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Gabriel Marcel; The impact of Technological Spectating.

*Mystery of Being* by Gabriel Marcel depicts the harm of spectating in contemporary society. Marcel describes how spectating rather than participating causes us to lose our sense of being. This essay will show how technology, particularly television, social media, and cell phones, has negatively influenced people's decisions to leave small communities and develop spectating habits. Marcel demonstrates how the yearning for ingatheredness among individuals is depleting as self-centered consumerism rises. I will illustrate that this rise is primarily due to the performative actions of people and the influence of social media. Indeed, I shall use Dr. Lonnie Aarssen’s work *What We Are* toillustrate the addiction to technology in a biological standpoint. More specifically, I will show using Dr. Aarssen’s work, how we have developed a type of ‘nose blindness’ to technology by not living fulfilling lives. This will exemplify how individuals become accustomed to this mode of living and lose the participatory aspects of their lives. I will argue why I support Marcel's fear and present counterarguments regarding performative accounts to further my agreement. Ultimately, the advancement of technologies promotes detached communities and removes individuals from the arena of world participation.

Marcel demonstrates that ‘being’ is an important aspect of society since it allows us to remain connected within the world. Marcel defines being as “an act by means of which I overpass (go beyond) these oppositions and in which the ‘turning inward to myself’ and the stretching ‘outward from myself’ meet”.[[1]](#footnote-1) According to Marcel, being, demonstrates how the journey inward of self-reflection allows us to obtain a comprehension of one's current state of self. The idea of ingatheredness examines who we are as a tool for introspection, allowing us to find our sense of self. He furthers this claim by articulating that we practice ingatheredness as a means of discovering where we belong within our communities; a means of drawing nearer to something within.[[2]](#footnote-2) As a result, being is not something that can be attained. Rather, it must be experienced by participating in activities that go beyond the mundane.

Marcel exemplifies participating as a means of being engaged with the world. He illustrates the will to participate is “beyond the traditional opposition of activity and passivity; to feel is not to endure but to receive and to receive is an act”.[[3]](#footnote-3) This action enables us to be a part of the world and engage with others in our communities. Indeed, we provide ourselves the opportunity to consider who we are when we actively participate. Self-examination encourages participation because we use the external environment to learn about our place in the community. Simply, participating requires that one goes beyond mundane activities in order to uncover our sense of being.

Spectating, on the other hand, represents the opposite of participating. This action does not see an individual genuinely performing activities in their lives. Rather, these individuals ‘watch’ or ‘spectate’ as a bystander. Marcel argues that this condition of merely observing, leads to a dull life because the spectator does not seek fulfillment through experiences. Marcel furthers his fear as this lifestyle does not promote ingatheredness or a means of life beyond mundane modes of living. Spectating cannot allow us to examine our sense of being since it excludes participation.

However, there are certain instances where spectating can still be considered actively participating in one's experiences. These instances enable us to ‘watch’ as spectators but engage in the activity with others in our community. Thus, these actions are not to be wholly considered spectating but rather restful participation. Moreover, since true spectating does not foster any kind of ingatheredness, it ought to be avoided.

An example that can be used to illustrate the comparison between participating and spectating is a game of hockey. In this scenario, I invite my friends to the frozen pond in my backyard. The twelve of us make up two different teams of five, allowing us to have one substitute player per team. Each of us has the opportunity to participate in the game and also to rest in between plays. Here, we are actively participating in the game and cannot stand outside of it. Simply, there is no possible way that I can spectate a game when I am playing.

Further, the players who are resting during the game are still participating. As they are catching their breath, they cheer on their teammates and await the next person to come off. Someone passing by the pond, although not participating in the game, may be engaging in another activity like dog walking and thus not considered a spectator. While interaction with the outside world is necessary for participation, it is not always required to include other people. Similarly, I could practice hockey drills alone and still consider this a mode of participation. This is because participation is not reliant on others, rather it relies on the act of experiencing life outside of oneself. However, mindlessly watching this game on the television would be considered spectating. This action illustrates a one-dimensional mode of experience because the spectator is not actively involved in the hockey game, rather they are being consumed by the technology broadcasting it.

