



The existential analysis of hope in the philosophy of gabriel marcel

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Abstract

Gabriel Marcel claims that being cannot be directly conceptualised since it genuinely belongs to the category of enigma rather than difficulty. In Marcel's philosophy, one of the most important concepts is hope. Hope is defined by Marcel using the distinction between "having" and "being." Not one that we have, but one that we are in. Similar to this, when we hope, we do not have hope. According to Marcel, hope implies asserting that, beyond all statistics and computations, there is a secret principle pertaining to me at the very centre of reality.

Keywords: hope, enigma, being, having, mystery, love, allegiance, philosophy, gabriel marcel

Introduction

Gabriel Marcel, a French playwright and philosopher, is very interested in concepts like love, loyalty, faith, and hope because he believes that without them, it is difficult to overcome the tragic nature of human existence. His view is that being a person has an inherent sanctity and that one significant effect of abstract ideologies is the "loss of the ontological sense." Human dignity and the holiness of existence are subsumed under the concept of function in abstract philosophy. When the world loses its element of mystery, everything is weighed according to causation, and this viewpoint lessens the feelings of love and hope. When a world is so utilitarian, people lose their sense of wonder. The loss of their feeling of human dignity and the emergence of their reality causes disappointment. The main component of Marcel's philosophy is his fervour for challenging the functional spirit's sufficiency and examining human experience. He refers to conceptual theories as abstract and claims that they are abstract.

The Great War shattered Marcel's optimism and led him down a new philosophic path. Philosophy, he emphasized, is a journey, just like life, and it cannot provide us a complete comprehension of the cosmos on its own. A philosopher should never stop thinking of hope and faith as outcomes of the human experience: hope in the existence of something more than what is immediately obvious to him. Marcel is drawn to the difficult situations that his characters face in his plays. When he is cut off from himself and God, the character starts to fade away without reaching a climax. Safety is achieved by a process of cognition Marcel refers to as "secondary thought."

Marcel distinguishes between two fundamental modes of interrelationship with the outside world in Being and Having. As a result, there are two modes of thought: primary and secondary. The idea of hope in Marcel's thought will be covered given the significance of secondary thought from his viewpoint.

Being and Having

Before discussing "hope," it is necessary to examine the two different relationships that man has with the outside world. Gabriel Marcel asserts that there are two separate types of existence for humans, namely "being" and "having," which govern how individuals relate to and perceive existence. He claimed that being and having are the two main prerequisites for a man's interaction with the outer world. He claims, however, that this possession—which is necessary for survival—is different from the possession associated with motivation. The will to live and the sense of survival, both of which are rather prevalent in life, increase living. Furthermore, we need everything that sparks our curiosity. According to this theory, nothing that has not been can be because having precedes being (alive). This characteristic is not innate in humans; rather, it is the outcome of social factors. Man should only aspire to have for this purpose since having for living does not contradict with being, unlike having (Fromm 1976, 45) [3].

In some cases, Marcel's distinction between having and being is clear and unimportant. But in other circumstances it is much more important to distinguish between having something and being something. For instance, when we have hope, it is we who have hope (Treanor 2006, 80) [9]. According to Marcel, people have started to link these two and have begun to place a slight premium on having rather than being. In Being and Having, he distinguishes between being and having as the two primary ways to relate to the world. When both or either are present, there is gradation. The word "having" has long been used by man to refer to a portion of his daily activities. For instance, we often defend our ideas when we believe we "have" them. There is a connection between possessive and abstract spirits. Subjectivism seeks to conceptualize an objective reality in a form that is understandable to the human mind. The aim to escape the spirit of abstraction and the effort to construct a tangible philosophy, if we had to pick one concept that best

encapsulates Marcel's thought (Keen 1966, 16) ^[4].

Marcel acknowledges that he is a part of a management, regulatory, or other system that protects the rights of others. Making laws is limited to its surface level, and man cannot go beyond that. Man's goods can be separated from him to the point where he can think of himself as an autonomous force. To put it another way, man is a strong being who can only transfer what he already has. It is notable that such shifting entails high financial expenses.

