

Gabriel Marcel:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Marcel, Gabriel, 1889-1973
Title:	Gabriel Marcel Collection
Dates:	1898-1973
Extent:	7 boxes (2.92 linear feet)
Abstract:	These materials, assembled by Darwin Yarish, a Canadian student of Marcel, contain over fifty notebooks kept by Marcel over the years. Drama, from juvenile efforts to several plays written in the mid-1940s, form the second-largest portion of the archive.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-02668
Languages	English and French
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Gift and purchase, 1981-1983.
Processed by	Bob Taylor, 1994
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Gabriel Marcel, generally regarded as the first French existential philosopher, was born in Paris in 1889 and died there in 1973. An only child in an upper-middle class family, Marcel early excelled in his studies and demonstrated an aptitude for philosophical inquiry. Shortly after Marcel began his academic career in philosophy, World War I broke out and he served in the French Red Cross, an experience that contributed to an increasingly humanistic aspect in his philosophy. In 1919 Marcel married Jacqueline Boegner, a professor at the Schola Cantorum; they adopted a son, Jean.

From 1914 Marcel kept a series of philosophical notebooks that reveal the evolution of his thought away from traditional academic philosophy and toward one influenced by the writings of Soren Kierkegaard. These notebooks were eventually published in 1927 under the title *Journal Métaphysique*. Later Marcel continued this practice of publishing directly from his journals with *Être et Avoir* (1935) and *Présence et Immortalité* (1959). The development of Marcel's philosophy led to his embracing Catholicism in 1929. His evolving "Christian existentialism" caused, in the years following World War II, his being contrasted in the popular press with Jean-Paul Sartre and the atheistic existentialism Sartre expounded and popularized.

Following his service in World War I, Marcel's academic career became an intermittent one, as he typically earned his living as a literary critic, editor, or publisher's reader. Marcel was, in these various capacities, instrumental in making contemporary foreign literature better known in France.

From an early age Gabriel Marcel evinced a keen interest in the dramatic, inventing dialogues with imaginary siblings. He had written plays as a schoolboy, and by the early 1920s Marcel had had his plays performed. His plays often demonstrated concerns manifest in his philosophical writings, and one, *Le Monde Cassé* (1933), is accompanied in its published version by a notable philosophical essay, "Position et Approches Concrètes du Mystère Ontologique."

Music had been an integral part of the Marcel household in his childhood, and in his adult life Gabriel Marcel was fond of piano improvisations. It was only in 1945, however, that he undertook--with the assistance of his wife--formal composition, setting down his musical interpretations of the poems of, among others, Baudelaire and Rilke.

Following the death of his wife in 1947 Marcel continued to write, teach, and travel. The major international recognition Gabriel Marcel received before his death was the German Peace Prize, awarded him at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1964.

Further biographical information on Gabriel Marcel may be found in his "An Autobiographical Essay" in *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, c1984).

Scope and Contents

The Gabriel Marcel material assembled by Darwin Yarish, a Canadian student of Marcel, is arranged in three series: works, correspondence, and miscellaneous. The works series comprises a collection of over fifty notebooks kept by Marcel over the years. In many of these notebooks he wrote down his quotidian thoughts, composed drama, or recorded his reactions to the events of the Second World War. Other notebooks contain a draft of an unpublished novel, literary criticism, musical compositions, and some fragmentary literary and philosophical jottings. The philosophical notebooks represent a significant portion of Marcel's recorded thought from as early as 1908 to the mid-1960s, and, in fact, represent about half of the total number of notebooks in the archive. Drama, from juvenile efforts to several plays written in the mid-1940s, form the second-largest portion of the archive.

The 55 notebooks that make up the works series have been arranged by genre into philosophy and philosophical journals, dramas, other literary materials, journals combining dramatic and philosophical materials, World War Two diaries, and music. While there is usually more than one notebook in each folder, the following folder list identifies Marcel's title for each notebook, separated by colons. The notebooks are all written in Marcel's hand with the exception of the plays *Le Quatuor en Fa Diese* (a typescript) and *Le Regard Neuf*, which is in the hand of Mme. Marcel. The manuscripts of *Existentialisme et Humanisme* and *Mystère de l'Être* include manuscript notes in the hand of Jeanne Delhomme.

About half of the plays represented in the collection are unpublished; the published drama *Le Quatuor*, *Chapelle Ardente*, *Iconoclaste*, *L'horizon*, and *Le Regard Neuf* are represented in manuscript.

The unpublished materials include Marcel's World War II journals (from 19 June 1940 to the end of 1944), together with the manuscript for his only (and unpublished) novel, *L'Invocation à la Nuit*.

