

**THE INTERPLAY OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXISTENCE IN GABRIEL MARCEL'S
PHENOMENOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND ITS IMPLICATION ON
INTERCULTURAL VALUES IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

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Abstract.

The epistemology of Gabriel Marcel is rooted in his existentialist philosophy. Existentialism is a school of thought that emphasizes that human beings are free and responsible for all their thoughts, words, and actions in this meaningless world. It is human beings, according to the existentialists, who define the world and choose by themselves what they want to be. Marcel emphasizes the importance of lived experience and subjective reflection over the abstract reasoning. He rejects a purely objective, detached view of knowledge arguing that knowledge is ultimately tied to personal involvement and then 'mystery of being'. His approach prioritizes participation and inter-subjectivity as crucial elements of understanding the world and ourselves. This interplay of knowledge cuts across all cultures of the world since no culture possesses or has monopoly of knowledge. Each culture can therefore learn and understand the values of other cultures through shared experience. However, in this age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), many civilized cultures impose their cultural values, including languages on the less civilized or minor cultures and hardly learn from them. This brings about serious issues when it comes to shared experience. This paper is therefore an attempt to marry Marcel's epistemology of lived experience and interplay of knowledge with a view to tackling this issue of total marginalization of the values of other cultures; taking them to be inferior to those of developed and civilized ones. This paper therefore adopted a qualitative study where data was got from books, journals, newspapers and the internet. The paper also employed the expository, evaluative and analytic methods of philosophical study. The expository methods established Marcel's interplay of knowledge and existence; the evaluative method offered a critique of his position, while the analytic method presented the effects of his epistemology on the current issue of AI and intercultural values. By evaluating and analyzing Marcel's epistemology of interplay of knowledge and existence, this paper found out that each culture has knowledge embedded in its cultural values and as such each culture should respect and learn from the others because each of them has something new the other(s) can learn from it.

Keywords: Knowledge, Participation, Phenomenology, Existence, Understanding, Intercultural values, Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Introduction

Gabriel Marcel is often seen as one of the key figures in existentialism and phenomenology, although his thought occupies a distinct and somewhat isolated position within these intellectual movements. Unlike the more widely known existentialists, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger, Marcel's emphasis was not merely on existential angst, alienation, or individual freedom. Rather, his philosophical focus was on human subjectivity, the nature of being, and how human beings come to know the world in a deeply relational way which has to

do with intercultural values. One of his most original contributions to epistemology is his concept of “participation,” a mode of knowing that contrasts sharply with traditional objectification of knowledge as one can learn new things or values from other cultures. This study explores the concept of participation in Marcel’s epistemology and its relevance to both phenomenological and existentialist thought together with its application to intercultural values in the age of AI.

At the heart of Marcel’s epistemology lies a critique of the modern tendency to objectify knowledge detaching it from lived experience, subjectivity, and interrelationship. Marcel’s opposition to objectification informs his entire philosophical framework, highlighting how knowledge is not merely something that is possessed or abstracted from the knower, but rather something that is enacted through communion with the world and others. By exploring this epistemology, we can better understand its significance for existentialist and phenomenological themes of subjectivity, being, and inter-subjectivity and how best it could be applied to intercultural values through AI.

Gabriel Marcel Philosophical Development

Gabriel Marcel was born in Paris in 1889 (Stumpf and Fieser 458). According to Omeregbe in his *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy*, Vol. Three: Contemporary Philosophy, Marcel is one among the existentialist philosophers who refused to be called an existentialist. However, the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre in his *Existentialism is a Humanism* classifies Marcel as a Catholic existentialist while himself (i.e. Sartre) as an atheistic existentialist (76). Initially trained in music and drama, he later turned his attention to philosophy, influenced by the intellectual currents of his time, including existentialism, phenomenology, and personalism. His early exposure to existentialist concerns, such as the individual’s struggle with meaning and alienation, was complemented by his deep interest in religious and spiritual questions (Stumpf and Fieser 458). Marcel’s philosophy evolved in response to the challenges of modernity, including the disillusionment caused by two world wars, the rise of totalitarianism, and the dehumanizing effects of industrialization.

Although Marcel’s early work was influenced by existentialists like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, he found their emphasis on individualism and subjectivity to be lacking in terms of human relationality. He began to explore a form of personalism, arguing that the essence of the human person could not be understood solely in isolation, but rather in the context of relationships both with other humans and with the divine (458).