When you say, "I have," you are stating that prior to it, you did not. This is only possible with a transference, which is impossible without a loss.

It is necessary to examine the nature of the relative dependence between being and owning more carefully than I have thus far because our possessions consume us, the tenets of metaphysical preservation. Maybe this relates to previous writing I've done about alienation elsewhere. In addition to being incorporated into the object of possession, it's also feasible that the self only exists in relation to ownership. However, the self disappears when carrying out an act or producing something. It seems to come back just after a creation check. (Marcel 1973, p.152)

Marcel exhorts us to consider the mysticism of life. He distinguishes between "he" and "I"-centric partnerships. It is akin to treating another person like an object to refer to him as "he" rather than "thou." When we meet someone, we refer to him as a "he," which denotes that we engage with him differently from how we do. The moment we establish a relationship with someone and address them as "thou," however, we stop treating them as an object. In this section, Marcel talks about the sensation of hope.

Hope

Marcel explains the meaning of hope in terms of God. We can find solace in "An Absolute Thou," a greater being, when we are disappointed. The Absolute Thou can save everyone who has hope in Him since He is a live, present being who is everywhere at all times. We need to understand hope and the Absolute Thou because there is no other way to avoid being let down.

Disappointment has two outcomes: either achieving one's true self or succumbing to it. A person who is tempted by disappointment will find it difficult to see straight ahead and will be persuaded that there is no superior, unstoppable force that can save him. In such a circumstance, man begins to believe that betrayal permeates the cosmos as a whole. Marcel makes an effort to explain and acquaint us with these concerns because he thinks they are crucial to human existence. Without the necessity for proof, these subjects are sufficiently unbiased for everyone to understand them.

Marcel believes there is a connection between honesty and hope. Integrity and hope both have similar underlying structures. Both hope and other useful tactics have similarities. One could consider hope to be the expansion and maintenance of availability. It is actually what may be referred to as a cosmic openness in the face of the biggest enigma of existence (Keen 1966, 40) ^[4].

As faith serves as an example of fidelity, so unconditional hope in God, the Absolute Thou, reveals the actual nature of hope. Even the most limited hope makes a reference to the Absolute Thou, the source of all unconditional hope and the all-pervading and all-living superior being at its centre.

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Optimism can appear in situations where sadness is probable, just as loyalty only shows itself when betrayal is a possibility. The temptation to despair is identical to the desire to limit hope to the realm of the calculating and possessive. The road to salvation, the end of suffering, and the beginning of hope. Given the magnificence of hope, nature cannot bring us to hope on its own; instead, hope can only arise in places where calculations are absent (Marcel 1995, 28).

In order to avoid calculation, hope is necessary. It seems that hope is accompanied with the idea that it may escape from all calculable realities and that it is linked to a secret principle at the core of everything that happens, which mocks such calculations. Hope is, in this sense, both a protest that can move people and a plea or a request. Only such a notion will enable us to assert hope. A person who is optimistic has arrived to the conclusion that there is an Absolute Thou, and that we can get closer to Him/Her/It via our life experiences and also through our eternal love. Someone of their calibre would never dispute His love (Marcel 1995, 29).

If a person expects a particular result, such as the healing of their ailment or their release from custody, they may be said to have entered a weird, mysterious domain where nothing can be verified by experiment or proof. So, it looks like I'm trying to escape reality. The response is that hope is different from expectation. Having hope is not the same as looking forward to something. Such a forward-looking perspective is driven by expectation rather than by optimism. Just like faith, hope is an absolute; we must not give up on it even if our hopes or expectations are not fulfilled. Hope refers to excellence as a driving force that encourages people to continue. It is by no means unimportant or meaningless; rather, it is a vital requirement for our spiritual well-being. Our desire to accomplish our objectives and wishes is fueled by hope (Marcel 1995, 57).

