THE "NON-CONTINGENCY OF THE EMPIRICALLY GIVEN" IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GABRIEL MARCEL

BY

J.G.JONES

PLAN

(a) I declare that this thesis has been composed by me, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself, and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree in the University of St. Andrews or elsewhere.

(b) The research undertaken by me is shown in the Bibliography. I paid two calls on Prof.I.W. Alexander, of Bangor, a leading authority on Gabriel Marcel; and had two meetings with M.Marcel himself which permitted several hours of private conversation.
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(c) I certify that the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations have been fulfilled.

Supervisor

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The title of this thesis is a phrase occurring in identical form in two of Gabriel Marcel's works, L'Être Incarné (included in the Essai de Philosophie Concrète), page 38, and The Mystery of Being, Vol I, page 134. In the slightly modified form "la non-contingence du monde tout entier" it is to be found in Part I of the Journal Métaphysique, page 45, and critical remarks about it appear in The Existential Background of Human Dignity, pages 30-31. The subject with its wide implications has held Marcel's attention over almost an entire lifetime of philosophical reflection.

To the best of the present writer's knowledge, no study has been devoted exclusively to this particular aspect of Marcel's thought. The essentials are naturally covered in authoritative works dealing with the philosophy as a whole, such as Father Troisfontaines's De l'Existence a l'Être, (especially Vol I, pages 295-299), and Professor Paul Ricoeur's G.Marcel et K.Jaspers, Philosophie du Mystère et Philosophie du Paradoxe; and in a more specific study such as that of Dr. K.T.Gallagher which concentrates on the subject of participation. But in none of these does it seem that all the strands have been drawn together. The present thesis, after sketching the background of thought on contingency, will attempt to expound Marcel's doctrine in detail. It will then examine the relevant aspects of the philosophy of thinkers whom it is known that Marcel studied with particular interest and sympathy, Coleridge and Schelling and the Americans Royce and Hocking, and indicate ideas of theirs which may have taken root in Marcel's mind and helped to shape his own thought. The next chapter sets out

briefly appropriate sections of the philosophy of Marcel's French contemporary Louis Lavelle in order that a comparison may be made; and this is followed by the Conclusion.

The present writer was informed by Aberdeen University that Marcel delivered the Gifford Lectures there in English. It is assumed that Marcel also lectured in English when at Harvard. Quotations from both series of lectures, The Mystery of Being and The Existential Background of Human Dignity, are therefore taken from the English texts.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

The phrase "la non-contingence de l'empiriquement donné" has not achieved the prestige of certain other phrases occurring in recent philosophy such as Bergson's "élan vital" or "évolution créatrice", and seems unlikely ever to do so. Yet it remains a striking phrase, and not least because it brings to mind and appears to challenge the famous thesis of Émile Boutroux's De la Contingence des Lois de la Nature of 1874. The purpose of Boutroux and of others of his time in affirming the place of contingency in the workings of the natural world was to reassert the principle of human freedom. Does Marcel's phrase suggest that he was seeking to reverse that important current of philosophical thought? What is the background to this seemingly paradoxical situation?

Scientific knowledge at the point at which it had reached in the middle of the nineteenth century depicted the universe as governed by absolute determinism, each event taking place necessarily in a rigorous process of cause and effect. The conclusion widely drawn from this was that no human being could be an originating principle of action. For many thinking people the much-cherished notion of human liberty, undisputed before the Renaissance but gradually undermined by the advances of science, had by then been proved an illusion. Not merely human action, but, by inference from the laws of the conservation of matter and energy, the human will also was deemed to be subject to an all-embracing determinism. And there was no prospect of a happy return to the old beliefs. On the contrary, as the practical applications of scientific knowledge became visible

in daily life to growing sections of the population, the prestige of science was less and less contested and its implications in the field of philosophy were the more widely accepted. Kant's attempt at solving the antinomy between causality and freedom by his theory of the noumena made no appeal to succeeding generations of philosophers. Freedom established itself and remained the central problem of nineteenth century thought; and the means of vindicating it most convincingly seemed to be by a direct attack on the mechanistic view of the universe.

To enable Marcel's thought to be seen in perspective reference is necessary to the work of a number of philosophers who, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards opposed determinism in the rigorous form associated with Taine which, as Paul Bourget noted in his Essais de Psychologie (1883), was a contributing factor to the pessimistic outlook of that period. The philosophers in the "spiritualist" tradition may be mentioned first. Ravaisson believed nature to be a progression from less to greater perfection and in this scheme "chaque degré y est une fin pour celui qui le précède". Finality is continuously asserting itself and thus nature is not, "comme l'enseigne le matérialisme, toute géométrie, donc toute nécessité absolue ou fatalité"; though by concluding that "au lieu de subir un destin aveugle, tout obéit et obéit de bon gré à une toute divine Providence", Ravaisson would seem, to those unsympathetic to "spiritualist" philsophy, to limit the freedom he postulates.[1] Lachelier in his turn and in his individual way (especially in Le Fondement de l'Induction, 1872) also employed the argument of finality, asserting that for a rational understanding of the

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1 La Philsophie en France, Conclusion

universe, final causes which are formulated by the human will have to be taken into consideration and be accorded greater weight than the efficient causes known to the world of science. Hamelin, in his Essai sur les Éléments principaux de la Représentation of 1907 presents finality as the antithesis to causality, declaring "[la finalité] ne fait pas le triage des mécanismes: elle condamne seulement à rester abstraits, irréels, inexistants, les mécanismes qui ne satisfont pas à ses exigences".[1]

Other philosophers, of whom several were accomplished mathematicians and who made greater play with the notions of discontinuity and contingency are more interesting in the present context. Cournot, in his Essai sur les Fondements de nos Connaissances of 1851, did not picture the world as a system of cause and effect in which all elements are firmly linked, but allowed for discontinuity. He regarded chance not as an expression covering human ignorance but as an indication of the activity of causal series which are not dependent on each other.[2] Renouvier, asserting similarly the absence of continuity in the structure and evolution of the world, believed that "l'affirmation d'un commencement absolu [i.e. the thesis of Kant's first antinomy] et la destruction du continu dans le

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1 Quoted by Parodi, La Phil. Contemporaine en France, p.410

2 Cf Ferdinand Alquié, Le Désir d'Éternité, p. 73: "....la pensée, voulant éliminer l'accident et le hasard, tend a réduire ce dernier à la rencontre de séries causales indépendantes, ce qui est bien l'incorporer au déterminisme, affirmer que la totalité du donné demeure réductible à des lois éternelles, et que le changement vient seulement de la multiplicité des séries que régissent ces lois".

monde font place"aux déterminations possibles qui ne dépendent point d'une manière univoque et absolue des déterminations antérieures et des arrangements ambiants", c'est-à-dire aux actes libres". Further, with regard to the law of large numbers, although this is sometimes invoked against liberty, it is, on the contrary, merely the formulation of "l'égale possibilité d'une série de cas, c'est-à-dire en somme d'une indétermination complète de sorte que si on voulait la faire intervenir dans le problème de la liberté, elle serait plutôt favorable à celle-ci".[1] Later mathematicians, Poincaré (Science et Hypothèse, 1903) and Borel(Le Hasard, 1914) pointed out that the laws based on large numbers should be understood only as generalisations and that the actions of individuals might be quite independent of such laws.

In proclaiming "la contingence du réel" Émile Boutroux was, according to Jean Wahl,[2] following a tradition of French philosophy from the time of Descartes and Malebranche; but the moment at which his work appeared confers particular interest upon it. Boutroux has a concept of the universe in which different worlds are superimposed one upon another, the world of pure necessity being at the base and the thinking world at the apex. The lowest world leaves room, albeit infinitesimally small, for contingency and hence, even this world "ne demeure pas inutile", but "prépare la réalisation de l'être". The higher the world the greater the degree of contingency and the larger the scope for free action. In the mind of man, "dans la

1 Gaston Milhaud, La Philosophie de Charles Renouvier
2 Tableau de la Philosophie Française, p. 142

résolution qui suit la considération des motifs, il y a quelque chose de plus que dans les motifs: le consentement de la volonté à tel motif de préférence à tel autre".[1] Fanciful as the argument may now appear it well illustrates the problem confronting the philosophers and is interesting as one of the solutions offered.

In the philosophy of Bergson there is a notable shift of emphasis. This thinker evolved his own powerful defence of liberty against determinism in his first two books without using either the argument of finality or that of contingency. The theory of duration in Les Données Immédiates de la Conscience(1889) and that of memory in Matière et Mémoire(1896) are the main substance. Against the upholders of finality, Bergson argues "L'application rigoureuse du principe de finalité comme celle du principe de causalité mécanique, conduit à la conclusionque tout est donné".[2] The subject of contingency arises in the third book, L'Évolution Créatrice(1907) in which Bergson states "la part de la contingence est donc grande dans l'évolution" and adds that the contingency is due finally to "actes libres". But the interesting fact is that, the reality of liberty having been demonstrated by other arguments, evidence of contingency is no longer valued as an indication that free action has taken place in the past and that scope for it in the future may consequently be assumed. In a well-known passage in Le Possible et le Réel(pub. 1930) Bergson reverses Renouvier's argument (based on the mathematical calculation of

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1 De la Contingence des Lois de la Nature, Conclusion and section De l'Homme.
2 L'Évolution Créatrice.

probabilities) of more than one course being possible at a future moment, and of there being scope for free choice. For Bergson it is liberty itself which creates possibility.[1] The notion of contingency, by now obsolete as an argument in the vital field of human liberty, will quickly relapse into a negative element in philosophical thought. Already in 1911 Bosanquet, professor in his day at St.Andrews and a philosopher whom Marcel studied, was writing "It is impossible for life at its best to be contingent, and if "freedom" is mentioned it must be remembered that freedom is the logic of individuality and as remote as possible from contingency". "The bias towards contingency arises . . . from a misinterpretation of the demand for creative initiative combined with a failure to appreciate the true nature of logical process. It is a mistake to confuse creative determination with arbitrariness and contingency . . ."[2]

Moving on to the period before the outbreak of the second world war, one finds that contingency, reduced in rank by Bosanquet, has become, in the mind of Jean-Paul Sartre, an object of passionate aversion. Here is a new philosophical attitude both as regards liberty and contingency. Sartre states unequivocally "Il n'y a pas de déterminisme, l'homme est libre, l'homme est liberté",[3] but his awareness of liberty owes nothing to the reasoning of Renouvier, Bergson or any of the philosophers mentioned above; it is of course the existentialist conviction of being "condemned to be free". Contingency for him is not reassuring evidence of a breach in the stronghold of determinism;

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1 In La Pensée et le Mouvant, p.115
2 The Principle of Individuality and Value, pp.78,356
3 L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme, pp.36-37

nor is it the antithesis - grounds for fear of possible, unforeseeable disasters ahead. His position has little affinity with that, for example, of the character in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbevilles (1891) who speaks, from physical dread, of "the harrowing contingencies of human experience, the unexpectedness of things". Contingency for Sartre implies the total pointlessness and absurdity of human existence, the position of man as an "intruder" in the world, the absence of necessity for anything at all, and in this extreme form is the root of his profound pessimism. His conception is of course related to his atheistic stand. He is unable to share the "fullness" which thinkers such as Lavelle experienced in the act of participation in the design of a creator of the universe. He is debarred from feeling himself, in Bergson's resounding words, "maître associé à un plus grand Maître".

How does Marcel fit into this changing picture, born thirty years after Bergson and sixteen years before Sartre and setting down his first philosophical notes well before the first world war? The generation in which he grew up could feel that the existence of freedom of the will had been demonstrated by the philosophical effort culminating in Bergson's work. Liberty was no longer the central issue which it had been. Marcel however has displayed interest from his student days in the question of the meaning of life for the individual within the general framework of personal freedom. As from early days he could postulate a creator and ruling spirit of the universe, human life has never appeared so radically contingent to him as to Sartre. An issue with which he has concerned himself is the relationship between the individual and the particular physical circumstances of his existence - the time, place and conditions of birth and upbringing

the persons with whom he comes into contact and the events which befall him. He recalls in Human Dignity that even when a twenty-year old student he could not reconcile himself to the view that his own circumstances were due to pure chance, or were contingent, as if so they would have been "insignificant". More explicitly his feeling, natural to the sensitive, reflecting mind, is that of being dissatisfied and worried by the thought that any given event or circumstance which has unmistakably affected the course of life might be wholly accidental. How preferable to be able to relate such an event or circumstance in some way to an essential element of one's character, to see it as truly integral to one's destiny. Marcel refused to regard his personal circumstances or the various occurrences of his life as the result of chance. At the same time he was aware that if he took the alternative view of regarding them as part of a process of determinism, he would be forced to acknowledge that he had played a passive role in the evolution of his mind and the formation of his character, and that would be equally unacceptable. To him a pessimistic outlook such as that of Sully Prudhomme (who, dying in 1907, lived on into Marcel's own life time), summed up in the line

"le sort a donc tout fait, nous n'avons rien voulu" [1]

was inconceivable and merely called for refutation. Marcel's aim while still in his twenties was to look for a way of seeing his personal circumstances and situation, admittedly contingent if objectively regarded, as non-contingent to him personally and thereby possessing the desirable significance. He remarks that "the pointless plays an important part in our lives, and . . this part is that of the contingent".[2] He will seek to reduce the

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1 quoted by Charlton, Positivist Thought in France
2 Mystery of Being, II, p.116

pointless, the insignificant and it is in furtherance of this aim that he postulates the non-contingency of the empirically given. It is to be noted however that in doing so, in denying bald contingency in this relationship, he does not assign dominance to the other extreme, to necessity, but rather implies a position between the two. His philosophy will repeatedly suggest a lessening of the rigid distinction between other logical opposites such as exterior and interior, autonomy and heteronomy, in the pursuit of a fuller understanding of the world and the universe than that offered by science and discursive thinking.

It is indisputable that in formulating his philosophical aims Marcel was powerfully influenced by Bergson and, as Charles du Bos points out, not by L'Évolution Créatrice which made its appeal to another type of mind, but by Les Données Immédiates, Matière et Mémoire, and above all by L'Introduction à la Métaphysique (pub.1903). In this memorable work Bergson points to the fact that opposing views arise on almost every element of reality and affirms the impossibility of reconciling thesis and antithesis logically. But, he adds, "de l'objet saisi par intuition, on passe sans peine, dans bien des cas, aux deux concepts contraires; et . . . on saisit comment cette thèse et antithèse s'opposent et comment elles se réconcilient".[1]

Émile Meyerson, an exact contemporary of Bergson's, formulated the concept of "la non-contingence de l'univers", but only to reject it.[2] To his mind, that of the trained scientist, such a concept could not be entertained because it could be based only on knowledge of reality of a completeness which in fact is not

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1 In La Pensée et le Mouvant, p.198
2 Du Cheminement de la Pensée, p.173

accessible to man. To Marcel the concept is tenable precisely because it does not depend on exact knowledge of a mathematical character.