It ought to be mentioned that I am not referring to commonplace technologies that still require participation. For instance, an automatic coffee maker, makes life easier, yet still requires participation; one still has to grind the beans and pour the water. This differs from mind consuming technologies such as smartphones or the television. Instances like social media, cause individuals to remove themselves from participatory actions and inflict the spectating mentality seen in ‘Doom scrolling’. This essay's subsequent section will look at this mode of spectating in order to demonstrate the negative effects of social media. Using these technological objects as a mode of participation cannot ultimately lead to a fulfilling life, since we are restraining ourselves from genuinely experiencing the world.

Indeed, participation cannot be located in the means of an object. In Layman's terms, an object is something that exists in our lives as opposed to a way that we participate in life. This cannot be deemed as participation because we are not actively doing something in the community. Objects are only used as a means rather as something that possesses an end in itself. The use of objects as a means to participate, leads to a non-fulfilling or dull inner life. Accordingly, individuals cannot be treated as objects. This treatment of individuals removes the self from participating since we are no longer actively engaged in the community. Simply, treating others as objects or using objects as a mode of participation forces us to ignore our reflection and state of being. Therefore, we need to move beyond the mundane aspects of our lives and transcend towards community and meaning.

As aforementioned, Marcel argues that we must remove ourselves from our commonplace lives and go beyond certain modes of experience. More precisely, he argues that we ought to transcend these experiences to reach deeper levels of the self. The ability to transition from the spectator perspective to the participation lens is the act of transcending. Transcendence can be seen as the means or action of going beyond the mundane. Marcel illustrates this definition by using a thought experiment of a young girl seeking riches.

Let us imagine that the case for instance of a young girl who, so that she may obtain the satisfactions of what she feels herself deprived, marries for money. Let us notice clearly that she perhaps frees herself from certain religious and moral prejudices and in this sense one might, it seems, properly speak of a ‘going beyond’. On the other hand, we have a very clear sense indeed that the need to which the girl has yielded cannot properly be called a need for transcendence.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Here, Marcel highlights that the desire for materialistic riches is not fulfilling. Therefore, the girl in the thought experiment is not experiencing transcendence. Indeed, the yearning for money or other objects cannot be deemed going beyond the mundane or journeying toward ingatheredness. This plays an important role in Marcel's argument because it illustrates how a simple-minded life experience, such as obtaining riches, is not enough for one to properly experience life.

Instead, Marcel argues, “that to transcend not merely to go beyond, spatial temporally experience as a non-satisfaction, but all non-satisfaction does not entail an aspiring towards transcendence”.[[5]](#footnote-5) This example is analogous to the use of technology since it cannot be deemed as a mode of transcendence. The young girl does not encounter any means of going beyond, rather she leads a dull life towards materialistic items. When someone develops an obsession with technology, the same hindrance found in the desire for riches is evident. Since technology fosters poor inner lives, it cannot be used as a tool of participation or transcending.

Marcel declares that individuals should move past materialism to obtain a more fulfilling life. He states that we ought “​​not only to orient itself towards something other than itself, but also to be inwardly conjoined and adapted rather as the joints of the skeleton are conjoined.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Here, we should look inward at our state of being to orient ourselves with the outside world. This inward journey enables us to generate outwardly connections. This is an essential aspect when examining participation since it shows how one cannot indulge in hollow activities. Hollow activities are those in which the person deliberately withdraws from society in order to perform meaningless tasks that do not benefit their state of being.

Moreover, the impact that technology plays on small communities illustrates how this spectating consumer mindset can interfere with our connections in the world. Further, Marcel fears that the world is entering a point of world suicide that can affect these small communities and participatory acts. He argues that “we live today in a world at war with itself, and this state of world-war is being pushed so far that it runs the risk of ending in something that could properly be described as world-suicide.”[[7]](#footnote-7) More specifically, Marcel illustrates that the world is broken, by striving toward a certain type of unity, it has lost its real unity. The sense of a small community such as the ones that joined in the hockey game, this no longer being formed. It is instead being replaced by the global gigantism of technology. This refers to the pursuit of technology for the sake of technology rather than for the sake of developing meaningful advancements.