Hope and faith are intertwined, according to Marcel. When God is at the center of life, hope is worthy and has value when it is accompanied by faith. If we believe that life is a blessing, then we must also believe that human beings are everlasting and that once we pass away, we go to the Afterlife. The notion that God's blessing is destroyed and removed by death is ridiculous. Understanding that we are eternal and that we must seek beyond this material, earthly life is crucial.

Being a constant, unshakable hope that comes from nothing, faith does not fade away. It goes beyond what is genuine and provides protection from letdown. Determining that life is a gift from God is therefore essential. Faith comes from a person's "being," from their fundamental worth. The basis of both hope and faith is the knowledge that each individual is a gift from God and that they are eternal beings. Since existence is therefore human existence, man cannot escape reality with hope or faith; rather, they help him become aware of who he is. Faith provides us with a strong foundation and a gratifying sense of security that reassures us that life is a gift from God and that hope is a part of that blessing. To put it simply, hope is important to life and is immeasurable. We can contact our inner selves through this secret (Marcel 1995: 67).

Absolute hope is trusting in God's favor. Total hope is how man responds to his unending existence, which demonstrates how dependent he is on it. We can fight off our discouragement when we admit our frailty in the face of God's omnipotence. Although God never ceases helping us and has instead made

arrangements for us to continue living after death, despair is a kind of betrayal that follows from the assumption that God has stopped doing so. We all possess a strong desire to understand the lasting and essential worth of life. Man, in his desperation, turns to himself, thinking that everything depends on him and that there is no plan before his action. However, to cling to material estimations and expectations is to cling to hope. A universal human trait is faith, just like loyalty and love. Despite the inevitable difficulties and pains, life is nevertheless a priceless blessing that death cannot end. Through their daily interactions, those who feel hope can understand that life is a gift that God has given them—a truth that nonbelievers are unable to perceive (Anderson 2006, 174) ^[1].

Marcel asserts that a philosopher's principal duty is to think about spiritual concepts. They must define hope and despair to convince individuals that they are not susceptible to them because it is up to each person to choose whether they wish to live alone or with others. Hope starts to show itself right at the brink of such involvement and solitude. Man's conviction that he is entirely dependent upon himself has predestined his unhappy existence. Sartre agrees with Marcel that this is the case, but he also holds that a man's genuine acts are more likely to be influenced by despair than by optimism. In contrast to Sartre, Marcel thinks despair is simple and clear-cut: we think that everything in life depends just on our desires or on our presumptions and calculations.

The underlying question is whether isolation has the final word; Sartre's call for despair and Marcel's urge for optimism offer two completely different approaches to this problem. The case for hope is made by intersubjectivity, love, and, in the end, faith (Keen 1966, 42) ^[4].

The wonder of life has always given man a wide range of physical possibilities. Hope is a wonderful gift that enables man to overcome any difficulties, and it can save him. Hope is the catalyst for human activity. A hopeful person just continues going and never thinks about stopping. Hope is more than we can define (Zalta 2014, 8) ^[10].

The distinction between "being hopeful" and "having hope in something" can now be made, just as there is one between "being faithful" and "having trust in something." A sincere want differs greatly from wishing for a particular result (such as having hope that something will occur or that we will achieve our objectives). Having a sincere hope of being saved is a great example of this.

Whether or not ultimate (genuine) hope can endure is not just dependent on our understanding of the attributes of the redemption we believe in. It does more than just forecast; it also does away with calculations and assumptions. Hope and calculations or expectations are unrelated in day-to-day living. Hope is being aware of what causes disappointment. This is because hope was first a means for us to overcome fear and find renewal, thus it is not in opposition to fear. As is clear, defining hope is quite difficult.

Hope and other spiritual realities cannot be confirmed or denied because they reside outside the sphere of the objective. Hope is distinct from expectation, which may be precisely understood by quantifiable evidence. As the primary object of our expectation, we work to attain it. In addition, rather than acting in hope, we expect what we want and try to make it happen.

