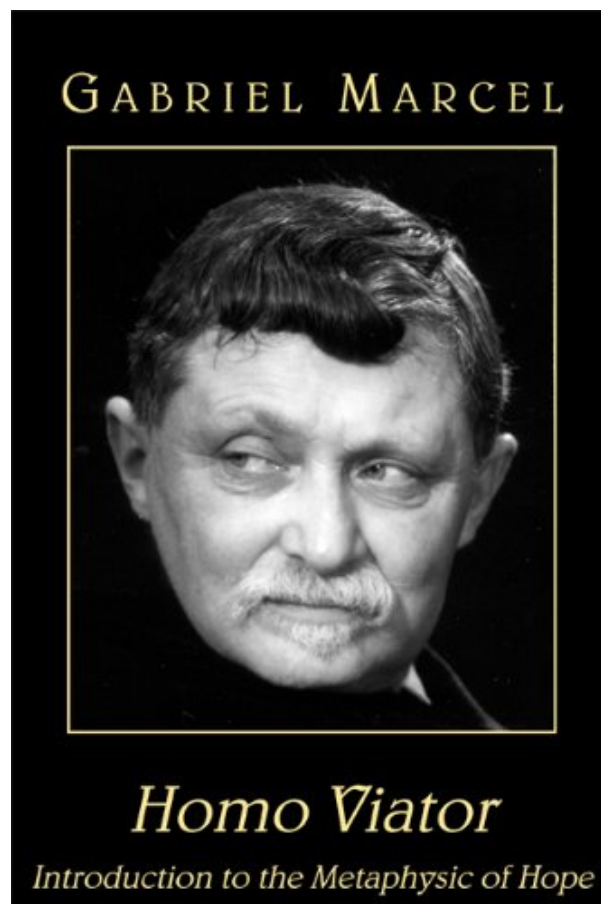


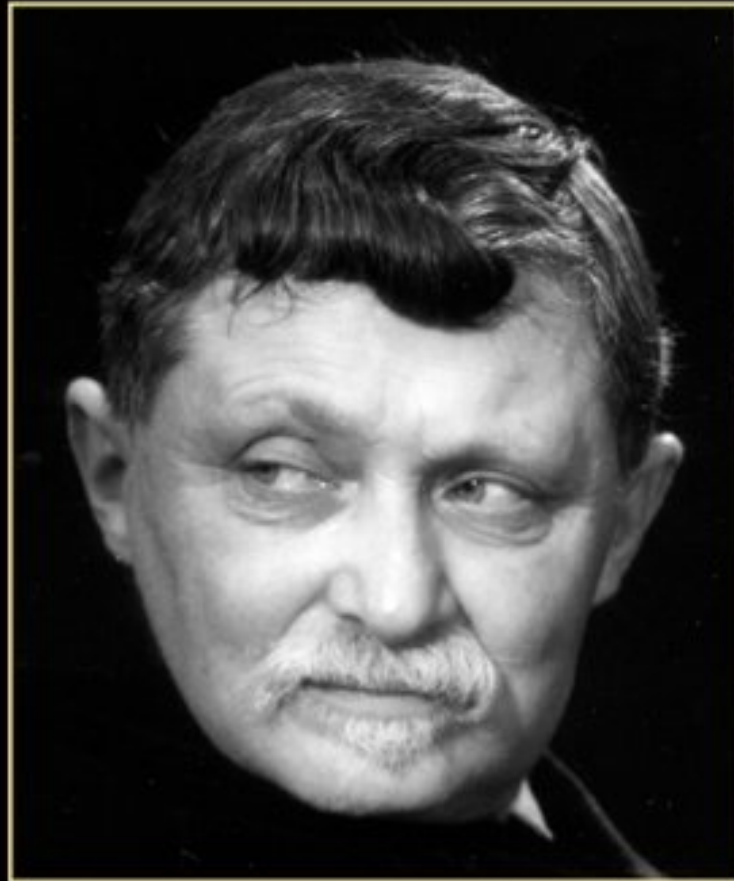
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Homo Viator

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This edition of Marcel's inspiring *Homo Viator* has been updated to include fifty pages of new materials available for the first time in English, making this the first English-language edition to conform to the standard French edition. Here, Christianity's foremost existentialist of the twentieth century gives us a prodigious personal insight on 'man on the way' that will reinforce and commend our own pilgrimages in hope. "*Homo Viator* - "*Homo Viator* - or as Marcel calls him, 'itinerate man' - is an outstanding example of the philosophy concerned, not with technical problems, but with the urgent problems of man. Marcel talks to our condition, emphasizing our urgent need of hope, thus discovering beyond the lack of stability the values on which we may depend. "A subtle mind, a dramatist as well as a philosopher, close to the texture of human experience, he goes far beyond current platitudes to show that our Western tradition contains living truths that are as essential to our contemporary life as they were to our ancestors when they discovered them." - Eliseo Vivas "The theme of Marcel's *Homo Viator* is close to the center of all preoccupations: man in his pilgrim condition. With great virtuosity in the use of his own philosophical method, he probes into interpersonal relations and the threat to ethical values. Marcel excels here in his concrete analyses of the attitude of hope, the family community in its temporal and supratemporal aspects, and the forgotten virtue of personal fidelity." - James Collins Gabriel Marcel's many works include philosophy, drama, and poetry. He was the Gifford laureate in 1950-51, published as the two-volume *Mystery of Being* (St. Augustine's Press). Also available from St. Augustine's by Marcel: *Man against Mass Society* and *Thou Shall Not Die!*