This type of development influences disunity and can be illustrated by Marcel’s fear of technology. Given the time period, He uses his fear of the radio, the highest level of technology, to demonstrate his concerns. Marcel's concern later translated into a fear of world suicide. He elucidates this problem in his work *Man Against Mass Society.* Here, he discusses how the “Austrian writer, Joseph Roth, has thrown a clear light onto the really satanic role which *radio* will be found to have played in contemporary history.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Marcel shows that the ‘satanic role’ influenced by the radio separates the small communities by incorporating world gigantism.

In this case, world gigantism refers to the problem occurring in small communities after their encounter with technology such as the radio. This issue involves people isolating themselves to use technology as a form of participating, rather than engaging in modes of ingatheredness. This definition witnesses’ communities distancing and becoming more focused on networking to outer regions. The close-knit relationships that we had with one another began to dwindle due to the rise of technology. Marcel uses the radio as an example of this divide as it was the only commonplace piece of technology. This one-way mode of communication foreshadows the start of examining people as objects rather than beings.

He articulated that the use of technology will cause individuals to possess less meaningful relationships and begin spectating in their lives. The radio possesses the ability to connect others with Worldwide information. However, this mechanism is a one-way speaking device that does not incorporate real conversations or experiences between others. By using his example of the radio, he shows how one-way conversations become harmful to our state of being. This, feared Marcel, was an issue that would develop as technology advanced.

Indeed, individuals would stop looking inward to find their state for being. Instead, Marcel states that we are “tempted to say the center of gravity of such a man and his bouncing point tend to become external to himself; that he projects himself more and more into objects into the various pieces of apparatus on which he depends on for his existence.”[[9]](#footnote-9) Marcel describes how the modes of men have become obsessed with technology and we view one another as a means to an end. As previously stated, one cannot utilize others as objects to transcend beyond the mundane or to remove ourselves from spectating. Here, technology utilizes our addiction as a gravitational pull to inflict spectating rather than enabling us to practice our journey toward being.

This view removes us as participants and forces us to disengage from the community. By employing these modes of technology, we no longer wish to transcend beyond our ordinary lives and engage deeply with others. Marcel declares that this mode of interacting with our world is a means of spectating. Similar to the example of the man watching the hockey game, individuals are now engaging more in their devices than within their communities. This shows how people would rather spectate interactions amongst others than participate in them themselves. The use of objects leads to a non-fulfilling or dull inner life therefore this treatment of individuals removes transcendence.

Objectification makes participation improbable, because without participation, presence cannot occur. Here, being present in the world fosters a connection between individuals who are participating with one another. The presence in the world allows people to share in each other's life experiences and participate in the community. As mentioned previously, it is possible to avoid spectating whilst being alone. However, using technology in attempt to participate by yourself cannot be seen as transcending. This is because, I am using technology as a means for fulfillment rather than as an end in itself. When engaged in objectification, we are no longer connected and compelled to spectate.

Certain objects, such as books, have the ability to fall under participation. This is because these objects allow one to engage in literature and consequently gain from active outward involvement. Objectification occurs when the object produces mindless, intoxicating affects that encourage the act of spectating. By placing attention on a device, one does not obtain fulfillment because this is a form of a hollow activity.

Thus, the presence of another, ought not be subject to objectification. Further, not thinking of a presence as an object means that “the very act by which we incline ourselves toward a presence is essentially different from that through which we grasp at an object; the case of a presence, the very possibility of [...] of seizing, is excluded in principle.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Essentially the self is a mode of action, by falling into modes of technology we lose this action and objectify those in our world. Here, technology is used as a mode of objectifying individuals instead of seeing them as persons. This causes us to lose our participatory actions since we are not present in this community. Instead, individuals fall victim to modes of objectification through technological means.

Marcel declares that it was a “common spectacle then to see thinkers who regarded themselves as thoroughly imbued with materialistic principles.”[[11]](#footnote-11) Marcel continues this view on materialism by stating “more precisely, that in a society ruled by materialistic principles, freedom is transmuted into its opposite, or becomes merely the most treacherous and deceptive of empty slogans.”[[12]](#footnote-12) The materialistic principles have since advanced parallel to modern technology, further becoming an addictive substance in our lives. Marcel would therefore contend that using technology compels us to disregard our sense of identity and promotes spectating as an ideal way to exist.