There is little doubt that everyone will view hope in a different way.

Why not investigate the notion that hope is really a wistful desire to escape the negative outcomes of our previous experiences. It is necessary to accept this view because it cannot be disputed.

The spiritual side of our reality, which also consists of concrete qualities, includes hope. It's not a given that we would surely fail in both areas if we failed in one. The ideals of hope and happiness go hand in hand. Such wonders exist. Since hope lives apart from our joy or grief, it cannot be understood through material methods. This is hope's highly enigmatic quality.

We cannot have hope unless we think miracles actually happen. In a society ruled by technology, fears and wishes inevitably come to pass because all means ultimately fulfil desires or desires. One of hope's characteristics could be that it does not depend on other forces for assistance. There must be some glimmer of hope for everyone without means. It is the hope's unspoken component.

When we give the matter some serious thought, we realize that it is challenging to define what hope is. I'll offer you two examples: wishing for the liberation of one's oppressed country and hoping for the health or change of heart of a loved one. The hope expressed here is for something that, in conformity with the natural order, is independent of us (it is entirely outside the realm of stoicism's applicability). At its core, hope is the awareness of a situation that screams for despair (illness, damnation, etc.). (Marcel, 1949, p. 74)

When we think of hope, we typically picture a soul that has experienced something profound enough to be able to carry out a transcendence-seeking action against its own will and knowledge. This action entails consolidating the fundamental reconstruction that this experience is both its precursor and its initial outcome. Our lives are given new energy by the potent spiritual quality of hope. It would be incorrect to compare its influence to that of technology because hope liberates us from the shackles of unchanging natural rules. Its effects extend far beyond the tangible world. The advantage of hope is that it draws us away from things like tangible objects and material possessions.

Significant problems arise when hope is interpreted in terms of experience and rules since hope is a metaphysical concept with metaphysical repercussions, and the assumption that it can be conquered by procedure is incorrect. A major failure to understand that nothing functions when there is no power is the root of today's opposition to optimism.

Is it not clear that in some situations, hope's potency lies in its empowering nature? At least in terms of on-resistance, this makes sense. It is true that every conflict between two parties involves some level of basic complicity, a shared desire for the conflict to go on, and that this condition of affairs persists until both the desire to wage war and the ability to see war as a game become completely untenable. However, if I support violence, that is, if I align myself with it, there is a good chance that I will continue to support it and perhaps even strengthen it. (Marcel, 1949 p.77)

According to Marcel's Existentialism, morality is a process that is possible through optimism, which can replace fear, isolation, and sadness as well as a means of fostering interpersonal connections. Selfishness must be abandoned if we are to keep our mental connection to other souls, maintain our optimism, and move from a limited to an unlimited reality.

Man would never feel optimistic about himself if he is consumed by selfishness. We need to let go of our intense desire for material possessions. Considering hope is arguably the easiest way to understand "excellence," as it entails delving deeper into a more profound reality.

We are unable to verbalize our own experiences in order to share them with others since excellence can be understood via hope and experience rather than just science and philosophy. In conclusion, Marcel seems to believe that since existence is a mystery rather than a material concern, it should not only be viewed from a material perspective.

Even if trust may never have a conceptual component, it can nonetheless contribute to the viability of a love-based existence on its own. Man is a joyful, free-spirited laborer who strives to progress existence through his participation in it. Such involvement is what makes it possible for love and hope to combine in man, who is symbolized by "Thou" in the other dimension.