CHAPTER II

MARCEL'S DOCTRINE

i Early Theories

Marcel has mentioned more than once that on re-reading his earliest philosophical works, the Fragments Philosophiques and Part I of the Journal Metaphysique, forty years or more after writing them, he was "exasperated" and "irritated."[1] This reaction was aroused, however, by what in retrospect he calls the "slackness" of presentation, the "lack of precision" in terminology, and not by the basic ideas. These works remain essential material to the student of Marcel's thought.

The first of the Fragments, MS IX of 1909-1910, shows Marcel at grips with the fundamental philosophical problem of the duality of the rational and empirical natures of human beings, or of the apparently contingent relation between the two natures. This is for him a disturbing instance of our inability to understand the true structure of reality. He asks himself whether an entity which cannot be grasped by conceptual thought can possess any reality, whether individuality has any meaning other than as an expression of Absolute Thought. Perhaps the idea of individuality should be dismissed. We are not at bottom what we think we are because of the gap between our rational activity and our physical natures which it would seem impossible to bridge. As with our own physical natures so with the empirical world in which we have our existence; it is unrelated to us, as far as rational thinking is concerned.

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1 Entretiens Paul Ricoeur Gabriel Marcel, pp.13,18

The rational order which our minds "project" at reality does not, as people generally imagine, take on phenomenal existence. "La difficulté invincible pour la philosophie consiste dans l'impossibilité de déduire le fini". [1]

Marcel turns the problem over again in his mind. Individuality in the world is there to be seen. The world can be conceived by the mind only in terms of rational necessity, but can be knowable only by experience, and this unquestionably leaves immense room for contingency. "La contingence est l'expression de ce qu'il y a d'individu dans la réalité". Physical events in the world surrounding us and in our personal lives which form the aggregate of our empirical experience have an indisputable reality even though they cannot be grasped in their individuality by conceptual thought and cannot be related to a rational order. Individual experience is something which metaphysics has so far not been able to explain: "Passer de l'universel de la raison à l'expérience individuelle, voilà l'oeuvre difficile et périlleuse entre toutes". [2] But a solution has to be found.

Marcel writes in MS IX almost a year later, in 1910, that while "le donne se pose comme contingent par rapport a la forme intelligible, ou sujet pur de réflexion", the two terms have meaning only in relation to each other. In wording which suggests familiarity with some of the philosophical arguments referred to in Chapter I he states further that the idea, i.e. mind at work, which at first is "pure finality", in fact "materialises" in contact with the phenomenal reality; it is assimilated into the physical reality, which it determines. Marcel considers it "unsatisfactory" for one's scheme of thought to consist in these

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1 Fragments Philosophiques, pp.15,17,18
2 Ibid, p.19

two abstract notions "une forme intelligible et un donné contingent par rapport à elle". The truth, he concludes at this stage, lies in the "spiritual" act which draws them together. "L'esprit peut poser l'idéal et le réel dans leur corrélation réciproque", and hence must embrace both the ideal and the real. Experience is inherent in the very nature of spirit and is inconceivable without some finality to orientate it.[1] Marcel already grasps that mental activity and empirical experience are not totally unrelatable terms, and his use here of the words "corrélation réciproque" heralds later developments in his thought.

Marcel's philosophical interests outlined in Chapter I stemmed from the dissatisfaction he felt as a student with the arid philosophising of the university, which so rationalised human experience as to rob it of meaning. Reflection on the vital issue of individuality was halted by an apparent technical impasse. However, his predisposition to religion and the timely appearance of Bergson's Introduction à la Métaphysique offered a way of deliverance. Brought up without systematic religious instruction and as a young man taking no part in religious practices, he nevertheless has recorded that "à partir du moment où j'ai commencé à penser par moi-même philosophiquement, j'ai été comme irrésistiblement porté à penser en faveur du Christianisme".[2] He came to realise that apart from the order of truth demonstrable by abstract reasoning there is a second order, that of religion, or participation, which does not lend itself to logical deduction. This second order, he states much later in life, is similar in character to the music of Bach or

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1 Fragments, pp.20,21
2 Entretiens, p.77

the later Beethoven - "invested with a supreme authority which [does] not allow of any explanation".[1] Ordinary discursive thought cannot solve the deeper problems of existence but may recognise its own limitations and hand over the task to a different, mysterious activity, the exercise of religious faith. Between the fruits of faith and the achievements of reflection there is a logical discontinuity, and faith being placed above intellection is above contradiction. Its exercise appears essentially as a mystery, "c'est-à-dire, comme échappant à toute méthode d'analyse qui la convertirait en objet".[2] In the words Marcel used years later, "elle n'est pas l'approximation imparfaite de quelque chose qui pourrait être un savoir; mais elle fait corps avec les réalités auxquelles elle se suspend".[3]

While Bergson does not specify the discoveries or beliefs to which his "intuition métaphysique" may lead, Marcel's faith in these early days is explicitly in a benevolent creator of the universe. Faith is more than "un acte immanent"; it is "l'achèvement d'une dialectique toute entière orientée vers la transcendance".[4] It is not yet Christian, notwithstanding the remark to Paul Ricoeur quoted above; it owes nothing to revealed truth and is without dogmatic belief. It is, at this stage, largely intuitive, though it may be noted that Marcel did not accept recourse to intuition immediately and unreservedly. In a Fragment of 1909 he asks, with regard to the grasping of individual experience, "Faudra-t-il faire appel à une intuition religieuse ou autre, pour expliquer ce qui du point de vue de la raison semble une énigme insoluble?" - and returns the answer "Je ne sais pas".[5] But as early as 1910-1911 intuition has been allowed a role and religious faith has made its appearance in

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1 Human Dignity, p.26
2 Fragments, pp.60,65
3 Essai de Philosophie Concrète, p.222
4 Fragments, p.93
5 Ibid, p.20

Marcel's philosophy, enabling the principle of participation to be sketched. At its inception, this is the participation of thought in being. Faith carries the conviction that form and matter which are conceived antithetically in the scheme of abstract truth do not in fact constitute a duality[1] but are related. Hence, an individual nature can be "connected" with mind and is able, as mind, to participate in being. Although at this stage it may appear little more than wishful thinking, Marcel has secured his objective of preserving individuality, of avoiding being forced to deny its reality, and at the same time of relating it to thought.

The Theory of Participation takes on greater substance in MS XVIII of 1913-1914. Faith, Marcel writes, inspires consciousness of - or in his own words "creates" - individuality, and individuality as thus constituted participates, as thought, in being. But here the notion of love begins to play an essential part indicating that Marcel's thought is drawing away from the theoretical and assuming a more existential character. It is obvious from Marcel's writings that love is a dominant trait in his own personality and is indeed a cornerstone of his philosophy. It is the necessary condition for faith, not faith's product. The individual nature "created" by faith "s'affirme dans l'amour et ne saurait être hors de lui". It is only by substituting a relation of love for that of abstract thought between our two natures that we are able to accord true and non-contingent reality to our individual selves. This love, Marcel hastens to explain, is not "un jeu d'illusions subjectives"; there is subjectivity only in opposition to the objectivity of abstract knowledge. Thus, as individuals, constituted as pure subject

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1 Fragments, p.72

in this new sense by love, we may participate in being.[1]

In going on to explain the nature of love, Marcel reveals its indissoluble connection with faith. He was to write at about the same time in the Journal "Je crois qu'en réalité l'amour et la foi ne peuvent et ne doivent pas etre dissociés".[2] Faith is the act which, in full freedom, affirms love as real and incommensurate with any verifiable truth. It would be wrong to suppose that real love is ever inspired by any "merit" on the part of its object. It is outside the realm of ethic relations. Love is not a form of knowledge and indeed the assertion of its transcendence relative to all knowledge is the loftiest activity of mind. In an act of knowledge of the abstract, analytical type, there may be a contingent relation between the object in itself and the qualities ascribed to it; the qualities may be accidental or arbitrary. In an act of love of a purely abstract nature, the relation between it and its object would similarly be contingent. But the love implied in the context of participation can be only the reverse of abstract, and Marcel states that "il n'est donc pas contingent que l'amour porte sur tel contenu déterminé".[3] He amplifies in the Journal:". . . pour l'amour et pour l'amour seul, l'individualité de l'aimé ne se disperse pas, ne s'effrite pas en je ne sais quelle poussière d'éléments abstraits". And ". . . l'amour véritable . . .affirme la valeur de son objet par delà l'ordre tout relatif, tout contingent du mérite et du démérite".[4]

With the notion of love underpinning the perhaps less readily graspable notion of faith, Marcel has strengthened the demonstration of his conviction that individuality can be accepte

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1 Fragments, pp.95,97
2 p.58
3 Fragments, pp.101-103
4 pp.63,64

both as real and as related to other individual natures, and that it participates in total being. He now proceeds to extend this view in a striking manner. The act of love, as he has shown, establishes a special relationship - non-contingent - between the subject and the object to which it is directed, and thought if genuinely free recognises that this relationship is outside the sphere of the analysable or the verifiable. As Marcel expresses it more graphically years later, in love the frontier between in-me and before-me is abolished.[1] Marcel claims - to him it is "manifeste" - that a similar relationship may exist between thought, understood of course in the non-formal, non-abstract sense, and all that presents itself to thought, to mind, as experience. This relationship he now terms "spiritual", implying that its nature is akin not to that of ordinary human love but rather to that of the love of God for man, and hence the experience is to be regarded as willed and, in the strongest sense of the word, as given, by God. In Marcel's theory, individuality, in faith, freely affirms a divine creator who, being himself free, wills the existence of individual persons who also enjoy freedom, and an empirical reality which these persons will look upon in an attitude of love and which will therefore possess significance for them. Since the relation is no less than transcendent, the empirical reality must be accepted. The mind will accordingly refuse either to cut itself off from this reality, the nature of which it is not able to infer by any rational process of its own, or to identify itself therewith and so bury itself.[2] Acceptance, which will be free, will not

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1 Position et Approches Concrètes
2 Fragments, p.105

be so in the sense of "la nécessité acceptée" (a concept appopriate in the intellectual sphere), nor, as expressed elsewhere[1] will it be the Stoic adhesion to the eternal order in which the individual is an element. "Ce n'est pas une adhésion, c'est une volonté".

Marcel claims that this is the first appearance in dialectic of the affirmation of a divine will, a divine freedom, "qui seule peut rendre compte du rapport que la pensée libre établit entre elle et l'expérience".[2] Ricoeur endorses the claim, "par rapport à tout transcendantalisme",[3] though with reference to Marcel's discussion of the cogito which is set out below.

Part I of the Journal, written at the same time as the later sections of the Fragments, deals inter alia with the same topics. The perennial problem of the relation between mind and matter is discussed in terms of the cogito which is universal and the empirical self which is an individuality. Can a relationship be established between them? There seems no possibility in dialectic but to declare the relation contingent. Echoing his remarks in the Fragments Marcel now writes "l'ordre sensible ne peut se déduire d'un ordre rationnel". "Il faut bien poser....la contingence absolue des existences par rapport à un ordre rationnel quelconque". But to be forced back on to a dualism would be intolerably defeatist. Again, purely objective reasoning is seen to be out of place: "la déduction s'arrête nécessairement là où l'individualité se

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1 Fragments, pp. 76-77
2 Ibid, p.104
3 G. Marcel et K.Jaspers, p. 210

se trouve posée". The very fact that the relationship cannot be established as a matter of demonstrable truth offers a role for faith. Courage is needed to make the leap required, the saltus mortalis, but such a move should not be regarded as arbitrary, since faith is not a hypothesis. In this context faith enables the spirit, "réalité vivante et active", to assume the function of the "sujet pensant" and by affirming a "transcendent liaison" between the thinking and the empirical selves thereby to close the gap between them. The act of faith posits the non-contingency of the empirical self and of the whole empirical world relative to mind.[1] This does not imply a relation of necessity, but that the mind has a grasp of the physical reality forming its background which it recognises as peculiarly its own.

It is interesting that in this particular argument Marcel does not adduce the notion of love. The emphasis is rather on the freedom of the spirit to posit, in faith, an "intimate" relation between itself as "individualised thought" and its empirical experience. Marcel declares that he need no longer imagine himself as an abstraction, unrelated to the empirical world - or think of that world as a place where "la nécessité ne serait que l'envers de la contingence",[2] where in fact the subtle "Marcellian" relation of non-contingency, which is not necessity, would have no play. This exemplifies the assertion he made years later that when faith appears, its object no longer seems to be "outside" the subject. The distinction between exterior and interior is abolished. When Marcel adds

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1 Journal, pp. 18, 19, 44, 45
2 Ibid, p.46

that "le croyant s'apparaît à lui-meme comme intérieur a une réalité qui l'enveloppe et le pénètre à la fois",[1] contingency has been eliminated from the relationship.

An early discussion of the problem of the relationship between the thinking and the empirical selves was prompted by Marcel's realisation that, if looked at purely objectively, the development of his empirical nature would be determined by his biological inheritance.[2] A worrying thought, involving a dualism of his empirical nature and his thinking self with its aspirations towards the good, towards fuller being, and implying that his personality would have no reality of its own. Such determinism would be as unacceptable as contingency. As he turns over in his mind how to deny the unwanted duality he grasps the need to penetrate beyond the field of a stract thinking and to postulate a non-contingent relation between his two natures which would entail conceiving himself as willed by God.