Among the materials contained in the philosophical notebooks are manuscripts for a major portion of the *Journal Métaphysique*, as well as *Être et Avoir*, *Homo Viator*, and *Mystère de l'Être*.

The correspondence series supplements the works series and represents, in the main, letters of condolence Marcel received in 1947 upon the death of his wife Jacqueline. There is also a small group of letters from Marcel to Darwin Yarish written in the last four years of the philosopher's life, together with a few notes from Marcel's sister-in-law Genevieve Boegner to Yarish. Among the letters of condolence are found notes from Jean Pierre Alterman, Denis Huisman, Julien Lanoë, Rosamond Lehmann, and Max Picard.

The miscellaneous series contains a substantial amount of material which supports the works and correspondence series. The largest fraction comprises several hundred clippings of articles by and about Gabriel Marcel, interviews with him, reviews of his works, and (most particularly) coverage of his receiving the German Peace Prize in 1964. These clippings are from contemporary European newspapers and literary journals and are in various languages, German predominating. A small number of photographs (about 15) of Marcel and his Parisian neighborhood, together with a few theatrical programs, completes this series.

While the representations of Marcel's work in philosophy and dramatic writing is quite strong in the archive, there is very little personal material or material representing his work as an editor, literary critic, or publisher's reader.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Boegner, Genevieve
Delhomme, Jeanne
Lehmann, Rosamond, 1901-
Picard, Max, 1888-1965
Yarish, Darwin

Subjects

Bergson, Henri, 1859-1941
Bradley, F.H. (Francis Herbert), 1846-1924
Ebner, Ferdinand, 1882-1931
Richardson, Dorothy Miller, 1873-1957--Criticism and interpretation
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 1875-1926
Royce, Josiah, 1855-1916
Sartre, Jean Paul, 1905-
Philosophy
Songs, French
World War, 1939-1945--Personal narratives, French

Document Types

Christmas cards
Diaries
First drafts

Juvenilia

Photographs

Postcards

Series I: Works, 1902-1965

Subseries A. Philosophy and Philosophical Journals, 1908-1965

Cours de Bergson, 1908-09	box 1 folder 1
Notes de Bradley, 1909; Notes Anciennes... de Bradley, 1910	folder 2
Réflexions sur L'idée, 1910-11; Notes de 1912-13; [Philosophical fragments in 5 notebooks], 1910-13	folder 3
Notes de 1912-13 Pour le Thèse; Notes Philosophiques Personnelles, 1913-14; Théorie de la Participation, 1913-14	folder 4
Notes Philosophiques de L'époque, 1910s; Notes sur le Conscience et le Moi, 1910s	folder 5
<i>Journal Métaphysique</i> , pt. 5 & 6, 1914-19	folder 6
<i>Journal Métaphysique</i> , pt. 7, 9, 1919-23	folder 7
<i>Journal Métaphysique</i> , pt. 10, 1923	folder 8
Éléments D' <i>Être et Avoir</i> and Notes sur <i>Le Monde Cassé</i> , 1932-33; Notes de 1932 et 1936	box 2 folder 1
Articles sur Sartre, 1938-43 and Notes pour le N.R.F. sur Rilke	folder 2
[Notes sur Royce], 1940s; Textes pour <i>Homo Viator</i> et <i>Être Valeur Liberté</i> , 1945	folder 3
[<i>Mystère de L'être</i>] Recherche sur L'essence de la Realité Spirituelle, 1948; [Notes sur Réflexion et Notes sur un Métaphysique de Charité], 1948	folder 4
[<i>Mystère de L'être</i>], 1948	folder 5
Existentialisme et Humanisme, 1948	folder 6

Plan Definitif de la Conference "Presence et Immortalité,"1952	folder 7
[Notes sur Ferdinand Ebner], 1965	box 3 folder 1
Subseries B: Drama, 1902-1940s	
La Duchesse de Modene, 1902; La Lumière sur la Montagne, 1905	box 3 folder 2
Le Dilemme, 1906	folder 3
Iris (Suite) de la II Version, 1918; Le Petit Garçon, 1919	folder 4
Le Quatuor en Fa Diese, 1919	folder 5
Notes pour des Pièces <i>Chapelle Ardente</i> and <i>Iconoclaste</i> [and other dramatic writing], 1922; Dernière Version du III des Champs Devastés and Sujet de Pièce Marie Blanche, 1923	folder 6
[L'horizon] Quelques Notes de 1927 and Manuscrit de L'horizon, 1927	box 4 folder 1
Le Regard Neuf, 1938	folder 2
L'emissaire (1940s); [<i>L'horizon</i>] Le Survol (1940s)	folder 3
Laurence, ou, Les Mains Vides (1940s?)	folder 4
Les Mains Vides, Acte I (1940s);[dramatic dialog between characters Françoise and Olivier] (1940s?)	folder 5
Subseries C: Other literary materials, 1921-1930	
L'invocation à la Nuit, Roman (1921); Notes sur Dorothy Richardson (1930)	box 4 folder 6
Subseries D: Journals containing both literary and philosophical materials, 1930-1957	
Philosophical and literary essays from the 1930s	box 5 folder 1