The soul might search for proof in previous experiences to support love and hope's continuous existence and unification in the future when there is a "we" or spiritual link to bring them together. This concept is based on the idea of a concealed presence, which is nothing more than involvement in reality. Theoretical logic cannot explain hope, free will, or other related spiritual concepts (Marcel 1961). Our hope is constrained, first and foremost. You shouldn't mix up hope and ambition. Hope develops in places where the spirit learns to overcome limitations. Learning about hope is crucial. It is strongly tied to the soul, for which hope is like air. In the absence of hope, the spirit degenerates and begins to perish. The soul moves in hope, which is how psychologists have effectively interpreted the concept of "being," or having movement. Hope-dependent individuals see themselves as an Absolute Thou, who is always there. In this way, he commits himself. People who are suicidal wallow in selfishness and are unable to reach the Absolute Thou (Copleston 1993, 333) ^[2]. Any sacrifice is tantamount to suicide without hope, as there is no way to make one without it. Yes, when I have hope, there is no reluctance, but this hope is only directed toward a directive or a cause when I give my life in service to it.

Hope is distinct from optimism since optimism may not come true. Even when you have high expectations for something, things might still fail. Although pessimism stands in contrast to optimism and contradicts it, disappointment is the opposite of hope, thus the two are not incompatible. Instead, when a man experiences disappointment, hope emerges and reveals itself. The same circumstances that can cause disappointment can also create hope. Hope is a meaning, as opposed to optimism, which is just an emotion accompanied by logic. Simply put, optimism is an emotion. To put it another way, optimism is a sense of assurance.

Hope is a component of our existence and is closely linked to other facets of life such as love, faith, and morality. God, who is believed to love all of His creations, is the sole absolute source of hope for you. Similar to this, the pillars of human society are hope, faith, and love.

One must incorporate faith and hope along with doing good things and loving others. Love entails faith in the eternities and unflinching power of the beloved. Love can only be shown to those in whom a man has faith. Hope and confidence in the omnipotent power lay the groundwork for existence. The

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continuation of human society may be ensured by hope since hope is not self-centered and contains love and goodness. Hope is the steadfast belief that all people were created by the Supreme Being, who also loves them all and wants the best for them—namely, their attainment of righteousness and salvation. As we utilize mathematical sets to depict and treat people as things, the world community has to be reminded that it is not a mathematical set or unit. This norm, however, holds true for everyone in a multi-voiced society where everyone is recognized and respected. A culture that lacks hope begins to pull away from the world and becomes pessimistic toward others. Even though it has everything it might possibly need, it won't have any spirits and can't actively take part in anything (Anderson 2006, 175) ^[1].

Conclusion

According to Marcel, the problem with individuals is that they have lost the ontological importance of their experiences. We live in a broken culture that makes us dejected and nihilistic. One of philosophy's fundamental objectives is to investigate the many elements of human experience, particularly hope.

As Marcel points out, it's difficult to adequately express what hope is. All we can do is describe it. In order to illustrate the concept of hope, we first explore the distinction between "being" and "having." Being and possessing are the two different ways that man exists. Man develops relationships with existence and makes important changes to his conception of the cosmos through these two types of existence. Being and hope are related.

Since true hope never declines and occasionally even feels good, it is impossible to define. There is only place for hope when miracles are feasible. The anticipation of being near to God and sharing all of eternity with Him is the definition of hope in the Christian tradition. All other hopes can be compared to the hope in redemption.

We rely on hope, but not because we are afraid. In a variety of situations, we may feel optimistic or pessimistic, but optimism always exists. Humans always oscillate between hope and despair, despite the fact that the outer world frequently pulls us in that direction. Gaining optimism would not be possible if there was no sense of helplessness. According to Marcel, the basis of disappointment is the conviction that there is nothing in the world upon which we can rely, and that there is no guarantee of our victories.

A person who is hopeful, in Marcel's opinion, asserts that it is unlikely that the world will continue to be unable to cure their loved one's fatal illness. There is a rescuing force at the very end. I will never cave in to disappointment. There are things in the world that operate beyond our materialistic expectations and judgments. I say that even though I don't want it since it has a prophetic, sincere hope about it.

The incapacity to think negatively or depressingly is what makes hope what it is. However, there is a permanent bond between hope and disappointment that prevents them from being split apart. We live in a world where failure is completely conceivable and man is even tempted to try it, but only in such a world can hope exist and keep man from losing.

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