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THE FRENCH EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHER OFFERS HIS THOUGHTS ON "HOPE"

By Steven H Propp

Gabriel Honoré Marcel (1889-1973) was a French philosopher, playwright, music critic and Christian existentialist. He wrote many other books, such as *Mystery of Being: 1. Reflection and Mystery*, *Mystery of Being: 2. Faith and Reality*, *Metaphysical Journal*, *The Philosophy Of Existentialism*, *Being and Having - An Existentialist Diary*, *Philosophical Fragments 1909-1914*, etc.

[NOTE: page numbers below refer to a 270-page paperback edition.]

He wrote in the Preface to this 1951 book, "it is certainly less easy to find our way in a series of

meditations... than in a treatise through the whole of which a sequence of thoughts, following from one the other, is logically developed. I should have liked to produce such a treatise... I have reached the melancholy conclusion that I shall never write it. Moreover, I feel rather irritated and annoyed with myself, because I am aware that I shall most certainly not be conforming to all the rules which have been almost universally observed in the philosophical game up to the present day..."

He explains, "in the first place hope is only possible on the level of the US... it does not exist on the level of the solitary EGO, self-hypnotized and concentrating exclusively on individual aims... In the second place, there is only room for hope when the soul manages to get free from the categories in which consciousness confines itself as soon as it makes a clear line of demarcation between what it knows for a fact on the one hand and what it wishes or desires on the other. Perhaps hope means first of all the act by which the line of demarcation is obliterated or denied." (Pg. 10)

He observes, "The truth is that there can be strictly speaking no hope except when the temptation to despair exists. Hope is the act by which this temptation is actively or victoriously overcome. The victory may not invariably involve any sense of effort: I should even be quite ready to go so far as to say that such a feeling is not compatible with hope in its purest form." (Pg. 36)

He suggests, "to despair of myself, or to despair of us, is essentially to despair of the Thou. Avowedly, it is conceivable that there is some difficulty in admitting that I form with myself a real community, an US: it is, however, only on this condition that I have my active share as a centre of intelligence, of love and creation. This absolute Thou in whom I must hope but whom I also have always the possibility of denying, not only in theory but in practice, is at the heart of the city which I form with myself and which, as experience has given tragic proof, retains the power of reducing itself to ashes." (Pg. 61)

He states, "Life, as it is transmitted in the act of procreation, is really neither a blessing nor a curse in itself. It is a possibility, an opportunity, a chance for good or evil. But this possibility is only achieved in so far as the being to whom it is granted appears from the moment of his birth as a subject, ... as able to enjoy an above all to suffer, and capable of one day attaining to the consciousness of what he has at first only felt." (Pg. 91)

He asserts, "I claim to see the light which is actually hidden from you and which alone could illuminate the darkness in which you are groping---you who do not even know that you are surrounded with gloom, so complete in your blindness. It is only too clear that an assertion of such a kind, a judgment so summary, must be regarded as contrary to the Christian, and particularly to the Catholic tradition, which has always granted so large a place to the natural virtues." (Pg. 161)

In his second essay on Rilke, he notes, "if animals have the advantage over men in that they live in the open, it is because the fear of death cannot touch them, because as we have seen the future does not exist for them. Now it is precisely this fear, with all the secondary emotions it arouses, that sets up a barrier of unreality between the two Kingdoms, thus destroying the great unity at the heart of which the angels have their habitation... animals are on the side of the barrier which is erected and that the problem for man, guided by the poet, is on the contrary to establish himself on the other side; that is to say to break down the barrier without by so doing falling back into the preconsciousness of animals." (Pg. 253-254)

This book will be of great interest to anyone studying Marcel, or religious Existentialism.

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Marcel, for me, is one of the "bridge" ...

By Kensho

Marcel, for me, is one of the "bridge" existentialists. Always a source behind the scenes of his contemporary, continental, existentialists he was a bridge between the growing language of phenomenology and existentialism and the individual's spiritual sense of Being. I purchased this volume based on the essay regarding hope. It was a particularly dark time for me. I am a person who finds solace in words; Marcel provided that solace and a direction of thought that proved helpful.

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