Marcel’s philosophy is often situated between phenomenology and existentialism, yet it cannot be reduced to either. His existential concerns particularly his focus on the mysteries of human existence and the human condition place him in line with existentialist thinkers like Sartre and Heidegger. However, unlike Heidegger’s focus on Being as a philosophical problem or Sartre’s emphasis on freedom and nothingness, Marcel’s thought centers on the theme of participation and the importance of relational experience in understanding existence and knowledge (Omeregbe 77).

His focus on participation as a means of knowing resonates with the phenomenological emphasis on lived experience and direct engagement with the world. For Marcel, knowledge is not something external to the person, nor is it an abstract theoretical construct; rather, it is something enacted in communion with the world and with other persons.

The Concept of Participation in Gabriel Marcel’s Epistemology and Philosophers’ Response

Marcel’s notion of participation arises from his critique of the subject-object dichotomy that has dominated much of Western philosophy. In contrast to the detached, objective stance of

traditional epistemology, where knowledge is seen as a product of a passive subject observing an external world as expressed by Edmund Husserl in his phenomenology, participation is an active, relational process. For Marcel, to participate is not simply to observe or represent the world; it is to be involved in it, to engage with it in a way that reveals deeper truths (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 1). This concept encapsulates an existential openness to the world, where the subject and object are not distinct entities but are intimately interconnected through experience.

In his work, *The Mystery of Being*, Marcel writes, "Participation is not the same as 'having' knowledge of something. It is not a relation between a subject and an object but an involvement, a sharing in the being of the world" (1). By emphasizing participation, Marcel insists that knowledge must be understood not merely as an abstract possession of facts but as a lived experience that involves the whole person, including emotions, actions, and commitments. This view contrasts with the Cartesian model of detached, objective reasoning, where the act of knowing is treated as a disembodied exercise of intellect.

One of the key philosophical concerns of Marcel's work is the problem of alienation. He argues that modern Western philosophy, particularly through its emphasis on objectivity and individualism, has led to a sense of estrangement between individuals and the world. Marcel's concept of participation is deeply tied to overcoming this alienation. It is through participation that the individual can re-establish a sense of connection and belonging within the world.

Marcel contrasts the modern notion of "having" knowledge with the idea of "being" involved in knowledge. This distinction is vital to Marcel's epistemology, and it has significant consequences for our understanding of knowledge and reality. For Marcel, "being" refers to the fundamental, ontological relationship between the self and the world. It is a relationship of participation, in which the self is intensely embedded in the world and is inseparable from it. As Marcel expresses, "being is not a static concept, but a dynamic and participatory one" (Marcel 145). In contrast, "having" refers to a relationship of possession or ownership. It is a relationship in which the self is separate from the world and is able to possess or own things within it. Marcel says, "having is a relation of exteriority, whereas being is a relation of interiority" (Marcel 150).

Marcel's distinction between "being" and "having" has paramount influence for epistemology. Traditional notions of knowledge and understanding often rely on a relationship of "having", in which the self is seeing as possessing or owning knowledge or understanding. However, Marcel argues that this approach is inadequate, and that true knowledge and understanding can only be achieved through a relationship of "being". "True knowledge is not a matter of having, but of being" (Marcel 155).

In a sense, participation represents a kind of return to a more holistic experience of knowledge, one that is grounded in relationships rather than detached observation. As he notes: "Participation implies that the subject is not isolated from the object but is drawn into its very being" (Marcel, *Creative Fidelity* 92). For Marcel, this overcoming of alienation is a key step in realizing the true nature of knowledge as lived and relational.

In reaction to his position, his contemporary, Jean-Paul Sartre in his *Existentialism is a Humanism* argues that human beings are free and responsible in this meaningless world and as such disagrees with Marcel's role of God in human knowledge (38). For Sartre, "I am my own freedom" (*Being and Nothingness* 435). Thus, man's knowledge comes from himself through experience as he interacts with others in the world. Here, he agrees with Marcel and objects his notion of the role of God. Sartre was an atheist as such saw no meaning in the existence of God and denied it in almost all his works while Marcel was a Catholic who believed in the existence of God and believed that all knowledge emanated from God.