An example of this can be elucidated with the comparison between past and present methods of romantic dating. I will illustrate how people essentially become ‘nose blind’ to their actions of spectating. In this instance of ‘nose blindness,’ I articulate the feeling that occurs due to the inability to distinguish the commonplace experiences we have with technology. These nose-blind experiences cause us to spectate rather than participate because we ignore the need to transcend beyond the mundane.

Suppose it is the 1950s and I am currently looking for a relationship. I might engage in a conversation with an individual who's reading a book that I am interested in. Perhaps, I might go out to a party with my friends and look for someone else seeking a relationship in a different environment. In these situations, I walk up to a person of interest and get to know them face-to-face. This interaction can be deemed participating because I am actively going out into the world and experiencing somebody else in the community. I might ask them out to dinner and continue the development of the relationship beyond technology. This action of going out and looking for someone, enables me to find a partner through experience and engage with them without the interference of social media.

Now, I can compare this situation to a modern example of dating. In this example, I am in a similar situation as the instance above. I am currently looking for a relationship and want to develop a deeper connection. In modern society, I might download a dating app or look through my friends' followers on social media. More precisely, dating apps such as Tinder and Bumble require no means of participation with other people. When I open the app, I am presented with a picture of a person that is located within my preset perimeter. This perimeter can be as far as I wish, allowing me to connect with people that are in my desired proximity. Once I have examined their profile, I can swipe left to remove the person from view or right to identify my attraction to the receiving party. If the attraction is reciprocated, then I will get a notification informing me of the ‘match’. This illustrates how the use of technology requires little to no modes of participation since I did not attain any experiences in this interaction.

I have done all of this whilst remaining stagnant and have begun a relationship without expressing any true connection. This action cannot be seen as participatory because I did not go out into the world and experience another individual. Similar to the radio example, the technological advancement of communication removes the act of participating and forces me to spectate. Although I am actively conversing with this person, the relationship cannot advance whilst encountering the interference of my screen. I have discarded the traditional participatory dating methods and remain a spectator in my relationship.

It ought to be noted that Marcel does not declare that there is any particular era that we can base our society on. He does mention that stoicism is a proper mode of thinking, however, technology uprooted and ruined this mentality. He argues “that we shall find ourselves forced to recognize an exceptionally important fact in stoicism [...] has been to-day, I shall not say refuted by the facts but uprooted by the missile which used to nourish it.”[[13]](#footnote-13) Marcel illustrates that we have lost this aspect in our lives and the ability of absolute possession of the self by the self.[[14]](#footnote-14) Simply, with the rise of technology and the influence of social media, individuals have lost the ability to connect with others and possess a sense of self.

Dr. Aarssen illustrates this problem of the loss inner self and the rise of a consumer society in his work. He argues that “a mind -the ‘inner self’-troubled by its own possible/probable impermanence is a mind worried about a loss of meaning.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Here, the mind is constantly worried about losing meaning in the world. Dr. Aarssen aims to illustrate how humans have evolved culturally as well as biologically. He argues that humans alone share our evolutionary traits socially. Essentially, how we learn and behave will soon fall onto the younger generation causing the mass issue of technology to become an evolutionary trait. This research shows how genetics and culture coexist and can give rise to societies centered around technology.

Moreover, in a community that is constantly exposed to technology, individuals have found other ways to obtain empty meaning in the world. I define ‘empty meaning’ as a mode of filling one's time with ultimately useless activities that cannot account for participation. This action primarily occurs when we engage in hollow activities. These activities possess empty meaning since the performance of them does not produce modes of participation. Dr. Aarssen presents this when he implements issues with consumerism in his book. He states, “Conspicuous and wasteful consumerism feeds several intrinsic humans needs it can signal membership within a particular group, addressing the need for self-esteem or reputation legacy, and it can advertise status that is attractive to potential mates.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Wasteful consumerism can be illustrated as the desire to purchase the next best thing. Here, it can be seen as the next iPhone, video game or app. Dr. Aarssen illustrates that the need for self-esteem or reputation is advertised through technology and influences the desire to consume.