A logical difficulty arises here. Development takes place in time, and even if Marcel has not been subjected to determinism his character will in any case have evolved over a period of time. If he is willed by God, at what point did the act of willing occur? He is led by this dilemma to posit himself as willed directly by God and by an act "out of time", but the matter could not be left there. After some discussion [illegible]

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1 Être et Avoir II, p. 65
2 Journal, p.6

about the possible ideality of time he concludes that" les problèmes métaphysiques ne peuvent se poser que dans un ordre où il est fait abstraction de tout rapport (même négatif) du temps".[1] He was tackling the identical problem at about the same time in the closing pages of the Fragments. When the non-contingency of the empirical content of some individual experience relative to thought has been postulated by an act of faith, it would be contradictory to regard this content as "l'instantanéité pure....concomitante avec l'acte de foi". The act of faith, Marcel suggests here, is really "out of time" - to which, however, as he indicates, the reply could be made that actions in which faith has revealed itself, recognised as distinct in time, must correspond to equally distinct "interventions" of faith. The answer is that to think of a number of separate interventions of faith is an artificial contrivance and not possible in metaphysical terms. "Au point où nous en sommes", the act of faith is best regarded "par ce qu'il a de non-historique".[2] The above reflections of Marcel's all reveal the central position occupied by the notion of faith in his early thinking about the non-contingency of the empirically given.

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1 Journal, p. 12
2 Fragments, pp. 111-113

ii Development

In postulating that he is willed by God, Marcel could scarcely deny the influence on himself of heredity and environmental factors even if he wished to do so. The inheritance of intellectual gifts from his learned father, of personal qualities from his mother and a broad cultural outlook from the milieu in which he grew up - this would seem to be a fact. But a new concept is emerging, that of a certain "unity" of mind and empirical reality, implying in this context that he and his "situation" are in a sense a whole; as already stated, he is "intérieur à [sa] réalité". The circumstances and events of his life are not to be deemed to have a separate real existence. They will have affected him, but not in a manner of objective causation. He will have reacted in his unique individual way and in a sense will have required" some of the events. This unity has implications beyond the earlier notion of a relationship with his situation regarded as non-contingent in the sense of being given by God in his love and as calling for acceptance by the mind. As he restates it years later the position is that "we have to engage in conditions not of our choosing, neither are they strictly speaking imposed from without....."[1]

An early consideration of this new idea in an examination of the relation between thought and extended matter occurs towards the end of Part I of the Journal. The content of thought is obtained by the mediation of external data; and hence it would be an illusion to consider oneself, as a thinking entity, unconnected either with the spatial reality which surrounds one or with the physical self. Marcel leaves out of consideration for the moment the argument of the relation

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1 Mystery of Being II, p. 181

between thought and matter as non-contingent because it is spiritual and based on faith and love, and picks up the thread of a theory briefly stated in MS IX of the Fragments. He used there the term "corrélation réciproque", and now in the Journal states that between the thinking self and the reality existing in space there is a"corrélation intime", not expressible in terms of causality.[1] Thus it would be impossible to work out what form thought might take from a knowledge of the external data constituting its field. It would be wrong to establish a dualism of thought and the data; thought is not a thing which can be physically placed beside another thing. But the idea of a "monisme génétique" is equally mistaken. Thought cannot be defined without regard to the external data. These have in a sense an ideal existence and can themselves be defined only in terms of the thought, as conditions necessary yet insufficient, which are conditioned in their turn by what they condition. The key is the word "insufficient", indicating scope for the activity of thought; and thus there is reciprocal interaction.[2] The effect is that the relation of condition to conditioned tends to appear in the reverse sense, not as logically constituting, i.e. the action of the data, but purely as subjective reflection or the action of thought. A given individual thought is beyond "l'enchaînement conditionnel"; it and its external field form "une unité non-causale" which cannot be apprehended by an intellect but is "supra-intelligible". Marcel agrees that this

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1 Journal, p. 113

2 Cf the circular, as opposed to linear, causality between the organism and its milieu to which Merleau-Ponty draws attention in La Structure du Comportement.

unity might be seen to justify a monism. "Je m'apparais comme lié au monde par le fait que nous dérivons lui et moi d'un acte identique par lequel l'absolu s'engendre lui-même". But such a view would be totally unacceptable to a mind convinced like Marcel's of a transcendent God. He summarises this line of his thought by stating that he can be "defined" only as a function of the world of time and space; "je ne me comprends moi-même que lorsque j'ai découvert que je ne suis moi que par l'intériorisation (l'assimilation) de ces données soi-disant contingentes . . ." He indicates the pitfalls of attempting to conceive the development of one's nature from the standpoint of realism. It would be as arbitrary, he writes, for me to think of myself as creating my own nature as experiences occur, as to imagine myself the product of the content of my experiences.[1]

The notion of the non-contingency of the empirically given is now transformed. It was represented initially as consequent on an attitude towards empirical experience inspired by love and precluding any abstract, objectifying approach. By this means, conceivable only within a framework of religious faith, the experience acquired a character of particular significance to the individual mind to which it presented itself. The non-contingent relation is now shown to be derived more especially from the idea of the "unity" of mind and experience, which is more than an abolition of the duality of the two concepts in that it asserts something of a reciprocal influence between them. My physical situation becomes mine and I become the mind which corresponds fully

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1 Journal, pp.115-118

and exclusively to that precise situation; and all elements of contingency previously existing in the relation will have vanished as the relation assumes a unique character.[1] The well-known conception of being-in-a-situation as the essential characteristic of human existence has taken shape, and is defined as "pas la synthèse mais du moins la jonction de l'extériorité et de l'intériorité". A person's physical circumstances which are to be regarded as spatial in appearance only assume a particular/colour/ and significance for that person, as a result not of abstract analytical thought, not even of interpretation, but of feeling, between which and pure creativity there is a difference not of nature but merely of degree of strength. Feeling moreover is receiving, not so much in the sense of being affected by some action exerted from without, but "unlocking", and therefore giving, oneself; ensuring that the action is reciprocal. The individual's relation to his situation is something ungraspable by any other person and the "rapports subtils" are difficult to describe in rational language. The individual imbues withaa certain quality "qui lui est propre, l'ambiance qu'il fait sienne: d'où une sorte d'harmonie entre elle et lui . . .".[2]

It is noteworthy that as the notion of the unity of man and his situation is developed, Marcel tends to disregard what in the early days formed the basis of his theory, the fact of experience being given by God. Somewhat paradoxically, he utilised that premise when he had not yet entered the Church. At the age of seventy-one, long after his admission into the

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1 This fact, which Marcel sees as a philosophical truth, is also recognised in psychology. Cf Morris Ginsberg, The Individual and Society: "Genetically every individual is unique . . .Moreover as he develops he responds selectively to his environment and therefore no two individuals can ever have strictly the same environment".

2 Philosophie Concrète, pp.130,141, 139

Church, he reverted to it and concluded that he felt obliged to abandon the notion of "God-given" because of the theological objection that the affirmation of a divine will in such a context would be dependent on the act of the person making it. It would be preferable to say therefore that we should react "as if" the experience were given by God.[1] The non-contingency doctrine in its more evolved state does not seem to be seriously prejudiced by these fairly recent scruples of Marcel's, which incidentally testify to his philosophical honesty.

When, in the Fragments, Marcel spoke of "accepting" one's physical experience, in the light of its being given by God, his thought was not only open to criticism on theological grounds but was totally unrelated to practical considerations. Six years later, however, in 1920, he faced the fact of the great disparities of health, wealth and fortune which are to be observed, and which in many cases render acceptance the more difficult. The notion of the unity of oneself and one's situation became particularly valuable in this new context, for it has to be recognised that, to finite minds, the reason why one's "point d'insertion" is a given time and place and not some other is totally inexplicable and is an instance of the contingency which exists on a vast scale in the natural world. It is pointless to reflect on the difference between being born a Parisian bourgeois towards the end of the nineteenth century, as was Marcel, and appearing in the world as a Chinese coolie at a period of warlord activity or natural disaster. Human lots which superficially appear to differ considerably cannot be

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1 Human Dignity, pp.30-31

supposed to balance each other, if viewed impartially, as the effect would be to reduce God to an equation.[1] Marcel's view of a God who is the creator of the world has never implied that each person is deliberately "inserted" in a pre-ordained position. God is not simply "une volonté législatrice".[2] How then are we to react to this objective contingency? As already stated, Marcel's theory of non-contingency is not the opposite concept. It does not entail belief in a scheme such as that which Le Senne outlines and also dismisses - a scheme of necessity, a conception of the world "excluant toute contingence et toute indétermination", a world in which "Rien n'y serait possible qu'où cela se réaliserait"; where "l'ici et le maintenant tiendraient à l'essence des choses".[3] The first stage in the approach to this question is to disregard the notion of one's "share" in life ; to entertain such an idea is to think of oneself as a being exclusive of others. God's gift is "indivisible", is in no way exclusive and in no sense comparable to the allocation of a share.[4] The subject has vast sociological overtones but, writing in 1919, Marcel said he mistrusted any direct application of these ideas in the practical sphere and keeps the discussion on philosophical ground.

The second stage is the utilisation of the notion of unity and consists in taking "une vue globale" of oneself.[5] The non-contingency of the self as mind relative to the empirical situation is comprised essentially in the unity of the two. It is practically impossible to dissociate the person from his

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1 Journal, p.256
2 Ibid, p.256
3 Obstacle et Valeur, pp.69-71
4 Journal, p.206
5 Ibid, p.256

situation. At the same time, the unity should not be construed merely as the self influenced and shaped by the course of experience; events are not to be regarded as something external, or objective; the unity is the field of reciprocal interaction. If action were on one side only, i.e. if the only action were that of events affecting the self and in a causal manner, the individuality of the self would be destroyed.[1] In sum, by feeling one's situation as part of oneself the undeniable contingency of its original appearance will be eliminated.

The subject of one's share in life involves consideration of "les épreuves" which are encountered in the course of human existence. Ricoeur makes the striking remark that while Bergson stresses the joyous aspect of duration, its creativeness, its "tonalité majeure", Marcel for his part does not overlook "la tonalité mineure [de la durée], sa signification comme épreuve".[2] Trials are examined from two different standpoints, as single incidents of a serious nature, a grave or incurable illness, or the death of a beloved person, possibly by accident; and as life itself. Such incidents must appear as contingent in relation to the mind of the person threatened by illness or of the bereaved individual, and it is known that many people would be able to bear their trials relatively easily if they believed them to be imposed by a higher will; if a reassuring basis of non-contingency could be supposed. But Marcel rules out this approach. It would deprive the trial of its metaphysical character, of providing an opportunity for the exercise of precious liberty.[3] As Ricoeur expresses it, the fact of being

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1 Journal, pp.284,257
2 G.Marcel et K.Jaspers, p.110
3 Journal, p.229

conscious of one's "adhérence à l'existence charnelle" offers a chance to opt between despair and hope, between "le refus" and "l'invocation".[1] The first step in Marcel's view is the profound recognition of the fact of being willed by God - God conceived in the "toi" relationship, i.e. without trace of any objectifying construction, and indeed as "le toi absolu";[2] and of feeling willed not at some specific moment in the past but as still enjoying a "rapport de filiation".[3] With the strengthening effect of this vital knowledge, one may adopt a thoroughly positive attitude, resisting the temptation to allow the event to appear as something contingent, accidental and pointless, and conferring upon it some significance. An illness of one's own may be an opportunity to become aware, in charity, of other people's illnesses, and such an act of the spirit would be an "interprétation créatrice". In this manner, by altering the whole character of the occurrence, one can decrease the amount of senselessness in the world[4] - a central objective of Marcel's philosophy.

To the objection that Marcel has in mind only trials of an exceptional gravity, whereas life unfolds itself in "normal", "average" circumstances, he replies that no distinction between

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1 G.Marcel et K.Jaspers, p.106

2 Marcel informs us that he was developing his own thoughts about the "thou" relationship at the same time as, but independently of, Martin Buber who published Ich und Du in Germany in 1923. It is also interesting to note that at the precise moment (1912) at which Marcel was recognising the limitations of discursive reasoning and its "willingness" to hand over to intuitive thought, Rathenau, doubtless also under Bergsonian influence, was writing in Germany, "Trost des Daseins, dass der selbstbewusste Verstand seine letzte Aufgabe darin findet, sich selbst zu beschränken und zugunsten tiefinnerer, geheimnisvoller Kräfte zu entsagen . . ." (Zur Mechanik des Geistes, p.13).

3 Journal, p.229

4 Philosophie Concrète, p.118

degrees of gravity should be maintained. Life as a whole is one vast field in which the accidental and the pointless in whatever measure they manifest themselves can, ideally at least, be made to flower into significance.

Jeanne Delhomme, in her interesting discussion of this subject, mentions "l'arbitraire des appréciations subjectives" - the danger of conferring an arbitrary and possibly absurd meaning upon a given "épreuve". But, as she points out, Marcel's notion of "l'interprétation créatrice is not reducible to the "fabrication" of a sense, because it is based on a grasp of true being, not merely of intelligence. The sense-giving takes place in "une zone médiane entre fabriquer et constater", the zone of authentic creation which in a certain manner is simultaneously that of discovery.[1]

In considering life as a whole as a single continuous trial, Marcel separates the two concepts of life and being. Life is that which is given; being is something which is at stake, which has to be saved, by placing one's life at the disposal of a higher reality. In the extreme case a person may give his life for a cause which he judges of the highest importance; he "situates" his being above his life. By such an act he assigns to himself a related, significant position in the course of events.

A basic element of Marcel's existential thinking is the knowledge that he is incarnate in a physical body and that any attempt to escape from the body is impracticable. He can neither identify himself with, nor distinguish himself

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1 Existentialisme Chrétien, pp. 166-167

completely from his body because such actions belong to the world of objects, and it is a cardinal principle not to treat the body as an object.[1] To do so would create an unreal duality between mind and body which would falsify the nature of existence. Assuming then that one does not try to evade the fact of being incarnate, that one does not objectify the body as something unconnected with one's mind, a pattern is thereby established which is applicable to all other reality. The physical world is seen to be an extension of one's own body in one direction or another and exists in the strongest sense of the word precisely to the extent that the mind entertains the same relations with it as with the body.[2] This is a restatement in more existential terms of the early postulation through faith and love of a non-contingent relation between mind and matter. The corollary of this new principle is the attitude by which the subject "conveys" that he is of account to other reality and that other reality takes the subject into account, the relation being one of reciprocal action. It is a development of the basic notion of being-in-a-situation already outlined. In well-known words, Marcel expresses his conviction that if he places the accent on the objectivity of things, if he cuts the umbilical cord binding them to his own existence, he isolates himself from the world and does not allow it to be anything but indifferent to his destiny.[3] And it may be noted here that the process by which this idea came to Marcel was

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1 Philosophie Concrète, pp. 34-36
2 Journal, p. 261
3 Philosophie Concrète, pp. 54, 36

his equally well-known "second reflection", his own chosen vehicle which he prefers to the Bergsonian intuition of his earlier days.