Emmanuel Levinas' philosophy of the other (his theory of alterity) was influenced on Marcel's emphasis on the importance of encountering the other as a source of meaning and moral

responsibility. In his work, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Levinas, following Dostoevsky's epic novel states that, "know dear ones, that every one of us is undoubtedly responsible for all men and everything on earth; not merely through the general sinfulness of creation, but each one personally for all mankind and every individual man" (5). Levinas argues against egoism and holds that "my responsibility to the other is the fundamental structure upon which all other structure rests" (25). The concept of otherness in philosophy is also known as 'alterity', which means the "other of two" from the Latin *alter* which means "the other (and not the one)" (2). Levinas' reaction and work is very important in discussing the subject matter of this paper, i.e. intercultural values in the age of AI. This is so because the makers and users of AI seem to neglect the other(s) when it comes to application or use of AI. It is not untrue that AI can and should also learn from other minor cultures and adopt their values and not just the values of the dominant cultures which it has adopted at the moment and always tried to impose them on the minor cultures.

Epistemological Significance of Participation

Marcel's epistemology is inherently relational. He proposes that knowledge is not simply about discovering facts but about understanding and participating in the reality of the world. In this way, participation functions as a mode of being that transcends the intellectual act of knowing. It involves an embodied engagement with the world, where the boundaries between the knower and the known dissolve. This type of epistemology is what Marcel calls a "mystical" or "participatory" epistemology, wherein the knower is intimately involved with the known, and the process of knowing becomes an existential act of connection (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 134).

This idea can be seen as a response to the limitations of Cartesian rationalism, which separates the subject and object and views knowledge as an impersonal, objective process. For Marcel, knowledge cannot be fully understood through reason alone; it requires participation in the world. Participation, in this sense, is not just a theoretical or cognitive act but a lived and experiential engagement with the world. Marcel's epistemology, therefore, invites individuals to approach knowledge not just as something to be acquired, but as something to be experienced, lived, and shared.

Marcel's distinction between participation and objectification is pivotal to understanding his epistemology. Objectification occurs when a person approaches the world with the aim of extracting knowledge from it, reducing phenomena to objects that can be analyzed, measured, and controlled. This process is exemplified by the natural sciences, which, according to Marcel, often operate under the assumption that knowledge is something detached from the knower.

In contrast, participation is about being actively engaged with the world in a way that recognizes the subjectivity of both the knower and the known. Knowledge through participation does not objectify; it acknowledges the "mystery" of being and the intersubjectivity of experience. Marcel argues that true knowledge emerges not from an abstract intellectual analysis, but from a lived, participatory engagement with existence.

In his work *The Mystery of Being*, Marcel writes, "To possess is to objectify; to participate is to experience the world through communion with it" (Marcel, *Mystery* 34). Here, Marcel points out the tension between knowledge as possession—something that can be measured and held—and knowledge as a shared experience that cannot be reduced to mere abstraction.

Marcel's Epistemological Foundation of Phenomenology

Phenomenological Foundations

Phenomenology, as developed by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, emphasizes the direct experience of consciousness and the attempt to describe phenomena as they appear to

consciousness, without the distortion of preconceptions or theoretical assumptions. Marcel's epistemology shares many features with this tradition, particularly in its emphasis on lived experience and the rejection of abstract, detached forms of knowledge.

Marcel was particularly influenced by Husserl's focus on intentionality—the idea that consciousness is always “about” something. For Marcel, however, this intentionality must be understood not merely as a cognitive relationship between subject and object, but as a participatory, relational engagement with the world.

Marcel's phenomenology is informed by a deep commitment to existential themes, particularly the lived experience of human beings. His approach is profoundly different from that of other phenomenologists, such as Edmund Husserl, who sought to describe the essential structures of consciousness and experience. While Marcel was influenced by Husserl's method, he critiqued his abstraction and emphasis on objectivity. For Marcel, phenomenology must not merely engage with abstract essences or structures of consciousness but must be grounded in the concrete, lived experience of individuals. In contrast to the objective stance of Husserlian phenomenology, Marcel's thought emphasizes the "total subject" as a relational being whose experience is intrinsically tied to others and the world around them (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 32).

Marcel's distinction between "problem" and "mystery" is key to understanding his phenomenological approach. He contrasts these two concepts to argue that many aspects of human existence are best understood not as problems to be solved intellectually but as mysteries to be lived and experienced. Problems, according to Marcel, are things that can be analyzed and resolved through reason, detached observation, and scientific inquiry. Mysteries, on the other hand, are those aspects of life that cannot be reduced to objective understanding. These are experiences that demand participation and engagement, transcending the limitations of intellectual comprehension (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 56). This distinction challenges the Cartesian dualism of subject and object, suggesting instead that certain experiences—such as love, death, and the divine—are beyond the grasp of detached observation and intellectual analysis. They require a participatory, embodied approach to knowledge, one in which the subject is intimately involved.

