of experiencing. It is a continuously evolving truth that unfolds through the relationships humans have to one another, to ideas, to God [³¹]. Perhaps in an effort to escape the pain inherent in a life lived beside other human lives, we attempt to deny the effects of shared relationship. To appear invulnerable to one another seems to be preferable. One of the ways we attempt to make ourselves immune to the difficulties of relationships is by seeking language to misrepresent the experience and abstract ourselves from it. Marcel considers the misrepresentation of language to be driven by the spirit of abstraction. Abstract language sterilizes the vitality of experiencing, missing the texture of what it is to be human [³²]. It is Marcel's position that experience turns on itself, it is existential, unique, and individualized. Thus, there is no precedent for any particular experience and efforts to predict the outcome and boundaries of experience are usually frustrated by the present-ness of the experience itself. The experience of relationship which is most meaningful is felt inwardly and subjectively [³³]. When an effort is made to objectify experience, or to make it conform to a particular logic, it loses its quality of mystery, uniqueness, and any possibility of moving toward the aesthetic. Our contemporary obsession with prediction of outcome or prescription for process has led us to deny both our religious and philosophical traditions and to confuse our individual perceptions. Contemporary western culture has become intrigued by the concept of purity, while at the same time being drawn towards the corruption of its traditional meaning. Traditionally, purity had to do with the Greek attentiveness to the wholeness of the human being, a wholeness that encompassed, for example, reason (*logos*) and passion (*eros*) [³⁴]. The concept of purity has been altered to serve our industrial technologized interests, interests addressed as if unrelated to the aesthetic sensual dimension. Purity in these techno-industrialized terms is a concept de-eroticized and defined in terms of efficiency, productivity and social convention. That this sterilized purity pervades human consciousness, is apparent, in terms of how individuals

are "taught" about their sexuality. Sexuality is often addressed as an uncontrollable desire somehow inside, somehow outside the individual and at the same time alien. This alien desire needs to be controlled, lest it takes over the life of the individual, destroying inhibitions and common sense. Sex is taught to be feared, not understood as relationship, but denied, as chaos. Hence, our sexuality, the very core of our being, is represented to us as our enemy and the potential for our destruction [³⁵]. It cannot be denied that our sexuality is a powerful influence on our lives. Sexuality between individuals can range from creative and caring to volatile and destructive. Both of these can be affirmed by our experience and therefore both qualities must be treated with sensitivity and respect. Sexuality, however, instructed as if outside the human self, alien and strange, is misleading and erroneous. Existentially, sexuality is woven into the tapestry of being human [³⁶]. A denial of sexuality as fundamental to our nature leads to the negation of the very foundation of the human experience. When goals for humanity do not take into consideration the diverse quality of individuals within and between communities and do not take into consideration that individuals have needs, desires, and feelings, goals without existential meaning entrap us and become citadels of the soul. There is in every one of us a secret shrine or citadel of the soul. It is a quiet and sacred place to which we can retire and shut the door. A citadel is a fortress or a stronghold. It is a place of security, safety, refuge, and strength [³⁷]. Too often when heterosexuality, masculinity, athleticism, or symmetry are the template for either correctness or goal, we must forego, negate, deny or surrender the very fundamentals of what it is to be unique, critical, and interesting in the experiential sense. When there is no longer a sense of being situated in contexts that are receptive to our individual meanings, we are inwardly alienated and isolated from one another [³⁸]. When an individual feels that his/her interpretations are unacceptable, for whatever reasons, both interpersonal and intrapersonal forms of communication are affected.

5.0: CONCLUSION

In Marcel's philosophy especially his concept of "creative fidelity," one sees a philosopher strong

³¹Gabriel Marcel, (1984) "Response to Sam Keen," in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company), p. 81

³²Gabriel Marcel, (1984) *Perspectives on a Broken World*, trans. Katharine Rose Hanley, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press), p. 41

³³Giorgio Agamben, (1998) *Homo Sacer Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller Roazen, (California: Stanford University Press), p. 55

³⁴Seymour Cain, (1963) *Gabriel Marcel*, (Indiana: Regnery/Gateway Inc., 1963), p. 62

³⁵Sam Keen, (1984) "The Development of the Idea of Being in Marcel's Thought" in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company), p. 38

³⁶Donald MacKinnon, (1984) "Drama and Memory" in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Lewis Edwin Hahn, (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company), p. 60

³⁷Wilhelm Reich, (1950) *Children of the future: On the prevention of Sexual Pathology*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux), p. 113.