With the conception of incarnate being Marcel has completed the breach between his own and idealist thought. "Le cartésianisme implique une dissociation peut-être en soi ruineuse de l'intellectuel et du vital", he writes in Être et Avoir.[1] More explicitly he declares that "une philosophie qui part du cogito, c'est-à-dire du non-inséré....risque de ne pouvoir rejoindre l'être";[2] and again, "....le cogito... est exempt de tout indice anthropologique. La situation ou la condition humaine n'est, pour cette pensée impersonnelle, qu'un objet de considération comme un autre, elle est traitée par elle comme ne l'affectant pas....."[3] For Marcel the situation of incarnation in a body, the inability to say of the body either that it is himself or that it is not himself or that it is "for" himself as an object, signifies instantly that the subject-object dualism is transcended. And he has already established that the relation between the self and the body is to be the pattern for that between the self and the world.

A fuller meaning of the term participation than that of the Fragments can now be grasped. Participation was originally of thought in being, or was alternatively "cette vie en Dieu".[4] The key to its wider significance is to be found in statements such as that of the mind's undertaking not to cut itself off from the empirical reality surrounding it, or that employing

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1 Vol.I, p.215
2 Philosophie Concrète, p.103
3 Présence et Immortalité, p.20
4 Fragments, p.97

the image of the umbilical cord. Participation becomes "présence au monde", or participation in the universe.[1] The relation between ourselves and the universe, already shown to be non-contingent, in fact ceases to exist as a relation. Participation is an attitude of mind which we are at liberty to adopt or to refuse, by virtue of which, if we adopt it, we see the rest of creation not as something separate or in the smallest degree objectified. This attitude is being in the highest sense of the word: "la plénitude",[2] "l'attente comblée";[3] the antithesis to nihilism. It is impossible to make this clearer in conceptual language. The more fully and sincerely we choose the attitude in question, in fact "plus je participe effectivement à l'être, moins je suis en mesure de savoir ou de dire à quoi je participe".[4]

Marcel warns against interpreting participation as an insertion of the self in a certain objective structure.[5] This and other remarks in the context of participation, taken by themselves, might suggest that his philosophy is a monism, but that of course is not the case. He is careful to avoid speaking of participation in "the One"; and he is unlikely to have been moved by Brunschvicg's argument that participation "à l'Un" is "une analyse ascendante, solidaire de l'idée d'une création spirituelle ascendante qui est l'oeuvre de la liberté" - whereas "participation à l'être" is "une synthèse descendante".[6] Marcel does not subscribe to the doctrine that only one being exists. His philosophical effort is however directed towards removing the barriers which have taken firm root in everyday

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1 Philosophie Concrete, pp.39,40
2 Journal, p.177
3 Ibid, p.202
4 Philosophie Concrete, p.91
5 Ibid, p.90
6 Deschoux, La Philosophie de L.Brunschvicg, p.200

thinking between mind and other minds, and between minds and things.

By [illegible] 1933 Marcel had decided that the term participation is a little ambiguous, and substituted "permeability". This provides him with the opportunity to posit the interaction which is fundamental to his system; there is a mysterious interchange, he writes, between the free act of making oneself "permeable" and the gift granted in response to it.[1] He specified this disposition a few years later as permeability to "la Lumière par laquelle nous sommes au monde".[2]

There is something other than one's physical body and one's empirical situation from which one cannot and should not wish to isolate oneself. Marcel dwells on "le mystère familial", on the chain of ancestry extending into the remote past, and reflects that while there is no simple process of cause and effect between him and his forbears there is a relation of a particularly subtle nature, "plus obscure", but "plus intime":[3] he and they are consubstantial. Here again Marcel remains firmly on philosophical ground and omits consideration of the fact that many people have someone in their known ancestry whom they would prefer to disown. It seems certain nevertheless that this reflection on his kinship with past generations gives him personally a sense of solidarity and helps in some degree to dispel any lingering feelings of the contingency of his own life. He was an only child and has made no secret of his feelings of loss at not belonging to a large family.

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1 Position et Approches,
2 Philosophie Concrète, pp.257-259
3 Homo Viator, p.93

As with one's ancestry, so with one's past. Marcel would in no circumstances agree to disavow his past. He declares on more than one occasion "Je suis mon passé"[1], and explains that by this he implies "un rapport sympathique" between his past and his present experiences, closely connected with the "instrumental" functioning of his body; this, he is gratified to reflect, is "d'un bergsonisme presque orthodoxe". He likes to feel in communion with his past and explains further that it is all the easier if his memory does not operate automatically like a card-index system, laying out his past as "donné" and offering automatic replies to possible questions. He must be able to conduct with himself "un commerce spirituel". It may be surmised however that in addition to these reasons, Marcel "is" his past in order to savour the feeling of being related to the course of history in his life-time.

In a burst of imagination years later (1929) he wrote that he could not, even in thought, place himself outside the universe to be able to visualise the successive stages of its origins. Nor could he step outside himself and ask himself about his own metaphysical origins. By asserting that the universe cannot be thought of objectively and that the same is true of himself, he reached the conclusion that "à un certain plan, je ne peux pas/ne pas m'apparaître comme contemporain de l'univers . . . c'est-à-dire comme éternel". The line of reasoning is not pursued; but the inference at which Marcel arrived is particularly note-worthy as a climax of non-contingency aspirations.[2]

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1 Journal, pp.189,243

2 Être et Avoir, I, p.21

Reverting to the subject of one's past, there is no necessary contradiction between the view outlined above and that sketched much later in 1939, in which Marcel recognises that the past can be burdensome and, if regarded objectively and hence as "immobilised", can "contaminate" the future by seeming to anticipate it. Such is fatalism. The solution is not to regard the past as unalterable. Events are fixed in their material form but may take on a new meaning in the light of new consideration, in the present as it is being lived.[1]

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[1] Philosophie Concrète, p.84

iii Further extension of the doctrine

Marcel's theory has now reached the point of positing an essential unity of consciousness and empirical reality and of reciprocal "action" between the two. Activity does not belong to the sphere of consciousness alone, but consciousness must always demonstrate its awareness of that. The article "Existence et Objectivité"(1925)[1] indicates the attitude of mind to be adopted in order that the "unity" of mind and physical reality may be fruitful. The view offered is necessarily in opposition to that taken by much idealist philosophy of total inertia on the part of the object in subject-object relations. If the subject is determined to place the construction of his own mind on the object, he will lose sight of something vital, the object's "aspect existentiel", expressed later as its "mystérieuse puissance d'affirmation"; and will fail to take into account the object's "power" to affect the person contemplating it. The object is not "lifeless"

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1 Cf. Bradley, On Some Aspects of Truth (1911) (Essays on Truth and Reality)

"Judgement cannot consist in the external relation of two independent things, nor is it the presence (one-sided or otherwise) of one merely to the other. If you imagine two foreign bodies, one impressing or soliciting the other, and the second body attempting to grasp the first which has impressed or excited it - you have passed away from an actual judgement. For somehow undeniably there is an awareness of that whole judgement as one, and we belie that fact when we take its felt activity and its entire psychical existence as falling somewhere apart from it. The act of judgement itself must belong also to the object and itself make an element in the judgement . . .

". . . The notion of myself as a thing standing over against the world, externally related to it in knowledge and dividing with it somehow unintelligibly the joint situation or result, must once for all be abandoned". Marcel was of course a keen student of Bradley and acknowledges a considerable debt to him.

there is an "entretien" between subject and object; ". . .je le questionne et [. . .] il me répond". The position of anything which exists may not be reduced, for thought, to the status of mere objectivity:[1] an expression of Marcel's intuitive sense that reality is not to be split up into disconnected entities.

David Roberts[2] comments that "if Marcel's notion of interplay is taken seriously, then knowledge cannot be actualised without initiative or self-unfoldment on the part of the "object" which complements the subject's activity of apprehension and interpretation". Roberts continues, "a general pattern which attributes self-unfoldment to the "object" can make an appropriate place, within the total scheme, for the sense in which an event makes its impact via sensation, without indulging in any pathetic fallacies that seem to attribute volition to inorganic entities". Marcel was certainly not attracted to theories of hylozoism. On the other hand he believes that things have character. "Qu'il y ait une tristesse dans les choses . . . c'est ce qu'on aurait tort de nier", he declares, and the conviction is his own as well as Vergil's. He insists that it is not the whole truth to assert that it is we who "place" character in things. ". . . une explication associationniste serait ici bien insuffisante".[3]

Towards things there is scope for an attitude more positive than the merely non-objectifying. The approach may contain elements of reverence, or even piety. If these basic conditions are observed, the reciprocal action, the interplay may have results which to the objective mind would seem impossible.

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1 Journal, pp.309,310,316
2 Existentialism and Religious Belief, p.297
3 Présence et Immortalité

It is to be understood, of course, that such results may only occur when the situation is of an exalted nature, as for example in the pursuit of some serious vocation, and not at the level of the everyday confrontation of mind and matter. An early instance which Marcel furnishes is that of gazing at a work of art[1] with an open mind, without preconceptions, but with the receptive disposition which is potentially creative, and allowing the work to take its effect on him. Marcel enjoys it in a manner analogous to love and a non-contingent relation is established. It may be noted incidentally that the theory according to which relations based on love are non-contingent for that precise reason, and which dates back to the Fragments has not been discarded though it has been supplemented. The work of art offers itself to Marcel as a gift, and is in essence for him personally. It reveals itself, takes account of him; he is of account to it. The illustration is taken up later: "there is a deeper sense in which one can say that the work is enriched by the admiration it inspires and that it undergoes in a sense real growth and development".[2] This is in line with his conviction of character in things.

Having written in 1910 that "le donné se pose comme contingent . . .", Marcel provides in 1938[3] an alternative description of how "le donné" initially presents itself - as something inert, of which an inventory can be made, a process in which the mind exercises superiority and takes pleasure in so doing. But "l'inventoriable est le lieu du désespoir", and Marcel goes on to draw the contrast between a person going to a certain place as a sightseer, to seize all it has to offer,

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1 Journal, pp.144-145
2 Mystery of Being, I, pp.73-74
3 Philosophie Concrète, p.110

and the person who has lived there for some years and is in a sense a part of the place. The former, interested only in adding to his stock of "possessions", is overcome at the conclusion of his tour with impatience and boredom. The dweller's attitude is the reverse of objective in that he participates in the life of the locality "dans ce qu'elle a . . . d'indénombrable et par conséquent d'impossible à épuiser". Between him and the place a certain living relationship has been created, or indeed "un échange créateur". In the establishment of these non-contingent relations, between the work of art and its admirer, and between the dweller and his locality, it may be noted, the individuality of the work of art and the place become real.

The above paragraph illustrates in terms of real existence the view which Marcel had in mind twenty years earlier when he wrote in his Journal that "croire en Dieu ce sera entretenir avec le réel des relations dyadiques",[1] i.e. to approach real things in the non-objectifying manner in which the believer invokes God - as "toi" and not as "lui".

As already mentioned the creative interplay is postulated only when the mind is operating at its loftiest level, and especially in "the fulfilment of a high vocation" which, Marcel observes, "involves a kind of cooperation from a whole swarm of conditions over which the person with the vocation has no direct control".[2] This is a remarkable claim, even when it is understood that the cooperation cannot be conceived in objective, logical terms; it is to be associated with the postulation quoted earlier, that the conditions in which we

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1 p.155
2 Mystery of Being, I, p.44

are engaged are not "strictly speaking imposed from without". What illustrations does Marcel offer?

1) He imagines himself listening to an improvisation; he does not specify whether musical or poetic but either would be appropriate. He listens to the successive stages and may find them apparently unrelated, or on the other hand he may grasp the unity of the improvisation even though, inasmuch as it is unfinished, it cannot present itself as an object. If he seizes the unity, it can mean only that he has in some way penetrated into the heart of the improvisation and is participating in its unfolding. But that is not all: it is not inconceivable that the act of participation should contribute in some way to the improvisation. In other words some interaction of a telepathic nature between the minds of the listener and the improviser is suggested. By transcending time the listener participates more and more effectively "à l'intention créatrice qui anime l'ensemble".[1] It could legitimately be asked whether the essential here is the participation in the flow of music or words - this entirely non-contingent relation between the listener's mind and an aspect of reality; or in the telepathic exchange between the listener and the improviser. Perhaps the question is answered by Marcel's description of his life at a given moment at le Peuch when he was occupied in setting poems of his choice to music. His wife not only noted down the music which he composed at the piano, but by her affectionate presence and "la compréhension intime et minutieuse", inspired his work in a real sense. He states categorically that "sans elle ces mélodies n'auraient jamais vu le jour".[2]

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1 Être et Avoir, I, pp.17-20
2 En Chemin, p.208

The introduction of the time question here presents a new aspect of the non-contingency doctrine. Just as the mind contemplating a "finished" work is enjoined to do so with proper sympathy, the mind confronted by a succession - of musical notes or words - should endeavour, by participation, to grasp these in such a way that the relation between them does not seem automatic, or merely a series of causes with their mechanical effects.[1]

2) Marcel refers to the act of gazing at a beautiful landscape and of being filled with genuine admiration.[2] Since his feelings are perfectly sincere they are on the level, "in a certain degree",of creativeness; and hence "we cannot really feel at all that the coming together of this landscape . . . and of ourselves, is merely fortuitous. In the case of genuine admiration, I am somehow raised above the level of mere contingency; . . . though if I am not at the level of mere contingency, I am certainly not at that of mere necessity either . . . in this realm the opposition between contingency and necessity must be completely transcended".

3) Marcel sets out in Position et Approches Concrètes his well-known thoughts on chance meetings. One may meet a stranger and the encounter may have a profound spiritual effect or the peculiar significance of "une co-présence". To the rationalist mind this would be ascribed to mere chance. But for Marcel such meetings, at the level of "inwardness",[3] are not fortuitous. He reflects "Je ne peux me placer réellement en dehors ou en face de[cette rencontre], je suis engagé dans cette rencontre, je dépends d'elle, je lui suis en quelque façon intérieur".