Marcel's phenomenology also emphasizes the role of presence in human experience. Drawing on Martin Heidegger's notion of "being-in-the-world," Marcel highlights the importance of direct, personal engagement with the world and others. For Marcel, "being" is not an abstract concept or a metaphysical category; it is something experienced through presence. The idea of presence is not only about spatial proximity but also about an existential openness to the world and to other people. Human beings, according to Marcel, are always involved with the world through their actions, relationships, and experiences. This relational dimension of experience underscores his critique of Cartesian individualism, where the subject is considered a solitary, detached thinker (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 60).

Marcel's epistemology challenges traditional Cartesian approaches to knowledge, particularly the idea that knowledge can be separated from the knowing subject. While René Descartes emphasized the need for a subject that could stand apart from the world in order to acquire objective knowledge, Marcel critiqued this abstraction. He argued that knowledge cannot be purely objective or detached; it is always situated in the context of lived experience. As such, knowledge for Marcel is a deeply personal and relational experience, one that is shaped by our engagement with the world, our relationships with others, and the very mystery of existence itself.

Central to Marcel's epistemological thought is his critique of the subject-object dichotomy that has dominated Western philosophy. In contrast to the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am," Marcel argues that human knowledge is not the product of detached reason alone but is rooted in the relational and participatory nature of human experience. He rejects the reduction of the

world to an object for the subject to analyze. For Marcel, knowledge involves an ongoing dialogue between the subject and the world, one in which the subject is not a detached observer but an engaged participant (Marcel, *Creative Fidelity* 98). Knowledge, therefore, is not about mastering the world through intellectual detachment but about being open to the world and engaging with it in a deeply personal way.

One of the key concepts in Marcel's epistemology is that of "availability" and "possibility." Marcel contrasts the "available" with the "possible" to explain the limits of human knowledge. The "available" refers to those things that are present and immediately accessible through the senses or intellectual observation. However, for Marcel, the available is not the totality of what can be known. The "possible" encompasses what is not yet actualized or accessible but is nonetheless real and part of the broader horizon of human existence. True knowledge, for Marcel, involves an openness to these possibilities the things that are beyond the immediate and available to the senses or intellect (Marcel, *Creative Fidelity* 112). In this way, Marcel's epistemology emphasizes the limits of empirical knowledge and the need for a broader, more holistic engagement with reality that includes the subjective and the experiential.

Marcel also addresses the role of faith and mystery in knowledge. For him, faith is not merely a theological or religious concept; it is an essential component of human knowledge. Marcel argued that there are aspects of existence such as the question of God or the mystery of death that cannot be known through reason alone. These mysteries require a different kind of engagement, one that is grounded in faith and personal commitment. Faith, for Marcel, is not a denial of reason but an acknowledgment of the limitations of reason and the need for a different mode of knowing that involves trust, openness, and participation in the mystery of life itself (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 95). This view challenges the Enlightenment ideal of knowledge as something that can be fully captured by reason and scientific observation.

Marcel's epistemology cannot be fully understood without considering his theological perspective. His work is deeply informed by his Christian faith, which influenced his understanding of the nature of knowledge. For Marcel, the mystery of God cannot be fully comprehended through human reason. Rather, it requires an act of faith that transcends the intellectual domain. In his later works, Marcel discusses the relationship between faith and knowledge, suggesting that genuine knowledge involves more than intellectual understanding. It involves a personal, participatory relationship with the world and with God, and it acknowledges the limits of reason in comprehending ultimate truths. For Marcel, the "mystery of being" is inseparable from the mystery of God, and it is only through faith that one can begin to approach this mystery (Marcel, *The Mystery of Being* 130).

While Marcel did not follow Husserl's methodology strictly, his approach to knowledge is deeply phenomenological. His focus on the lived experience of the individual, the importance of the other in shaping knowledge, and his critique of objectification align him with phenomenological principles. In fact, Marcel's ideas on participation can be seen as a phenomenological answer to the problem of objectivity in traditional epistemology.

Marcel's contribution to phenomenology is therefore not just a theoretical extension but a transformation of phenomenological inquiry into the realm of interpersonal relationships. He argued that knowledge is not merely a mental act but a lived experience that involves a communion of persons. Thus, phenomenology for Marcel is not only about understanding consciousness, but also about experiencing the world in a participatory and relational way.