³⁸Quinton Smith, (1986) *The Felt Meaning of the World: A Metaphysic of Feeling*, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press), p. 195

enough to withstand the evil and absurdity which constantly invites us to abandon our hope for mankind [39]. Marcel's "creative fidelity" confronts well the crisis of betrayal, despair and suicide which are possible in a world of suffering and death. We live in a society that is inundated by fear of being hurt and betrayed. No one wants to be hurt or betrayed and so it is apparent that the best way to live would be to keep to oneself, be impersonal in my dealings with the other and refrain from any sort of intimacy that is emotionally taxing. But if we live this way, our society can only be rich in pain and emptiness that will only reduce us to automatons, accompanied with a life of painful loneliness. This is evident in the lives of those who try at every time to isolate themselves from others, claiming to fulfill their destiny on arrogant self-sufficiency. They are always faced with the option of failure and a reduction of themselves to a state less than that of the human person [40]. The human person, as we have seen, is relational and it is in relating with others that one can attain the zenith of one's fulfillment and destiny. Marcel argues that when one gives oneself to others and strives to be faithful, in spite of the strong temptation not to, then one attains the joy of an authentic existence. Furthermore, human society will be a happier one, when men and women learn to be present to one another, not just physically, but with a constancy that is supported by hope, and a presence that transcends physical proximity; a presence that involves my 'creating' myself in the other, not to mold him or her into my image and likeness, but to affirm his or her uniqueness and place at his or her disposal my giftedness of body, mind and soul. Indeed, my whole being. On the threshold of the catacombs which may soon swallow us up, it should be remembered that it is basically the same power of creative fidelity concentrated in more favorable times in architecture, music and poetry, which tomorrow will strengthen the fierce resolution of those who reject the consummation of themselves or others of man's denial of man, or to formulate this in a more profound way, the denial of the more than human by the less than human [41]. More often than not, both in life and in philosophy, attitudes consume themselves in resisting the tragic. Doing so, they end in impoverishment or, its philosophic equivalent, the spirit of abstraction. Ceaseless obsessional reiteration of stereotypes cancels any movement toward new possibilities. Tragedy remains the deferred self-knowledge underlying such practices. Ill-will towards suffering is the essential barrier both to

life and to authentic thinking [42]. Life is hard. And it is complicated. We may choose to hide away from life's vicissitudes and complexities or we may choose to be present in all of it. In presence, we are clear at times about what it is that is happening in our worlds. At times we are baffled. In times we act compassionately; at times blinded and ignore-ant. What love allows in these latter times is a place to scream, cry, and seek understanding for what it is, that is happening. Life is not encountered when we are afraid of our fear, afraid of our confusions, afraid of the hurt that comes with loss [43]. When the fear is not accepted as part of living in our multifaceted and faceted existences, we fear the fear, hiding in numbness from the terror and everything else that we are afraid of. We need one another to say "come out; your struggle is real; here you are loved and can love as you are, who you are with your confusions and questions." There is tremendous love in the statement "tell me more" about your thoughts, feelings, dreams and nightmares. Tell me what it is you have been afraid to say, what it is that you have said before and been ridiculed for saying, or what you have been silenced because of, or hurt as a result of. Tell me about yourself [44]. There is the deepest love when we hold the immenseness of one another's lives. That human life is comprised of both body and spirit creates a tension of understanding. There are probably moments when reason and desire within each of us have mutual intentions yet more often there are contradictions within us at most given moments, pulls from different aspects of our desires and from the different dimensions of our rational beliefs. There is angst, fear, and tremendous loneliness when we realize the many facets of our inwardness in relationship to the world that is before us. At these times what is needed more than probably anything is someone who understands us and holds us with all of our contradictions, complexities, and our desires to be loved and to love [45].

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⁴²Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, translated by Manya Harari (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1995) p. 64

⁴³Melvin Chen (2015) "Care, Narrativity, and the Nature of Disponibilité," *Hypatia* 30 (4): 782-786.

⁴⁴David W. Rodick (2014) "Radical Empiricism, Intersubjectivity and the Importance of Praxis in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 40 (3): 292-295.

⁴⁵Armin Gruen, (1992) *The Insanity of Normality: Realism as Sickness, Toward Understanding Human Destructiveness*, (Hurst Hannum & Hurst Hannum, Trans.) (New York: Grove Press), p. 137.

³⁹Clyde Pax, "Marcel's Way of Creative Fidelity," *Philosophy Today* (1975) Vol. 1, No. 25: 20-24.

⁴⁰Ignace Lepp, *The Challenges of Life* (New York: Society of St. Paul, 1969). p. 36.

⁴¹Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1964) p. 10

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