This then turns into a vicious cycle of self-impermanence anxiety. People obtain the sense that we are unimportant in our community and become isolated.[[17]](#footnote-17) As a result, we use technology to divert our attention from the sense of boredom and fear. However, it spirals out of control since the more we desire materialistic items, the more this desire intensifies. Since technology allows us to detach ourselves from reality, it is therefore employed as a means of diversion from concern related to our impermanence. Individuals wish to obtain the “next best thing” in the belief that it will amplify their modes of happiness. Yet, it only presents the opposite.

Dr. Arrssen states that “the ‘rat race’ of capital materialism and consumerism where the average person never seems to get ahead or to find greater happiness or contentment, despite continuing advances in technology, economic growth, and personal prosperity.”[[18]](#footnote-18) This relates directly with Marcel because it shows how the biological desire for advancement, or technology, is causing us to become spectators. Indeed, this illustrates how one can be addicted to social media and consuming technology in the same sense that one can be addicted to substances. “Any activity, involvement, or sensation that a person finds sufficiently consuming can become an addiction [. . .] addiction can be understood only in terms of the overall experience.”[[19]](#footnote-19) This illustrates how consumerism and technology can become just as addicting as anything else causing us to ignore participation.

Indeed, this leads us to the coined ‘Doom scrolling’. Doom scrolling can be defined as an addiction and heavy internet use that encourages one-way modes of spectating as instigated by the radio.[[20]](#footnote-20) This can be further exemplified using a thought experiment. Suppose you are on an app that possesses the ability to scroll unlimitedly. This could be YouTube Reels, TikTok For You or Instagram Highlights. The Doom Scrolling aspect occurs when an individual scrolls through one of these unlimited apps for long hours without the ability to pull themselves away from their device. The short format videos induce a constant rise in dopamine levels allowing the brain to constantly crave more content. Precisely, to develop an addiction you have to repeatedly participate in Doom Scrolling “for motion relief to the point where it feels as though you can't live without it.”[[21]](#footnote-21) This statement argues that people who have become victims of Doom Scrolling feel as though they cannot obtain happiness without this dopamine level.

Since Doom Scrolling enables the observation of others conducting their lives, it furthers the idea of spectating. “People can be addicted to behaviors, and even the experience of love. Addiction is really about the relationship between the person and the experience.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Eventually, the individual becomes addicted to this level of dopamine since the apps cater to the watchers' interests. This generates a relationship between the individual's feed and their constant compulsion to watching other people. The app creates an addictive environment through farming a personalized algorithm engaged in the content displayed to them. Your feed is generated to keep you scrolling for hours on end which inlays the term Doom Scrolling.

Furthermore, Doom Scrolling is a form of spectating rather than participation. Indeed, the inability to remove oneself from Doom Scrolling causes an individual to remain addicted to technology. As mentioned above, spectating can occur when we observe an action rather than participate in it, causing the individual to lose their sense of being. Ultimately, the person will eventually turn to Doom Scrolling as their only source of happiness leading to a dull inner life.

Dr. Aarssen contends that looking for greater happiness in the realm of social media and technology never fulfills the demand for pleasure. Ultimately, the involvement in intimate communities becomes unnecessary when one has unlimited access to the global social center through devices. The largescale community can be characterized as the overall mass of individuals online who create content for an audience, seeking a false sense of connection. The small communities that Marcel strived to achieve then became a sparce imaginative dream from a time before addictive technology.

Dr. Aarssen expands Marcel's view with an example from *Alice in Wonderland*. “According to the Red Queen from Alice in Wonderland, it takes all the running you can do just to keep in the same place.”[[23]](#footnote-23) Comparably, it appears that in the current state of the world, one is enticed towards materialism and consumerism to maintain satisfaction. The average individual accomplishes this feat by Doom Scrolling subsequently subjecting themselves to this cycle. By staying physically and mentally in the same place, one cannot generate the small network of communities Marcel intended, nor can they transcend beyond their dreary lives.

Marcel exemplifies Doom Scrolling by arguing that “the danger of these social effects tending toward anarchy and thus hampering a rational social organization which men claim day to day to be bringing into being.”[[24]](#footnote-24) This citation by Marcel illustrates the influence of technology. By including technology in society, we are causing a codependent relationship under the guise of staying connected. It ultimately causes us to lose values that small communities utilize and forces us to enter the global community. This leads to false connections as implemented in Marcel's fear of the radio or my example of online dating.