Marcel's Intersection of Existentialism and Epistemology

Marcel's philosophy contains many themes common to existentialism, especially the emphasis on human finitude, the search for meaning, and the anxiety of existence. However, his version

of existentialism is distinct in that it emphasizes the relational and communal aspects of existence. While existentialists like Sartre and Heidegger focus on the individual's struggle with meaning and authenticity in an indifferent universe, Marcel's existentialism highlights the importance of participating in a shared human experience and seeking meaning through engagement with others.

Marcel explores these themes in works such as *Being and Having*, where he discusses the contrast between having—a mode of possession that isolates individuals and being a mode of existence that involves engagement with the world and others. Marcel also draws attention to the role of the “mystery of being,” which can never be fully understood or objectified, but must be approached with humility and openness.

Marcel's concept of participation stands in contrast to the atomized individualism that often characterizes existentialist thought. For Marcel, existential meaning is not something that can be constructed by the solitary individual; rather, it is discovered through participation in the lives of others. This participatory knowledge transcends individual isolation and offers a richer, more authentic understanding of existence.

In the contemporary world, Marcel's epistemology of participation has significant relevance. In an age marked by individualism, technological advancement, and skepticism toward objective knowledge, Marcel's emphasis on relational knowing offers a counterpoint to the fragmented, often alienating tendencies of modern life. Participation as a way of knowing invites a rethinking of knowledge as something lived, shared, and intersubjective, rather than abstract or detached.

Marcel's emphasis on participation has much to offer in the context of postmodern epistemology, where questions of subjectivity, power, and relationality dominate philosophical discourse. In a world increasingly skeptical of the possibility of objective knowledge, Marcel's idea of participation offers an alternative model of knowing that resists reductionism and acknowledges the complexity of human experience.

Gabriel Marcel's Critique of Modern Science's Objectivity

At the heart of Marcel's critique is the issue of objectivity in modern science. Contemporary science, rooted in the Cartesian tradition of detachment, aims to observe and explain phenomena from a position of neutrality and distance. For Marcel, this detachment is problematic because it fails to account for the lived, personal experience of the individual, which he believes is fundamental to truly understanding the world. Marcel contrasts this detached, objectifying view of knowledge with a more intimate, subjective form of knowing, which he believes is often neglected in scientific practice.

In *The Mystery of Being*, Marcel states that modern science tends to treat the world as a set of objects to be manipulated and observed from the outside, thus creating a rift between the scientist and the world they study. This “having” perspective, according to Marcel, is an approach where knowledge is something external to the individual, something one can possess without truly engaging with it on a personal level (Marcel 19). By contrast, Marcel emphasizes a “being” perspective, one in which knowledge is lived and experienced rather than merely abstracted (Marcel 25). This distinction has profound implications for how we understand the role of science in human life. While science is undoubtedly valuable in its capacity to solve practical problems, it fails to capture the full richness of human experience because it remains disconnected from the subjective dimensions of being.

Marcel Distinctive Epistemology

One of the most significant contributions Marcel makes to epistemology is his distinction between “problems” and “mysteries.” For Marcel, a problem is something that can be solved by applying reason, analysis, and observation typical characteristics of the scientific method.

Problems are external to the subject and are approachable through objective means (Marcel 47). In contrast, mysteries are those aspects of human life and existence that resist such objectification. A mystery cannot be solved in the same way a problem can; it must be lived and experienced, engaging the subject in a deeper, more personal way (Marcel 51).

Modern science excels at addressing problems, whether they are in the realms of physics, biology, or chemistry. These are the domains where empirical observation, hypothesis testing, and logical analysis yield clear answers. However, the personal, existential questions about human life such as the meaning of suffering, the nature of consciousness, or the essence of love are not problems to be solved but mysteries to be experienced. Marcel argues that science, by focusing only on the realm of problems, risks overlooking the richer, more complex aspects of human existence that resist reduction to scientific models. In *The Mystery of Being*, Marcel states, "We are more than problems to be solved; we are mysteries to be lived" (Marcel 39). This distinction highlights the limits of the scientific method when applied to questions of human subjectivity, experience, and meaning.