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1 Être et Avoir,I, pp.17-20
2 Mystery of Being,I, p.136
3 Ibid, p.138

And what may be said of physical encounters applies also to striking thoughts that occur to the mind - provided that one welcomes them, allowing them to unfold to a receptive mind. "Rencontrer vraiment une de ces pensées, c'est un événement qui sans doute, pour qui va au fond des choses, n'arrive pas au hasard, qui est préparé comme les rencontres visibles".[1]

The incalculable value of certain meetings in Marcel's own life - his friendship with François Mauriac and Charles du Bos - is acknowledged with deep feeling in late works. It is well-known of course that Marcel, having been Christian in all but name for some twenty years, was prompted to commit himself and join the Church by something of a postscriptum in a letter from Mauriac. The role of Charles du Bos was to direct Marcel to Catholicism despite the fact that his wife was Protestant and came of a family of Protestant pastors with whom Marcel had deep sympathy. "These encounters always appear in retrospect as having been called for from within my very self, so that in such a domain the distinction between external and internal ultimately becomes irrelevant or, more exactly, becomes absorbed into a harmonically richer reality".[2] "Il me semble que Mauriac jouait ici simplement le role d'un médiateur entre moi-même et une puissance invisible qui certes ne m'était pas étrangère; mais, au contraire, . . . plus intérieure que moi-même".[3] The ambiguity of his life up to the moment of taking his decision became apparent, revealing "la dualité du rationnel et de l'existentiel"; a duality which was happily resolved. The illumination brought by Mauriac's letter was effective not only "in" and "around" Marcel, but

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1 Philosophie Concrète, p.22
2 Human Dignity, p.65
3 En Chemin, p.137

"comme par delà cette distinction même du dehors et du dedans".[1] Without contesting in any way the total sincerity of Marcel's entry into the Church, one cannot help observing the instinctive joy he felt at the same time - intimately connected with his yearning for non-contingent relations - in the words "Tout semblait donc se passer comme si j'avais simplement à occuper une place qui m'était déjà comme réservée dans une famille spirituelle toute prête a m'accueillir".

In discussing among his family his decision to enter the Church Marcel learned that his mother, agnostic like his father, had consulted a priest very shortly before her sudden death and might have received baptism. She had possibly prayed that her son would take a similar step. Marcel yielded to the feeling that the events in his mother's and in his own life were interrelated and that he had himself had experience, on this occasion as often before, of the interlocking of human destinies which is illustrated in his plays.

4) In the preface to his Coleridge et Schelling Marcel recalls that he only came to study these two writers because his first choice, Bradley, was bespoken. His early interest in Coleridge and Schelling he describes as "une sorte de curieuse anticipation de ce qui devait être mon destin, puisque je devais etre appele, bien plus tard, à me partager entre l'Allemagne et le monde anglo-saxon". That early interest is a fact contingent in appearance only.

5) Marcel was invited to deliver the Gifford Lectures

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1 En Chemin, p. 138

at Aberdeen in 1949/50 and the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1961. The calls at first sight appeared to come from without, but he is convinced, on the contrary, that neither was a matter of chance and both were in some sense required by his feeling of vocation. His conclusions are explicit. "In short this means that the destiny of a philosopher, or an artist, or a scientist, implies a type of interplay, very mysterious and unforeseeable as to its effects, between what one might call his psychological individuality and an environment from which he can be isolated only by abstraction".[1]

Marcel recounts one case in which, exceptionally, some links in the chain of cause and effect were visible. Soon after the outbreak of the second world war he inherited a quantity of furniture and a large collection of books which he did not wish to split up, and to accommodate these possessions he decided to acquire a country house. He had, if not the whole of France, a very considerable area from which to choose. However, the arrival of a "chance" postcard aroused happy memories of the Corrèze, and Marcel wrote "à tout hasard" to an agency at Brive. When the agency replied offering a property, he and his wife set off for that area, but before leaving received a call from their friend Daniel-Rops - "par une coincidence dont les suites étaient alors imprévisibles" - and were put into touch with Edmond Michelet, at that time a complete stranger, who by devoted assistance on the spot and the promise of his further friendship

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1 Human Dignity, p. 3

decided the Marcels to purchase le Peuch. Their moving in was delayed and rendered infinitely more arduous by the German invasion, but they eventually settled; and in time, in recollection of the attendant circumstances, a "lien vital" was established between the family and the house. Marcel does not hesitate to say that "toute cette préparation", which he likens to the gestation of a human child, was "en apparence contingente".[1]

The instances enumerated above represent a notable development of Marcel's theory. When he spoke in the Journal of the "corrélation intime entre ma réalité intelligible et ma réalité spatiale", he had in mind the spatial reality, the empirical background which was already there; the point at issue was the non-contingency of the relation between his mind and the reality and not the question of how the reality came to be there; it was in fact assumed to be there by accident. In the cases above, he is speaking of actual developments, of experience taking on new form, in a manner neither accidental nor rigorously determined.

Before any of the above cases of the "cooperation" of physical conditions had occurred or at least had been the subject of reflection, Marcel made a brief and isolated entry in his Journal in 1920, indicating a somewhat "confused" (as he admits) grasp of this principle. Perhaps, he wrote, events take on a certain pattern for human souls. Only if a pattern relatable to a soul manifests itself can that soul exist in the sense of possessing individuality. "Cette âme et cet ordre ne seraient pas d'ailleurs deux choses, mais une seule.

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1 En Chemin, pp. 175-177

Ainsi s'expliquerait l'étrange conformité entre ce que nous sommes et ce qui nous arrive".[1] There is no essential difference between the activity of a soul as represented in this passage and the accomplishment of some lofty vocation of which Marcel speaks in later writing.

The notion of interplay of mind and circumstances, fundamental to Marcel's doctrine, is an essential of his thought on the subjects of prayer and hope, and in this context he again moves on to new ground. In the six cases set out above, developments take place which, although beneficial, were not specifically willed in advance. In prayer, and in hope, there is at the start an objective, such as the well-being of a beloved person or the liberation of an occupied country, though this is not to be formulated in a precise manner. In any case the answering of prayer or hope may not take the identical form in which it was conceived. In fact an "answering", if objectively recognisable as such in physical form, could not be interpreted as a divine act,[2] for in prayer at least more than the interplay of mind and will and physical reality is involved. The answer to a prayer moreover might not be easily expressible in words; it could be "une certaine transformation intérieure, ou encore un afflux mystérieux, une pacification ineffable".[3]

A prerequisite for setting oneself any objective is the confidence that all is not predetermined and that there is room for the individual to make his mark on the course of events. Marcel imagined at one moment something between

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1 Journal, p. 262
2 Ibid, p. 221
3 Philosophie Concrète, p.55

Bergson's concept of a universe of "pure improvisation" and a changeless world; a world in which, while certain situations would certainly induce certain others, there would be undetermined "blanks" offering scope for active intervention.[1] Later, however, he stated firmly that there is no inherence of the future in the present. The future is not "préformé" in the present in such a degree that it could be foretold even by powers superior to our own. As seen above, fatalism can be overcome by an effort of the will. The effect of past and present on the future can be described only in terms of "liaison qualitative, enchaînement mélodique".[2] Writing in 1931, the date being significant because it is after his admission into the Church, he remarks that he will hear nothing about divine prescience, precisely in order to rule out predestination; if there were divine vision earlier in time than the act forming its object, predestination would be inescapably implied.[3]

Marcel confirms his view of the future with the words "par le fait que nous sommes dans le temps, nous sommes appelés à vivre dans du non-dénoué. D'où une certaine indétermination".[4] In his third Entretien with Paul Ricoeur, the latter remarks that in Marcel's plays "rien n'est dénoué".[5] The audience is left to speculate about the further development of the situation between the characters. There is no presumption that it will necessarily follow a particular course.

Marcel's view of prayer is based on his assertion in the

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1 Journal, pp. 135-136
2 Ibid p. 190
3 Être et Avoir I, p. 100
4 Philosophie Concrète, p.170
5 Entretiens, p.57

Journal that God works only through individual wills. The relation between God and himself is spiritual and thereby confers individuality on him. "Je suis pour Dieu en tant que je suis unique". There must consequently be room for the submission of individual wishes to God; and this is related to the view that there is no such thing as divine impartiality: "Dieu m'apparaît.....comme universellement partial". Prayer is the refusal to admit that all is "donné"; it consists in "invoquer la réalité traitée comme volonté". Of course one may not pray for oneself, or really for another; essentially, "au fond, je prie Dieu pour nous". But within that understanding, to pray is to postulate that "la réalité des autres, tout en étant indépendante de moi, dépend malgré tout à quelque degré de l'acte par lequel je la pose, que celui-ci contribue en quelque sorte à cette réalité". Scope exists for the exercise of this spiritual activity. The questioning on logical grounds whether it can have any effect on external reality can be met with the counter-question of what is the meaning of "external". Exteriority is expressly denied in prayer, at the base of which moreover is "une volonté d'union avec mes frères".[1]

Hope, the subject of a phenomenological study which shows Marcel perhaps at his most eloquent, is the reverse of a pessimistic fatalism which would regard reality either as powerless or as lacking any aptitude to take account of what is good not only for a reflecting person individually, but of what such a person judges to be good in the absolute sense. To hope, "c'est faire crédit à la réalité", to affirm that there is within reality the means of overcoming an obstacle,

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1 Journal, pp. 255, 256 n.1, 257-258, 219-220, 133.

a serious illness or something far more grave. There is room in reality for changes. Patience has to be exercised; patience is not mere indifference but implies " un subtil respect de la durée". Reality is regarded, in hope, as extending far beyond the realm of mathematical computation, and as related to some hidden principle at the bottom of things or events which itself takes no account of computations.[1] Hope does not begin or proceed with an estimate of probabilities. The self which exercises "une raison calculatrice" is not the self which hopes. In a world in which results are increasingly sought and obtained by technical operations, it is natural that there should be scepticism regarding the role of hope, for hope is not a power or a force in the everyday use of the words. Hope in fact could not possibly enlist the aid of any technique. There is no question of causal efficiency; on the contrary, in hoping I am conscious of reinforcing "un certain lien qui m'unit a ce qui est en cause". The bond is of course religious in essence. In the period shortly after entering the Church, Marcel wrote (1931) that all hope is hope of salvation. Without specifically abandoning that view, he does not reiterate it in the phenomenological study, but concentrates rather on the concept of hope as, like prayer, "toujours liée à une communion", and indissolubly connected with charity. In sum hope, if it is not precisely an act of creation, is an appeal to the existence of a certain creativeness in the world, or of real resources at the disposal of this creativeness.[2]

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1 Être et Avoir, I p. 98
2 Homo Viator, pp. 83, 82, 62, 74, 85, 66.

It is worth recalling here that Renouvier, reflecting on the statistical calculation of probabilities, welcomed the possibility of different futures as evidence of scope for the exercise of personal liberty. Marcel does not doubt the existence of openings for the will and for liberty. Hope, however, in his conception is a prophetic vision, proclaiming "cela sera". Marcel's rejection of probabilities is in the metaphysical sphere.

Hope, in Marcel's theory, is not to be conceived as an activity which may bring about some development such as those which have been instanced above as occurring non-fortuitously. The fruits of hope are to be expected rather in the new configuration which the individual and his situation in its totality may assume. In hope a new intimacy with the situation and with events may be created, which may prevent circumstances from being merely fate. Despite the vigour of certain assertions in the context of hope, Marcel draws attention to "l'affinité secrète qui lie espérance et détente"; and it is perhaps this aspect which is the main link with the theory of hope of his eminent disciple Paul Ricoeur. The latter, using language which frequently takes on the charm of the poetic, writes that hope "n'est pas le triomphe du dualisme" - i.e. between the person hoping and the object of his hope - "mais le viatique sur le chemin de la conciliation . . . Elle est l'âme mystérieuse du pacte vital que je puis nouer avec mon corps et mon univers". "Et si une distance évanouissante sépare toujours la liberté de la nécessite, du moins l'espérance veut-elle convertir toute hostilité en une tension fraternelle, à l'intérieur d'une unité de création".[1] Ricoeur's

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1 Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'Involontaire, p.452

notion of this unity and his desire to see reality otherwise than in terms of logical opposites such as liberty and necessity is closely in line with Marcel's thought. In the light of section iv of this chapter, the idea of a "pacte vital" is noteworthy.

The difficulty in attempting to "clarify" Marcel's theories of prayer and hope is to avoid reducing these activities to mere processes of adaptation of the subject's own mind to circumstances as they unfold. Both, possibly, may be regarded as an earnest striving to activate the hidden principles of the universe of which men are increasingly losing awareness, and which are metaphysical.

It was remarked above that in the spiritual activities of prayer and hope there is some ultimate goal, however imprecisely it is conceived. These activities may involve more than the interplay of a person's psychological individuality and his situation; a third reality, that mysterious and essentially discreet reality which is called grace may also be active.[1] It is impossible to be precise; Marcel at one moment finds it equally true and equally false to say that hope does not depend on him alone.[2] But following shortly on that remark he writes that hope consists in remaining faithful to an original inspiration and that "fidélité" itself is impossible without the "mysterious" collaboration of goodwill - the only positive contribution we ourselves can make - and "des initiatives dont le foyer réside hors de nos prises, là où les valeurs sont des grâces". The act of grace confers a gift, possibly in the form of an inspiration, and the gift is an appeal to which it is for

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1 Human Dignity, p.168
2 Homo Viator, p.79

us to respond. Grace, although a basically religious concept, is not in Marcel's view to be excluded from philosophy, since it undeniably can be a factor in the lives of conscious individuals, fulfilling a role in certain circumstances which can be accounted for in no other way. He avoids all reference to the historical, theological controversies on the subject. While he nowhere suggests that grace is bestowed only on certain elect he is also careful to point out[1] that it does not come into operation simply by a "return to religion in its standard and confessional forms". Its operation is indeed mysterious and cannot be predicted, any more than the "chance meetings" described above. When, however, the subject unmistakably recognises its efficacy, such moments are of particular exaltation and then it is, par excellence, that a reconciliation of necessity and contingency has been achieved. Marcel provides two notable instances of the working of grace.

- In the case of a religious convert, it would be absurd to remark to this person that he had found a solution to his difficulties or that he had found a remedy for his ills. It is not merely the words "solution" and "remedy" which are improper, Marcel points out,[2] but the use of the verb "to find" which is empty of meaning. The convert would insist not that he had found something but that he himself had been found. His own action was limited to the acceptance of the illumination of grace. It is unthinkable that Marcel did not have his own conversion in mind here. He had already testified to the enlightenment that he himself received at that moment, speaking of "un autre monde qui était là entièrement présent

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1 Human Dignity, p.167
2 Ibid, p.167

et qui affleure enfin".[1]

- The second instance is also personal and relates to the adoption of a son by Marcel and his wife. Contrary to their fears the six-year old child loved his foster parents from the first meeting "comme si vraiment il nous avait attendu".[2] Reflecting that from a superficial standpoint he and his wife had chosen the child, he asks himself whether it was not rather the case that they it was who were chosen.