Premières notes sur *Signe de la Croix* et sur Rilke, 1938-39

folder 2

Rétrospection, Notes Préparatoires aux Techniques D'avilissement and Notes Pour L'emissaire, 1946; [Notes sur Théâtre] "What May We Expect from Philosophy?", 1957

folder 3

Subseries E: World War II Diaries, 1940-1944

Journal de Événements with newspaper clippings, telegram from Jean Marcel, and shopping lists in hand of Jacqueline Marcel laid in, 1940-1941

**box 5
folder 4**

Journal de Guerre (25 juillet 1941-30 août 1942)

folder 5

Journal du Débarquement en Normandie à la Bataille du Rhin, juin-septembre 1944; Journal Fin 1944

folder 6

Subseries F: Music, 1945-1946

Music notebooks, including settings of poems by Baudelaire, J. Supervielle, and P. de la Tour

**box 5
folder 7**

Series II: Correspondence, 1898-1973

Marcel to Yarish, 1969-1973; D. Lanoe to Yarish, 1973

**box 5
folder 8**

Notes by Marcel and D. Lanoë (1970s); Marcel to his Uncle Meyer (1898)

**box 6
folder
1**

Letters of condolence: identified correspondents, 1947

folder 2

Letters of condolence: unidentified correspondents, 1947

folder 3

G. Boegner to Yarish (1970-72); Boegner to Querouil (1970); D. Yarish to Mrs. C. Yarish (1970)

**folder
4**

Various philosophers to Yarish (1968-71)

**folder
5**

Miscellaneous to Marcel (1950)

folder 6

Series III: Miscellaneous, 1945-1973

Photographs of Marcel, home, family	box 6 folder 7
Photographs of Marcel, 1948	folder 8
Theatrical programs	folder 9
Reviews and articles about Marcel in typescript	folder 10
Clippings about Marcel, 1946-1952	folder 11
Clippings about Marcel, 1948-1952	folder 12
Clippings about Marcel, 1964	folder 13-14
Clippings about Marcel, 1964	box 7 folder 1 - 2
German newspapers, 1964	folder 3
Miscellaneous minor printed matter	folder 4
Empty envelopes	folder 5

Gabriel Marcel Papers--Index of Correspondents

- Alterman, Jean Pierre--6.2
- Boegner, Genevieve--6.4
- Bonnard, H el ene--6.2
- Chastaing, Maxime, 1913- --6.2
- Dani, Babet--6.2
- Delhomme, Jeanne--2.4
- Forest, A.--6.2
- France. Consulat (D usseldorf, Germany)--6.10
- Giovetti, Carlo A.--6.6
- Grande, Charles--6.5
- Gray, J. Glenn (Jesse Glenn), 1913-1977--6.5
- Griffin, Jonathan--2.5
- Hayen, Andr e--5.3
- Heidegger, Martin, 1889-1976--6.5
- Huisman, Denis--6.2
- Jaspers, Gertrud--6.5
- Jourdan, Rose--6.2
- Jumlilhac, Elis de--6.2
- Lano e, Denyse--5.8, 6.1
- Lano e, Julien--6.2
- Lehmann, Rosamond, 1901- --6.2
- Lauris, Pierrebourg--6.2
- Marcel, Gabriel, 1889-1973--5.5, 5.8, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3
- Marcel, Jean--5.4
- Meyer, [forename?]-6.1
- Nicolas, P.--6.2
- Picard, Max, 1888-1965--6.2
- Querouil, [forename?]-6.4
- Robert Honnert, Jeanne--6.2
- Roumiantzeff, Jacqueline--6.2
- Saner, Hans, 1934- --6.5
- Schilpp, Paul Arthur, 1897- --6.5
- Schlemmer, Isabelle--6.2
- Schuman, Robert, 1886-1963--3.4
- Yarish, Darwin--5.8, 6.4
- Yarish, C., Mrs.--6.4