The Concept of "Presence" and Its Role in Epistemology

A central theme in Marcel's epistemology is the concept of "presence." Marcel contrasts presence with mere "having," the former denoting a deeper, more intimate connection with the world, while the latter is associated with external, objectified knowledge. Presence, for Marcel, involves being truly engaged with the world and others, rather than observing them from a distance. This notion of presence is not limited to physical proximity but encompasses an existential openness to the world as it is experienced. In *The Mystery of Being*, Marcel explains, "To experience presence is to be touched by the world, not as an object, but as a call to the self" (Marcel 60).

In scientific practice, knowledge is often abstracted, categorized, and distilled into quantifiable units. Yet, this abstraction can obscure the deeper dimensions of existence that Marcel argues are essential for true understanding. For instance, in studying human beings, modern science might focus on neurological processes or genetic factors, but this approach often neglects the lived experiences of individuals—their emotions, intuitions, and subjective perspectives. Marcel's concept of presence suggests that true knowledge of a person or event involves more than just external observation; it requires an openness to being present with them in their totality.

The implications of this for modern science are clear: while science is invaluable in explaining and manipulating the natural world, it cannot fully capture the subjective realities of human existence. Human beings are not merely objects of study but subjects whose experiences are shaped by their unique personal perspectives, which cannot be reduced to empirical data.

Marcel's critique of modern science also addresses the alienation that arises from the over-reliance on objective knowledge. He contends that the scientific approach, with its emphasis on detachment and observation, can lead to a sense of estrangement from the world. In his essay *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, Marcel notes that the rise of scientific and technological rationalism has created a "loss of presence" in contemporary life. As scientific knowledge has become more abstract and technological progress more rapid, individuals have become disconnected from the world around them and from each other (Marcel 45).

This alienation is particularly evident in the realm of medical science, where the emphasis on diagnosis and treatment often overlooks the personal experience of the patient. The objective study of disease—focusing on symptoms, pathology, and treatment may fail to address the subjective realities of suffering, fear, and existential distress that patients experience. Marcel's philosophy, by emphasizing presence and the lived experience, calls for a more humane and holistic approach to science, one that considers not just the external facts but also the personal

realities that shape human experience.

Integrating Marcel's Epistemology into Modern Science

The implications of Marcel's epistemology for modern science are both profound and challenging. While scientific methods are invaluable in their ability to analyze and solve problems, Marcel's insights call for a recognition of the limits of objectivity. Science, by focusing on problems and excluding mysteries, risks ignoring the richness of human existence. Marcel's emphasis on presence, subjectivity, and the lived experience encourages a more integrated approach to knowledge one that acknowledges the value of scientific inquiry while also recognizing the need for a deeper, more personal engagement with the world.

For modern science to fully embrace Marcel's epistemology, it would need to expand its methods to include not just objective observation but also subjective experience. This could involve interdisciplinary collaboration between the sciences and the humanities, where the insights from philosophy, literature, and the arts are brought to bear on scientific practice. Such an approach would allow science to engage with both the objective and subjective dimensions of reality, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the world.

Marcel's position on the significance of embodied, experiential knowledge and understanding resonates with contemporary debates in phenomenology about the nature of subjective experience and the relationship between the self and the world. Phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Luc Marion have stressed the importance of embodied, experiential knowledge and understanding, and have suggested that traditional notions of knowledge and understanding are inadequate for containing the complexity and value of human experience (Merleau-Ponty 12).

Marcel concept of participation also speaks about the nature of human existence and the role of freedom and responsibility in fashioning our lives. Existentialists like Jean-Paul Satre and Martin Heidegger have accentuated the importance of human freedom and responsibility, and have maintained that human existence is considered by its freedom and responsibility (Satre 25).

Furthermore, Marcel's epistemology of participation also resonates with contemporary debates in phenomenology and existentialism about the nature of intersubjectivity and the role of others in forming our experiences and perceptions, and have contended that traditional conceptions of knowledge and understanding are inadequate for grasping the difficulty and fullness of human experience (Levinas 100).

In addition, Marcel's prominence on the importance of embodied, experiential knowledge and understanding also contributes to contemporary debates in phenomenology and existentialism about the nature of embodiment and role of the body in forming our experiences and perceptions. Phenomenologists like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Shaun Gallagher have stressed that traditional philosophies of knowledge and understanding are insufficient for containing the exertion and productivity of human experience (Merleau-Ponty 150).