There are also instances of what Marcel considers to be the working of grace in the plays - notably in Le Monde Cassé where the husband and wife, Laurent and Christiane, having lived for years without mutual understanding suddenly receive "illumination".

With reference to the personal cases above, Marcel mentions a little later in En Chemin that his adopted son eventually married his wife's niece, to his and his family's great joy, and suggests the whole episode as a case of "cette mystérieuse conjonction de la nature, de la liberté et de la grâce". In Le Voeu Créateur he also evokes "cet ordre . . . [qui] suppose non seulement la collaboration d'un déterminisme naturel dont le détail nous échappe et du vouloir humain dans ce qu'il a de plus délibéré, mais encore, et à la racine même de cette collaboration, une initiative dont le principe même est métaphysique et se dérobe à nos regards".[3] Only faith, Marcel goes on, can recognise the working of this principle.

The postulation of the tripartite collaboration of nature, human will and grace is perhaps the key to some of Marcel's deepest thought. At times he appears to attribute something

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1 Être et Avoir, I, p.16
2 En Chemin, p.124
3 Homo Viator, p.130

akin to an animate character to what is generally regarded as inanimate matter. In the frame of mind in which he received the inspiration of Rilke's poetry (see below) he quotes in full, in a late work, Pour une Sagesse Tragique, Gérard de Nerval's "Vers Dorés": "Homme, libre penseur, te crois-tu seul pensant Dans ce monde . . ." But from other remarks it is clear that this is not his intention. His belief, which he realises does not lend itself to objective expression, embraces an "order" (a much-loved word of his) in which it seems that non-contingent developments may occasionally occur. An individual may be "brought" into contact with another, the meeting proving as highly significant as it was unexpected, by virtue of the mysterious inter-connection of ourselves, other persons and physical reality, and the activity of some "power" which is able to "vivify" reality. The nature of this "power" is difficult to determine. At times it appears to be some force, some efficacy, released or rather observed to be active through the abolition of the artificial "opposition" between the human mind and "inert" matter. Although seeming to belong to the physical field, Marcel would nevertheless class the conception as metaphysical. It is a mysterious efficacy of this sort which, it may be inferred, is at work in so ordering events that occasional developments may take place which, although unexpected, are seen in retrospect to be related to the aspirations of the person concerned. Inasmuch as the developments are outside the field of necessity, no direct causation is to be postulated. In contexts of the most elevated spiritual nature, in matters belonging purely to the religious sphere, the "power" which enlightens persons may take the name of grace.

In attempting to conceptualise the "supernatural" in Marcel's theories, it would be unjust to suggest that because of his insistence upon such intervention especially in the accomplishment of a serious vocation, something akin to the rewarding of meritorious striving is implied. Any such interpretation can be emphatically ruled out. While the notion cannot be expressed in objective language, a possible approach to an understanding of its meaning is to visualise a state of the fullest harmony between a person and his physical world such as may be induced in the process of fervent adoration or invocation, by virtue of which a closer relation in physical action may be induced. Marcel's readers are left to speculate, but have the unmistakable conviction that the truth of which the philosopher has an intuition is fundamental.

Beside the spiritual activities of prayer and hope, fidelity is seen as a third activity which may be crowned by grace. This notion is described by Marcel as having helped him to grasp more clearly that of faith and it in its turn received illumination from the conception of the "toi" relationship. By an act of fidelity I affirm the primacy of being and help to reduce the amount of nothingness in the world; thereby I "give grace its chances", in the sense that I place myself in a position of mind in which I can receive its benefits without any presumption of inducing it.[1] Fidelity regarded in its true sense of a commitment to God and as faithfulness to the unity of the self, unchanged by developments in time, implies that the person or principle to which it is directed is emphatically not "un pur accident",[2] a mere pretext; but

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1 L'Homme Problématique, pp.47-48
2 Être et Avoir, I, p.65

that the relation between the subject and object of fidelity, as of real love, is non-contingent.

Marcel enjoins faithfulness to nothing less than life itself. Acceptance of the world and of one's situation generally seemed the easy and obvious course to the bourgeoisie of the period before the first world war. But that war and the growing likelihood in the 1930s of a second conflagration sharpened the feeling of "la menace qui pèse sur l'homme",[1] and obliged men to search their minds and wills more vigourously. One can evaluate life, Marcel wrote in 1932, and, as a free being, one may yield to despair, to which the very nature of things seem to invite. Despair, however, may be overcome by fidelity to life in the recognition of something permanent, and hence non-contingent; in such recognition one is in a sphere in which mind and feeling are in full harmony.[2] Marcel examines the idea of suicide and his reflection moves on from the phenomenological to the hyperphenomenological.[3] If, he argues, he were as free morally as he is physically to commit suicide; if, in other words, his continued presence in the world depended on him alone, if the world were such as to tolerate such a "total defection", he would not feel as he does that he belongs to the world as a real participating individual. He would be, as he says in English, merely "something that happened to be", a contingent existence.

A related thought is the belief in life after death. Without such a belief existence would be "devalued" by appearing contingent in character. Since physical death may occur at any moment, existence would be "à la merci du non-sens

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1 Être et Avoir, I, p.48
2 Ibid, p.118
3 Ibid, p. 178

radical de l'accident pur".[1] Marcel wrote early in the Journal that immortality is a spiritual conception, belonging only to the domain of faith and can be thought of only as "transcendant par rapport aux accidents de la matière".[2] The views expressed in Homo Viator (1943) are more profound, linking the subject with that of fidelity. In refusing to accept physical death as an ultimate fact there is something of a challenge to the visible order of human existence, though it is perhaps essentially "une piété"; much more than retaining a memory which might imply devotion to something that is past and could degenerate into a form of idolatry. "C'est un non-simulacre que nous nous appliquions à apprehender, c'est-à-dire un indéfectible". The view which Marcel here expresses is that if a state of truly fundamental fidelity is maintained towards the beloved dead, there cannot fail to exist something indefectible - and that something is "une réponse". There is in this "relationship", as in so many others, reciprocal spiritual movement. Marcel hastens to say that the response cannot be imagined as automatic since that would relegate fidelity to the category of a technique, or a procedure. The revelation of the indefectible is not in accordance with universal laws; it depends on th e subject - and admittedly there is room for error and misapprehension. As Marcel recognises there is latent contradiction here, which he describes as part and parcel of our human condition.[3]

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1 Philosophie Concrète, p. 145
2 P. 152
3 Homo Viator, pp. 196, 198, 199.

Marcel's plays testify not only to immortality as a concept but to his life-long conviction of the co-presence in some real sense of the beloved dead to the living. To mention only two: in the early unfinished piece L'Insondable, of 1919, Edith speaks of her communion with a man whom she loved and who was killed in the war, in the terms "L'espace même ne sépare pas ceux qui s'adorent". The same sentiment is rxpressed in Mon Temps n'est pas le Vôtre, written thirty-six years later, in 1955, in which Marie-Henriette declares that our relations with those near to us do not cease with what is called their death: "parfois au contraire [nos rapports] se renouvellent et s'approfondissent" (Act V).

iv Intersubjectivity and Man's Pact with Life

Marcel's notion of fidelity is the factor leading on to two conceptions which are perhaps the peaks of his whole doctrine of non-contingency - intersubjectivity and the "pact" between man and life. Faithfulness to the unity of the self was mentioned above; the idea is broadened in Homo Viator, where Marcel states that the self to whom it is vital, though admittedly difficult, to remain faithful is "la parcelle de création qui est en moi, le don qui m'a été accordé de toute éternité de participer au drame universel".[1] And the more faithful in this sense one is, the more this "intimité avec [soi-même]" is preserved, the easier it will be to enter into contact with one's neighbours - not those whose dealings are impersonal, or mechanical, but those who transmit some element of individual personality and become a real part of one's life. Intersubjectivity is the recognition that the meaning of life is to be found only through communication with other persons and in progress towards the goal of universal understanding and communion. In a mature work, Présence et Immortalité, Marcel lays down with conviction that "Si les autres m'échappent, je m'échappe à moi-meme, car ma substance est faite d'eux". "La pensée philosophique la plus authentique", he adds, "me semble se situer à la jointure de soi et d'autrui".[2] Indeed, intersubjectivity is one of the "approches concrètes", a means whereby we may render ourselves open to grace.

Faithfulness - to the essential self - is not the

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1 P. 173
2 Pp. 22,23

only requirement for intersubjectivity. The attitude of "disponibilité", already mentioned above, is also needed. Marcel recognises that like everyone else he is subject to external events, "à des déterminismes objectivement repérables", but is exposed to reality of another sort, that of contact with other human beings, and in this sphere the role he plays is even more his own. He can communicate with this other reality only by avoiding absorption in self. One's destiny only acquires depth through being open to others, as Mireille, in La Chapelle Ardente affirms: "J'existe, maintenant qu'un autre a besoin de moi". "Disponibilité" embraces receiving in the richest and fullest meaning of the word, i.e. the giving of oneself.[1] It is of course closely related to the "toi" approach, the non-objectifying attitude of real love which alone makes possible a perfect understanding and sympathy beyond anything accessible to conceptual thought. Marcel envisages a transcending of "les catégories corrélatives mais rudimentaires du même et de l'autre", and this at first sight could be regarded as a nostalgic return to the fusion of individuality in an Absolute of his early philosophical thought. He explains his meaning, however, by reference to his play Le Quatuor en fa dièse, in which he draws attention to "une sorte d'indistinction féconde, où les êtres communiquent", which is not "un élément neutre" but a sort of "milieu vital de l'âme....."[2] The implication is that in this region of indistinctness, individuality is not lost. The essential is that communication, intersubjectivity, can occur.

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1 Philosophie Concrète, pp. 136-141
2 Ibid, p. 57

Intersubjectivity, which progressively took shape for Marcel as "la catégorie essentielle de [son] expérience" and became integral to his philosophy, was originally an intuitive feeling. From his earliest childhood, he tells us in En Chemin, he aspired to feel himself "en consonance avec l'autre".[1] In the same book he describes his duties as a publisher's reader which he construed as introducing to the French public novels reflecting mentalities very different from their own and he explicitly claims that work of selection as an illustration of "cette volonté d'intersubjectivité qui a toujours été mienne".[2] Again in En Chemin, writing at an advanced age, he recalls in some detail his friendship with a poet who had died some sixty years earlier, and he asks himself why he should evoke someone snatched away so long ago. The reason is that he cannot, and must not, even in thought, cut himself off from those whom "un destin mystérieux", or Providence, has brought into his life.[3] That such encounters were probably in the special category of non-contingent is not the point which is being stressed here. A person one has known, who has added to the quality of one's own life, is a permanent part of that life,even if physically dead and having died a very long time before. It is remarkable that Marcel's father, a connoisseur of the arts, was happy in the presence of objects he admired and needed no human company. Without having his father in mind, Marcel however draws attention to the modern "anarchist" notion of a freedom consisting in belonging to no person or thing, and points out that the plenitude to which such a notion lays claim is likely to reveal itself as nothingness.[4] As far as

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1 p.25
2 p.133
3 p.67
4 Philosophie Concrète, p.150

Marcel himself is concerned, the simple fact is that for him we are not alone in the world, and whatever we do we are responsible for what happens to others.[1] He thought it absurd, he recounts in En Chemin, to imagine human personalities as separate units, not in communication with each other.[2] From his earliest student days the notion of windowless monads was abhorrent to him and already in 1914 he wrote that communication between individual minds can and must be regarded as possible.[3]

The fact of human inter-dependence is illustrated in the plays. In Le Chemin de Crête, Ariane remarks "rien ne me paraît aujourd'hui plus manifeste que l'enchaînement qui lie entre elles toutes ces histoires où nous sommes à la fois auditeurs et acteurs . . ." Christiane, in Le Monde Cassé is moved by certain revelations made to her by the sister of the person she loved to exclaim "Ainsi il y aurait tout de même . . . un enchaînement?" In the preface to a much later play Croissez et Multipliez, of 1955, Marcel introduces the work as presenting "un ensemble de relations qui mettent en lumière cette dépendance réciproque, cet enchevêtrement des destinées individuelles sur lesquels je n'ai jamais cessé de concentrer mon attention". In another interesting passage in Présence et Immortalité he casts doubts upon the wisdom of concentrating on personal qualities which people have in common and which by virtue of that fact possess a rational character. The rationalist philosopher Brunschvicg is named as a representative of this not very helpful approach. Marcel insists that our very individuality, "la singularité en nous ou en autrui", is as it were an appeal to strive for more intimate understanding

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1 Entretiens, pp.63-64
2 p.113
3 Journal, p.61

and closer communication. That, he says, is fundamental in his plays.[1]

Interpersonal relations count for more than concepts and Marcel argues that "la valeur ne peut qu'être incarnée"; values must not be reduced to mere abstract formulation. In a sense it would be an absurdity to claim that a given person died "for an idea". On the other hand, it would be meaningful to say that a person sacrificed himself to save, or in any way to serve, other lives. "La réflexion, en tant qu'entité abstraite, n'est rien; ce qui est réel, c'est moi méditant sur le destin de mon frère".[2]

From relations between individuals, Marcel moves on to the conception of "une certaine société réelle" in which he may participate.[3] He evokes the "réalité supra-personelle" which is above the individual and even "l'ordre personnel", and is the underlying principle of human life. The ultimate aspiration of the mind dominated by true love is the "communion universelle" of the living and the beloved dead, "[qui] ne peut se suspendre qu'au Toi absolu".[4]

It is in the context of spiritual community that Marcel reintroduces the subject of miracles which he discussed in Part I of the Journal. The main line of his argument there is that the miracle is not to be regarded as a special interpretation of events, since that would imply a duality of the interpretation as form and of the events as "matière historique", and such a duality would be out of place in the sphere of faith. There is no room for interpretation, or reflection. The miracle manifests itself as a revelation (as does true art),

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1 p.24
2 Homo Viator, pp.190,200
3 Ibid., p.26
4 Homo Viator, pp.31-32,201

transcending reflection and appearing as "unité individuelle" of what, for reflection, is separated into form and matter. Although, as Marcel recognises, he does not thereby remove all the difficulties involved in the notion of miracles, he contests the realist view of historical material according to which any systematisation of events would be regarded as contingent. He makes the noteworthy observation that "la notion des événements suppose un ensemble, elle ne se définit qu'en fonction d'ensembles".[1] It is integral to his intuitive feeling as to his philosophy that there should be relations of some significance between historical developments.