Marcel's argument, however, can be refuted by arguing that technology fosters community rather than acts as a means of isolating individuals. In the Hanna-Rohm-Criittenden article “We’re all connected: The Power of the Social Media Ecosystem” they illustrate how the power of social media can be used as a mode of staying connected. They argue that “social media technologies have engendered radically new ways of interacting.”[[25]](#footnote-25) Indeed, social media platforms and technologies can keep these communities together and include new members. This directly disputes Marcel’s argument, considering technology has the ability to reach out to others. Illustrating that ingatheredness is unaffected by technology or otherwise enhanced by it.

Further “the interconnectedness of online social media combined with traditional media” allows us to reach other cultures and learn more about different ways of living.[[26]](#footnote-26) Utilizing contemporary technologies, this interconnectedness, is argued to allow us to span greater social boundaries. By reaching out to other communities we can educate ourselves with different modes of culture, inherently increasing our own communities' benefit. “Social media enables both reach and engagement through judicious use of all formats and platforms.”[[27]](#footnote-27) This counters Marcel's fear of technology removing us from participating. By engaging in the use of technology we can connect with a wider variety of people and participate within their culture, enabling us to transcend beyond our limited community. Regardless of the means of how we remain connected we still have the capabilities of participating through education.

The use of technology as a mode of enhancing one’s life can be illustrated in mundane communities. This counters Marcel’s argument by showing that “technologies frequently offer enhanced quality of life. Even basic conventions like water pumps and latrines can dramatically improve the health and economic well-being of people.”[[28]](#footnote-28) In this instance, the use of technology brings fulfillment to life rather than the dull image that Marcel depicts. By including technology in our lives, we have the ability to improve the well-being of other people around us. Here, we use technology to transcend beyond the mundane of living in homes without indoor plumbing and other necessities. Rather, in this case we can have a fulfilling life that includes new modes of technology.

Marcel defends his claims in *Man Against Mass Society* by articulating that exchange cannot be something mechanical. He argues “It is not rather the case that in the world where technique is triumphant this idea of exchange though still persistent has lost its old values just because exchange in the true sense is not something mechanical? It implies rather an endless possibility of disappointment.”[[29]](#footnote-29) More specifically, Marcel is arguing that the exchange within communities leads to only disappointment when infringed upon by technology. Although it creates a platform to have more interactions with other communities, it results in empty and meaningless conversations with others. In the same regard, the radio presents one-way conversations, social media and other platforms issue performative actions that are not deep and meaningful. In this context, ‘performative’ refers to an activity that is done primarily for the purpose of generating attention rather than for merit of the action itself.

For instance, suppose I post something on my social media about donating to a charitable cause. I broadcast my good deed in hopes to garner a positive response from viewers. This action can be deemed ‘performative’ as the donation is staged in efforts to build my social standing. This account of performative actions can be illustrated as a mode of spectating since I did not actively participate in this action. Instead, I used my social media accounts as a means to gain popularity rather than to achieve a sense of being.

Marcel further addresses this when he argues “he cannot actually exist. Existence without living links is not concretely conceivable it is not among real possibilities.”[[30]](#footnote-30) According to Marcel, people are spectators in their own lives, existing merely to maintain their social presence. In this instance, the donation was made to maintain an appearance rather than to gain a better understanding of oneself, thus it cannot be considered a participatory act.

Marcel argues that this does not mean that “we ought to break all the machines it means merely that as Bergson was so much profundity observed, every kind of outward technical progress ought to be balanced in man by an effort at inner conquest, directed towards an ever-greater self-mastery.”[[31]](#footnote-31) Marcel illustrates that the use of technology can benefit us if we use it in moderation. As argued above, technology can be used to improve the well-being of our lives. The issue of spectating occurs when we begin to incorporate Doom Scrolling and performative actions into the communities. Marcel demonstrates how overindulging in technology can lead to a life of dim, unfulfilling spectatorship. This is because some “technological advances fuel behavioral addiction, but they are so miraculous and life-enriching.”[[32]](#footnote-32) In this case, we can have an account of technology supporting a person's livelihood, however, if we become engrossed, we lose our ability to transcend and lapse into a spectator mentality.