Marcel's Epistemology of Inter-subjectivity and Intercultural Values in the Age of AI

Marcel basis his epistemology on inter-subjectivity which entails knowledge by experience where one subject learns from another subject or where one culture learns from and tolerate the other cultures. It is not untrue that in this age of AI, certain cultures seem to dominate the others and AI itself is programmed in such a way that it hardly learns or tolerate other cultural values apart from the one(s) it has been programmed. This paper calls the attention of the producers of AI to this issue in the following areas of concern.

- (a) **Cultural Sensitivity:** The human population on earth has diverse cultures. There are over one thousand cultures on earth with different ideologies, customs, and beliefs. The

major ethical concern here is whether AI seems to align with the morality of a few cultures and impose their moral values on the other cultures. It is in view of this that Ibanez, Penas, and Carmen are of the opinion that AI systems should be designed with cultural sensitivity, taking into account the values, norms, and beliefs of the communities they serve. This ensures that AI technologies are used responsibly and ethically in diverse contexts (46).

- (b) **Language and Communication:** It is not untrue that AI is transforming communication by bridging language barriers with tools like machine translation and natural language processing, but also raises concerns about linguistic homogenization and the need for inclusive AI development. There is a risk that AI could prioritize dominant languages, marginalizing smaller languages and cultures. In the same vein, AI powered translation may not always capture the full meaning and nuances of human language. In view of these, Russell and Norvig suggest that AI systems need to be developed with cultural sensitivity in mind to avoid misunderstandings and offense (837).
- (c) **Bias Mitigation:** AI systems largely depend on the pieces of information they are filled with. It is not untrue that some of the pieces of information may have some cultural biases based on the person who has sent such pieces of information into the website. AI systems can therefore reflect and amplify biases present in the data they are trained on, leading to unfair or discriminatory outcomes (Russell and Norvig, 934). Ibanez, Penas, and Carmen add here that these biases can arise from various sources, including biased data, algorithmic design flaws, and unconscious biases held by developers (62). They therefore suggest that addressing bias is crucial for building ethical and responsible AI systems that benefit every society and its cultural values. In the same vein, Russell and Norvig hold that this issue could be resolved by using datasets that accurately reflect the diversity of the real world, including underrepresented groups, and also addressing data imbalances and ensure that all groups are adequately represented (961).
- (d) **Community Engagement:** It is crucial, according to Domingos Pedro to involve diverse communities in the AI development lifecycle to ensure that AI systems are developed with a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by various populations or cultures (76). Community engagement fosters trust and acceptance, leading to better outcomes and successful implementation of AI systems. Open dialogue and participatory processes are, according to him, essential to address community concerns and ensure that AI is used ethically and responsibly (78).
- (e) **Global Collaboration:** AI ethics, encompassing principles like fairness, transparency, and accountability, is crucial for responsible AI development and global collaboration. This, according to Goffrey Andrew requires multi-stakeholder engagement and adaptive governance to ensure AI benefits humanity while mitigating potential harms (58). AI systems should therefore not perpetuate or amplify biases present in training data, ensuring equitable outcomes for all cultures or races. In the same vein, according to Luger and Stubblefield, all decision-making processes should be understandable and explainable, allowing users to understand how and why decisions are made (153). They further state that clear lines of responsibility should be established for AI systems, ensuring that developers and deployers are accountable for their actions and consequences. Also that AI development and deployment should prioritize human rights and dignity for people of all cultures, avoiding any action that could infringe upon these fundamental values (154). Russell and Norvig add here that global collaboration is essential to address the challenges and opportunities of AI, ensuring that ethical principles are applied consistently across borders (768).

Conclusion

Gabriel Marcel's epistemology of participation provides a refreshing alternative to traditional objectifying approaches to knowledge. His emphasis on relational, participatory knowledge challenges the contemporary man to be conscious of the other in all that he does, including his inventions. In whatever man does, he should be aware of the presence of the other and be responsible in the use of his freedom such that it does not trample on the freedom of others. In this contemporary, human beings should be conscious of cultural values in all their interactions. They should be aware that no culture has monopoly of knowledge so each culture can learn from the great values of other cultures. Thus, the inventors or creators of AI should have this at the back of their mind and see to it that AI is not used as a tool of exclusiveness but that of inclusiveness where all cultures of the world and their values will be respected. It should not be an avenue where the dominant or civilized cultures will impose their cultural value on the minor or uncivilized ones as if theirs were of no value or nothing good to learn from. AI should be able to learn and understand all languages of the world so that people can use it to interact freely and at ease.

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