When the subject of miracle next appears, in an address written in the late 1920s but first published in the Introduction to the Essai de Philosophie Concrète (1940), it is dealt with less purely theoretically than in the Journal. Marcel begins by asserting that while in objective experience one may correctly speak of "normal" conditions for apprehending the object, there are other levels of experience, such as aesthetic appreciation or creation, where this is not the case. A piece of music which seems a chaos of sound to one person possesses form to another. Marcel goes on to postulate a community of beings whose spiritual disposition, as a community, is such that they may apprehend reality in a manner different from that of other persons. And since there is the closest possible connection between the mode of apprehension and the thing apprehended, events may occur to this community which, from the standpoint of general experience, seem in the highest degree improbable. From the religious angle the events have no existence outside the meaning which they present to the

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1 Journal, p.81

beings to whom they happen, and the miracle can only be recognised and authenticated within and by the Church, i.e. a real community. Miracles are theological ground but not for that reason to be disregarded or glossed over by philosophy. The miracle is in a sense a culmination of the concept of non-contingency; it presupposes the interaction of the natural order and purely human initiative, and requires further "collaboration" on the part of grace. Marcel has a word about "miraculous" healing. While ruling out, obviously, any question of a "technique", producing automatic results, he thinks it undeniable that in this field there may occur "la mystérieuse jonction de la liberté et de la grâce".[1]

Marcel moves on from his brief discussion of miracles to further consideration of the true spiritual community of human beings. This he describes in terms of the brotherhood of men who share the knowledge that they are participating together in "une certaine aventure unique, . . . un certain mystère central et indivisible de la destinée humaine".[2]

A further aspect of the notion of fidelity is that, like a testimony sworn on oath, it involves consciousness of the sacred. Marcel deplores the loss, especially in the twentieth century, of a sense of the sacred, of a profound respect towards life and death and of an attitude of reverence, of reverent love, towards all created things.[3] It has been mentioned above that an approach to physical reality unmarred by arrogance and even embodying "piety" may be highly fruitful. Marcel now takes as his spiritual guide in this sphere the poet Rilke, on whom he lectured and in many of whose works

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1 Être et Avoir, I, p.103, n.1.
2 Philosophie Concrète, pp.14-17
3 Homo Viator, pp.174,98

he discerns and admires "la dilection, la révérence pour les choses". He notes for example Rilke's feeling that buildings which once held significance for us - the towers and palaces referred to in the Elegies - remain real after they have been demolished: the invisible exists on a higher plane of reality. The resemblance is striking between this feeling and that of Marcel towards the human dead he knew and loved. There are further instances of affinity of thought. Among the profound lessons which, as Marcel points out, Rilke learned from Rodin, were those of patience and humility toeards the object, and especially recognition of the joy kindled by the presence of the object, "l'acte double par lequel l'artiste s'ouvre à lui et par lequel il s'ouvre à l'artiste".[1] Marcel's two lectures on Rilke were delivered in 1944; the passage just quoted recalls, however, the treatment of subject-object relations in the 1925 article Existence et Objectivité, especially the clause "Je le questionne et [...] il me répond", with its whole context. In another poet whom Marcel admired, Péguy, he observed the same "goût du créé", a love for the wood and the stone at the craftsman's disposal. A similar sentiment was discovered in the writings of the German thinker Peter Wust, to whom Marcel devoted a valuable study: ".....une forme de piété qui va aux êtres appartenant à l'ordre infrahumain".[2]

Intersubjectivity implies the replacement of contingent by non-contingent relations, i.e. bonds of real love between as many human beings as possible with the explicit aim of universal communion. But the universe does not consist only

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1 Homo Viator, pp. 314-315
2 Être et Avoir II, p.94

of animate beings, and Wusts's "ordre infrahumain" partakes also of the dignity of creation and hence "requires" our reverent approach. Rilke created a pact between himself and things by virtue of which things assumed for him "une structure vivante". Wust's ideas are more farreaching. He requires first a filial relation between man and the sovereign Spirit which will enable man to behave like a child in the presence of the ultimate secret of things and ensure that necessity does not appear as pure destiny or blind chance. Marcel does not make the observation here, but the relation stipulated by Wust is clearly one of non-contingency in Marcel's own sense of the term. Wust also demands piety towards oneself, just as Marcel lays emphasis on faithfulness to the unity of one's true character. Piety, in Wust's view, enables us to grasp "ce principe universel de cohésion qui régit la nature", corresponding to what Claudel calls "la co-naissance de toutes les choses", and to see it transposed on to a higher plane. Ultimately, piety in its universal essence is itself the bond which indissolubly unites man, the whole of nature and the entire spiritual world. The bond is spiritual in nature, being a principle of love, and the cohesion in question is remote from the linkage of pure necessity which obtains in the world of phenomena.

Marcel's own notion is of a pact between man and life. Man, he states in Homo Viator, is the only living creature able to take up a position towards his own life and towards life in general.[1] The same thought occurs in Être et Avoir

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1 P. 109

in the context of evaluating life and envisaging the possibility of despair.[1] Man and life may be thought of as two distinct realities, between which a pact may exist, "un lien nuptial", involving the confidence which man pledges in life and which enables him to "dedicate" himself to life, and the response which life makes to the confidence reposed in it. As in pre-Christian times the pact existed and was fortified by feelings of piety towards the dead and to household gods, so in the present age the basis is piety towards Creator and created.[2] This conception, seeking to bring man into a significant living relationship with the rest of creation, is perhaps the apex of the doctrine of the non-contingency of the empirically given.

It seems legitimate to link Marcel's idea of a pact with that of "une étreinte réciproque de l'homme et du réel",[3] Marcel has already insisted on the need not to cut oneself off from reality. In much-quoted words he points that whether we like it or not we are engaged in being and have to decide for ourselves how to face reality. We have to remember that we are part of reality and avoid alienating ourselves. We must not seek to characterise, to size up reality, for the very attitude which such an action requires would preclude our apprehending it as in essence it is.[4] Characterising is a particular way of possessing, of aspiring to possess what cannot be possessed. Marcel contrasts this futile attitude to reality with that of the gardener to his garden the musician to his instrument, in which the real matter ceases to be inert and, in the act of creation, all sense of

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1 Être et Avoir I, p. 118
2 Homo Viator, pp. 109, 119
3 Ibid, p. 192
4 Être et Avoir I, p. 212

possession, mental or physical, falls away; "la dualité du possédant et du possédé s'abolit dans une réalité vivante". Marcel sketches in Homo Viator the tragic situation of the person "qui ne fait plus corps avec le réel", "le désoeuvré" who has lost all attachment to life, family and friends, a prey to boredom and to a growing consciousness of the cruelty in life. Marcel, to whom all thought of being isolated, of being out of tune with the scheme of things is intolerable, describes "oeuvrer" as "être en proie au réel",[1] and later, in the Preface to Pour une Sagesse Tragique, the real is associated closely with the idea of incarnation. Involvement is to be such that we are not sure whether it is we who are affecting the real or the real which is working on us; and that there may occur "une mystérieuse interversion, et en fin de compte une identification" between giving and receiving. It is not that the "desoeuvre", whom Marcel credits with the Sartrian feeling of being "de trop" in the world, no longer gives anything, but rather that he has lost the power of "animating" the world.[2] He has become unrelated to the world with the result that he is unable to seize, or be seized by, the vital occasions, "les occasions fécondantes", which would provide him with a substantial stake in life. If, as is the case with multitudes of people, one fails to make the necessary personal effort to be alive to reality, if one "sleep-walks" through life "en marge du réel", the hope of enjoying a non-contingent relation with one's physical reality is seriously threatened, for one's whole attention

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1 Homo Viator, p.192
2 Ibid, p.193

may be drawn to objects either of fear or desire, presenting themselves "au hasard". Such abdication may of course be avoided by the exercise of "disponibilité", which is very closely related to the newer notion of "animation", described in this context as becoming fully involved in real situations as they occur, and, in making them one's own, being able to "collaborer ainsi avec son propre destin en lui conférant sa marque propre".[1] Marcel has already spoken of the "invasion" of the pressures and tendencies of modern social existence and its "qualité anonyme" - the consequences of which are that as an individual he reacts more and more exclusively to pleasure or pain and deprives his own life both of dignity and of positive significance. Ultimately his destiny ceases to possess form or character. Astrology, he says, whatever one may think of its methods or results, at least involves the idea of "une figure, une configuration de la destinée individuelle".[2]

As an aspect of his approach to reality, Marcel indicates that although a menacing situation in the world may stimulate "l'appétit ontologique", the feeling of living under a threat should, strictly speaking, be regarded as the normal, as it was for Kierkegaard. One's outlook should not be dependent on accidental developments in the political, social or such fields. This remark of 1934[3] links up with his statement of 1914 that there is nothing in the unrolling of events to demonstrate that the universe is governed according to spiritual principles. From the metaphysical

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1 Homo Viator, pp.27,28
2 Philosophie Concrète, pp.143,145
3 Être et Avoir, I, p.48

standpoint, he continues, the world must be seen as "le lieu de l'incertitude, le règne du possible"; events must initially seem contingent as a challenge to religious faith.[1] It is for the individual to make them non-contingent to himself.

Two important points remain to be made. Marcel remarks that chance meetings which force us to think and sometimes change our minds may at the time be worrying, but perhaps at bottom are to be welcomed as showing "ce qu'il y a après tout de contingent, oui, d'accidentel dans les cristallisations mentales qui fondent notre système personnel".[2] This is not diametrically opposed as it at first sight appears to the doctrine of meetings the value of which is their non-contingent nature. Marcel is merely concerned that there should be something of a balance between the totally contingent "raw material" of a human life on the one hand and the elements in that life which are either necessary or at least non-contingent on the other hand. This thought is linked with the alarm which he increasingly feels at the pace of technological progress, and which finds particular expression in Les Hommes contre l'Humain of 1951. He sees the aim of modern applied science as that of removing all physical risks and insecurities from human life, and regards this as dangerous in that it would simultaneously reduce the scope of individual existence. Technology, moreover, is "emancipating" itself totally from speculative knowledge;

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1 Journal, pp. 95-97
2 Position et Approches

"plus les techniques progressent, plus la réflexion est en recul". There is an interesting conflict of opinion between Marcel and Emmanuel Mounier who published Le Personnalisme in 1949. Mounier noted that many of the uncertainties which used to harm human life are disappearing as science extends its realm. "L'homme n'est plus bloqué dans son destin par le déterminisme.....Qui prend argument des fatalités de la nature pour nier les possibilités de l'homme s'abandonne à un mythe....." Mounier foresaw the perils ahead: "la puissance de l'abstraction de la machine est effrayante". "L'age technique fera courir les plus grands dangers...," but adds that "aucune malédiction particulière ne le frappe". The ultimate benefits would in his view vastly outweigh the harm done (specifically to the "mouvement de personnalisation"). Teilhard de Chardin was among those who remained confident in the predominantly beneficial results of scientific discovery and on this crucial issue Marcel parted company also with him. Marcel's own objective was primarily and professedly to lessen the amount of meanimglessness in life, but not to the extent of reducing life to a succession of inevitable, necessary happenings.

The second point is an extension of Marcel's thought about "les épreuves". In works published after the end of the second world war and especially in L'Homme Problématique (1955) Marcel faced the fact of one of the major social consequences of the war, the existence in different parts of the world of multitudes of persons, uprooted from their own lands, without property, without employment, often without

nationality, placed under the care of international organisations for whom they are not real individuals but merely index card numbers. Such are "les hommes de baraque". The message to such persons is not essentially different from that of "making their situation their own", being "wedded to their destiny", but is more specifically contained in the philosophical address "Le transcendant comme méta-problématique,[1] the starting point of which is the certainty of death. For Marcel there is "un contrepoids ontologique" of death - not life, nor objective truth, but the positive utilisation of freedom, a freedom which becomes "adhesion", in other words love. By this, death is not merely "over-balanced" but transcended. Death, and by extension any cataclysmic happening, is not to be "depreciated", or treated as something to be forgotten or overcome; it is to be faced in the spirit of participation in a reality infinitely greater than the self but which at the same time cannot be treated as outside the self. The recourse is invocation of "cet Autre", "ce Récepteur" whose existence is a matter of faith and is in no sense "verifiable". In uncompromising language Marcel lays down that the transcendence of this Being "s'affirme par rapport à toute expérience possible, ou même à toute supputation rationnelle qui ne serait encore que de l'expérience anticipée et schématisée".

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1 Philosophie Concrète, p. 210

v Summing-up

In summing up it seems desirable first to recall the particular nature of certain instinctive feelings of Marcel's which are clearly revealed in his writings. What Marcel has to say about his ancestry, his past, suicide and immortality reflects his insistent longing not to be an isolated individual but to be related positively and significantly to his human entourage and indeed to humanity in general; not to live in the fugitive moment, but in communion with his past. It would seem undeniable that this disposition of mind, which led directly to the formulation of the principle of intersubjectivity, also inspired the reflection from which emerged the doctrine of the non-contingency of the empirically given and its culmination in the notion of a pact between man and life. Marcel reached early the view, not that he as an individual had been inserted into the world by a supernatural power in a specific, pre-ordained place and particular circumstances, but that the circumstances, whatever their nature, could, if seen as the gift of a loving god, be regarded as of special significance to him. The relation between him and his empirical reality which could not be known by analytical reasoning was made plain in faith. As his thought evolved, the attribution of "God-given" disappeared into the background and was finally withdrawn, being replaced by the notion of the unbreakable unity of the individual and his situation. Analytical thought remained inadequate but feeling supplemented or rather superseded faith in helping a philosophical understanding to be reached.

It is in this context that the most interesting element

in Marcel's doctrine came to light, that of nothing less than "reciprocal action" between the individual conscious mind and the physical reality with which it feels itself united and, further, of the "cooperation" of physical conditions over which the person has no direct control. Upon occasions things fall into place to the benefit of an individual in pursuit of some high purpose, without intentional contributory action on his part. Hope involves the belief that reality at any particular moment contains within itself the means of serving some lofty human end and can be deemed to "concur", at its own "chosen" time, in the evolution of the situation along lines which are in some way beneficial to the subject. The underlying principle is the mysterious interrelation between human minds and wills and nature, and some agency the entire conception of which is metaphysical. By an attitude of reverence and piety towards creator and all created things, by the exercise of "disponibilité" and "fidélité" such conditions as are open to us for the activation of this metaphysical force are fulfilled. Marcel, as a sincere Christian, accords a role to grace, and the more wholeheartedly in that he believes himself a true beneficiary. He appears to feel, however, that through the indissoluble unity of man, nature and the spiritual world, some power may be at work which is below the level of grace but other than what is comprised under the name of physical causality. It is the activity of this principle or power which is connoted in his use of the term "non-contingency".