The counterarguments declared that technology can be used as a means of staying connected with others in the community. However, relationship specialist, Dr. David Schramm illustrates how “technoference, (the way technology use interferes with face-to-face interactions with others)” is impacting relationships in a spectating manner.”[[33]](#footnote-33) The article outlines how the overall use of technology interferes with human interaction and causes people to spend less time with one another. This reflects Marcel's fear that intimate communities and self-reflection are becoming less common in modern society. Technoference indicates less satisfaction and higher levels of depression and anxiety.”[[34]](#footnote-34) This illustrates that technology inadvertently leads to the dim life Marcel argues in *The Mystery of Being*.

The impact of social media and technology causes people to have less meaningful relationships with one another and develop more speculative-addictive tendencies toward devices. Dr. Aarssen declared that the evolutionary trait of spectating will cause more generations to increase disengagement in their journey inward and become more focused on materialistic tendencies as depicted by the young girl example or the apparatus citation.

In an interview with Sebastian Junger, an American journalist and author, he comments on his most recent book *On Homecoming and Belonging*. This work illustrates what we can learn from Indigenous tribes and the impact modernization has on society. He states in the interview that,

As modernity goes up in a society, the suicide rate goes up the depression rate goes up schizophrenia goes up in urban environments. They're not good for the human psyche. We are designed, we evolved to live in groups of 30-40 people in a harsh environment totally reliant on one another for survival. That creates a huge amount of equality within a group and loyalty within a group. That's what we are designed for. Genetically modern society allows the individual to be independent from the group which is in some ways a great liberation in other ways it can lead to a profound alienation and depression. It's just a very confusing thing it seems for people to be amongst so many people but to be alone.[[35]](#footnote-35)

This exemplifies how the global community that social media inflicts is causing us harm. It shows that biologically, we are not meant for the enlarged social groups that the internet provides. The small communities that Marcel advocated for, ought to be the way to live. Yet, as previously stated, we cannot revert to these modes of living after being exposed to technology. Marcel stated that rather than eliminating all machines, humans must learn to coexist with them in moderation. He furthered this argument when he claimed that there is no golden age of living. Instead, we ought to learn how to cope with modernization and look inward as a means of reconnecting the self and being.

Although we ought to use technology in moderation many individuals do not possess the self-control to do so. I believe that this was Marcel's true fear. He indicated that machines and technology were going to progress regardless of his teachings. Therefore, he advocated for moderate use of technologies and enhanced self-discovery. I agree with Marcel’s argument that people are watching their own lives unfold, and that this situation will only worsen. He suggests that in order to go beyond merely observing, we must filter out distractions. Conversely, I think that everyone will fall victim to spectating during their lifetime. Feeling ill and binge-watching movies or enjoying a late-night hockey game can warrant some time to spectate. However, Marcel's skepticism of technology stems from the regularity in which people use it in their daily lives as opposed to enforcing self-control.

One should take certain actions to use technology in moderation. For instance, removing the Doom Scrolling apps from one's device will allow individuals to partially lessen these addictive tendencies. Ignoring these precautions and frequently indulging in the grasp of technology is where the problems arise, halting the search for a fulfilling life. By using technology to learn new things such as how to crochet or researching small engine repair, we can use it as a means to participate rather than spectate. By implementing technology in a way that allows us to participate, we can agree with Marcel's argument by moderating the use of technology. Moreover, I believe that Marcel's fear of technology in the 1950s was warranted and we ought to take it into account when addressing the current state of dull lives and states of being.

This essay exemplified Marcel's claims that one might find their sense of self by engaging with society. I illustrated how Marcel's dread was first piqued by the radio and how doom scrolling translates that fear into modern life. Marcel's anxiety was heightened by the usage of Dr. Aarssen, who demonstrated how technology may infiltrate our culture and genetics. The counterarguments offered additional proof that we should not be absorbed by spectators, rather to encourage self-control. Ultimately, this essay demonstrated how the development of communication technology results in isolated societies and limits people from engaging in ingatheredness and lose their sense of being.

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