CHAPTER III

MARCEL AND COLERIDGE AND SCHELLING

All students of Marcel's works must be grateful to the philosopher for having decided when aged seventy-seven to publish his study of the metaphysical ideas of Coleridge in their relation with the philosophy of Schelling. This work was written in 1909 when its author, being as we know dissatisfied with the solutions to the problems of life propounded by the official philosophy of the day was open-minded and on the look-out for new doctrines and attitudes. It would be surprising if, in analysing sympathetically Coleridge's and Schelling's approaches to certain basic questions - the role of religious views in philosophy, the problem of individuality in a universe which is an ordered whole, the dualism of mind and matter - he had not imbibed ideas which, without being adopted integrally, exerted some influence on his own thoughts. He suggests in his Preface that if he re-examined Coleridge's writings he would probably discover "bien des approches concrètes de ce qui devait par la suite devenir mon oeuvre". Most students would probably agree that the study virtually does that as it stands. Hence its considerable interest.

The Introduction indicates one reason why Coleridge attracted Marcel initially. As the English poet (1772-1834) grew up, the intellectual climate in his country, as Marcel describes it, was dominated by the need to account for everything by experience. The theory of knowledge with which the poet was familiar excluded all that is qualitative in perception. The complex could be wholly explained in terms of the simple.

Coleridge, the Romantic, rebelled against these prevailing views and determined to re-introduce into philosophical thought an awareness of reality in its full richness and truth, very different from "le monde décoloré" which the reasoning of the day all too often offered in its place. He abandoned his own countrymen and sought guidance and inspiration in German thinkers - not in Kant, of whom he could make little, but especially in Schelling. Marcel in his turn found that the philosophical teaching of his day did not fulfil his spiritual needs; he also had wider horizons. A philosophical mentor was to hand in the person of Bergson, and that thinker played a vital part in directing his early speculation, but Marcel eventually sought further guidance outside his own land, in philosophers of the United States. Coleridge, to Marcel's joy, displayed a preoccupation with "ce qu'il y a de plus immédiat, de plus actuel . . . de plus mystérieux et de plus tragique dans l'existence"(235).[1] His work is characterised by "un mouvement vers le concret, vers le réel"(33). Moreover, although admittedly not one of the greatest speculative thinkers, he embodied Marcel's picture of the true philosopher. His ideas did not exist only as abstract concepts but, as in the case of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, they were his life and "ce qu'il y eut de plus intérieur et de plus profond dans sa vie"(235). Marcel's admiration was aroused particularly by Coleridge's decision ultimately to reject pantheism and to discover a principle of transcendence.

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1 references are all to pages in Marcel's Coleridge et Schelling unless otherwise indicated.

Although his views fluctuated considerably, Coleridge was a Christian believer throughout his life. The role which religious faith played in his thinking is well illustrated in his reaction to the death of a young son, which Marcel relates in detail. Life, Coleridge argued in a letter, is the absolute; no part of it, however small, could really perish. In a separate letter he reflected that life is God; but is God a blind, irrational force? If one insists that life is created by divine power, can one avoid admitting that it is destroyed by the same divine power? Coleridge could not possibly accept the idea of God's acting under a form of necessity, in accordance with "des lois générales"(44). Such an idea, totally abstract in nature, could have no meaning in reality(44); it is of the sort that would be entertained only by those who, dispensing with faith and relying on "l'orgueil raisonneur", think they can uncover what in fact lies hidden in mystery - "enfoui au sein de l'éternel et non nécessaire avenir". (Marcel adds stress to the last words by quoting Coleridge's English: "the eternal Future unnecessary"). God works in each person for all but more especially he works in all for each. Coleridge inferred from his religious faith that his child's death was not a pure accident in the world of physical nature but was the result of an act of the divine will, taking particular account of the child itself, as an individual; revealing in fact that the child had a place in some great pattern beyond the grasp of finite minds. The individual could not have been sacrificed to the generality. In Marcel's summing-up, "l'individu est une fin en soi"(45).

It is note-worthy that Coleridge's faith strengthened

his conviction of the individual reality and value of his son's existence. Marcel, as we have seen, similarly established in his early days that faith "creates individuality". Coleridge's interpretation of his child's death suggested moreover a non-contingent relationship, one of love, between God and the child, and although Marcel does not comment in that sense, the thought must have occupied his mind. The poet did not use the term, much less did he elaborate a theory of, "non-contingency". Marcel, however, appropriated the term and began to evolve his own doctrine about 1912, some three years after completing his study of Coleridge and Schelling.

Marcel notes particularly that Coleridge, while determined to safeguard the principle of individuality, also asserted the omnipresence of God and the fact that God's purposes embrace the whole universe(45, n.2). God's activity, in Coleridge's view, must be recognised as "omniforme"; it is inconceivable, in fact impossible, that an omniscient being should not have "distinct" ideas of finite beings(53). Yet Coleridge, unlike Marcel, was by nature sympathetically inclined to pantheistic views and these were further nourished by his powers of imagination. As a young man he assigned an important role to the imagination in seconding faith and assisting our understanding. Speculative reasoning, the poet felt, is apt to lose itself in its own universality(186), the particular and the individual finding no place in its working. Imagination brings to abstract reason life and individuality; and in this sense is not to be distinguished from religion(187). It works by the creation of real symbols, not to be confused with crude allegories, "les produits mécaniques de l'entendement", but such as to

allow the universal to show through the individual(187). But in addition to its services to individuality, the imagination, in Coleridge's view also carries out the function, for which the intellect is inadequate, of showing being in its unity, "dans sa totalité indivisible"(38). It enables us to grasp "l'unité vivante du Tout qui laisse subsister et implique même la vie individuelle des parties"(52). Coleridge could not rid himself of the instinctive feeling, characteristic of the Romantic age in which he lived, of the unity of all reality, animate and inanimate. He found it unsatisfying to think in terms of parts of creation, the more so as the parts are all infinitesimally small in relation to the whole. Marcel quotes a letter in which Coleridge admits that he "ached" to contemplate and know something great, something which is One and Indivisible. The mountains, rocks and waterfalls were significant, they gave him a feeling of "sublimity" and "majesty", only if he saw them in a spirit of faith in the One(36). Such was his desire to sense the whole as inter-connected that he passed through a phase of admiration for Spinoza's system, recognising however at the time that it was too uncompromising for his convictions of individual liberty.

Marcel has frequently declared that Spinoza's philosophy is unacceptable to him. Nevertheless he may have been impressed by Coleridge's sincere desire to feel that the universe is not a hap-hazard assembly of unrelated objects, and he would in any case have noted the argument against "l'entendement", which arbitrarily breaks up the real into seemingly unrelated parts(87) and against fancy which can do no more than establish a purely external and superficial connection between its objects whereas

imagination can grasp them in profound cohesion. The notion of causality is also attacked by Coleridge. This may be indispensable in the realm of "l'entendement", but if elevated to an absolute presents a false picture of reality, being "un principe de séparation, de dispersion" and failing to recognise "l'unité profonde, la vie même de la nature"(177-178). Similarly a philosophy basing itself on a mechanistic explanation of all things would misrepresent reality by subordinating the whole to the parts(179). To Coleridge's mind, accordingly, the essence of the divine nature, as revealed by imagination and faith rather than by mechanistic deduction, is "une nécessité d'action harmonieuse et omniforme" and its creative energy is marked by order and system(52). The thought of "un indéterminisme" is criticised as seeming irrational and incompatible with the divine power(190-191). Clearly imagination played the same part in Coleridge's reflections as the Bergsonian intuition which enabled Marcel in his student years to see beyond the antitheses of reasoning.

Apart from Coleridge's assertions of the insufficiency of discursive thought, Marcel was interested in the poet's criticism of the dualism of mind and matter. To Marcel in his early days this dualism had precluded the possibility of a non-contingent relationship between an individual and his empirical background, and he employed the notion of faith to bridge the gap. Coleridge found it impossible to accept an absolute dualism of Spirit and Life; he felt that they must be reconciled in some truth partaking of both.[1] He was imbued with "le sens de la parenté mystérieuse qui unit l'âme aux

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1 cf Marcel's Fragments, p.20: "si l'esprit peut poser l'idéal et le réel dans leur corrélation réciproque, c'est qu'il n'est pas distinct d'eux, c'est qu'ils sont lui-même . . ."

choses et les choses entre elles....."(60). If the duality is asserted of soul as thinking substance and body as extended substance, how can the "interaction" of the two, which occurs in appearance at least, be explained? The law of causality would be inapplicable here since the two concepts are of a different nature. The answer appears to lie in postulating matter as a modification of intelligence which would have the common functions of thought and matter(113-116). If, in Coleridge's theory of knowledge, it is convenient to distinguish artificially and momentarily between the subjective, or intelligence, and the objective, which is nature, it has to be understood that the two terms, although "absolument exclusifs l'un de l'autre", "sont corrélatifs". Positive knowledge requires their "concours", their "collaboration", i.e. the mediation of what by definition is conscious and what by definition is unconscious. A duality is admittedly implied but, at the same time, "l'unité de cette dualité"(130-131). In Schelling's famous expression, quoted by Marcel, "la nature doit être l'esprit visible, l'esprit la nature invisible"(61). Schelling(1775-1854), in his Philosophy of Identity, asserts that subject and object are identical, even though they must stand in contrast to each other; [1]

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[1] It is interesting to note en passant that the aspect of contrast was thought to be exemplified in the "polarity" already discovered by researched in the natural sciences: positive and negative poles in electricity, acids and alkalis in chemistry. Both Coleridge and Schelling believed in a "principle of polarity".

that any difference between them is not qualitative but quantitative. As Marcel shows in the Conclusion to his study, Coleridge came in time to accept Schelling's belief that nature is fundamentally what spirit is, and knowable not by analytical methods but by the imagination. Following Schelling he realised that the basis of the imagination is the identity "cachée et profonde" of the visible and the invisible, the conscious and the unconscious, and that if the artist can effectively penetrate into and comprehend nature - " c'est qu'il est ce qu'elle est"(237). The artist, the individual mind, is not at bottom distinct from nature. "Si la théorie de la nature est possible, si le rébus est déchiffrable, c'est que ce qui est hors de nous n'est pas en soi différent de ce que nous trouvons en nous"(207). This view is already wider in scope than Marcel's early doctrine of a relation of particular significance between the individual and the empirical reality which comprises his personal situation. It points the way to the later view according to which, at moments of conscious mental and spiritual concentration, certain events are felt to be integral to oneself, so that the distinction between inside and outside tends to lose its meaning.

A duality of which Coleridge was aware is that of the idea and the law, the idea as such, in unrealised form, being represented by the human reason. The duality vanishes in that "par sa co-existence avec la loi", the idea itself becomes a law; a law, however, which contains within itself its own principle. The idea in this process does not cease to be itself; it does not become an object for a subject

but an object which is its own subject.[1] Viewed in different terms this duality is that existing in man of his "entendement" and his reason; he is nature and spirit. The duality is resolved in the essential metaphysical fact of the "double destiny" of the idea, the spirit side. In one sense the idea, taking on another identity, that of nature, remains idea. In another sense, inasmuch as it becomes nature, it will remain nature. Marcel expresses the view that no similar theory is to be found in Schelling. In the lecture on the Philosophy of Nature in the Münchener Vorlesungen(1827), however, Schelling expounds his theory that the subject can no longer be thought of as pure subject but as wishing to become substance and, in the process of becoming an object, losing nothing of itself but rising to a higher level of subjectivity. This would seem to be closely related. But the essential point, in any case, is that Marcel found in one if not in both the thinkers whom he was studying theories of the correlation of subject and object, mind and matter rather than of their radical duality.

It will perhaps not be out of place here to introduce the subject of phenomenology. While Marcel was studying Coleridge and Schelling and as a young man perhaps unconsciously deriving inspiration from them, Husserl, already a mature thinker, was working out a new means of gaining access to reality in its essence. The method, as is well

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[1] Cf Fragments, p.20: ".....l'idée....se spécifie et se réalise au contact du donné; elle devient loi.....la loi est assimilée au donné qu'elle détermine et traitée elle-même comme donné".

known, consists fundamentally in stripping away the subjective constructions of psychologism and concentrating on concrete experience before the subject-object dualism becomes effective; in revealing the joint function of the noetic, the subjective side and the noematic or objective side. There is a certain kinship of purpose between Husserl and Coleridge and Schelling, when all allowances have been made for the marked differences between the personalities of the three great men and the ages in which they lived. All were concerned to discover the fundamental relationship between consciousness and the world. Was Marcel's conception of the non-contingency of the physical world relative to mind inspired in any way by phenomenology? The idea can, it seems, be ruled out on chronological grounds alone, since Marcel's theory, as we have seen, was taking shape by about 1912. Spiegelberg[1] reveals that Marcel read Husserl's Ideen shortly after publication in 1913 but, on his own profession, made little of that work. Marcel's article Existence et Objectivité, of 1925, is phenomenological in recognising the contribution of the object side in knowledge, but this work, as I.W.Alexander points out,[2] was produced quite independently of Husserlian influence. It was probably noy before the 1930s that Marcel became thoroughly conversant with the intricacies of phenomenology. He recognised the value of the method but was unwilling to abstain from metaphysical inferences or conclusions and in

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1 The Phenomenological Movement
2 The Phenomenological Philosophy in France

his own words passed on to "hyperphenomenology". The essential point, however, is that before becoming acquainted with Husserl's system he knew that of Schelling which, moreover, is more far-reaching in postulating a fundamental identity as well as a difference between subject and object. His notion of the "unity" of the person and his situation would certainly seem to have been nourished by ideas found in Coleridge and Schelling.

In referring to the influence on Coleridge of Wilhelm Schlegel Marcel expounds in some detail a theory of some relevance to the present study which was originated by Schlegel although intimately connected with some of Coleridge's own ideas. In his study of genius in the Dramaturgische Vorlesungen, Schlegel speaks of the relation of form and matter in the hands of the true artist and distinguishes between "mechanical" and "organic" form. Form is mechanical when it is conferred upon given matter by external action, "et cela comme un pur accessoire contingent sans rapport avec la nature interne de cette matière". Organic form, on the other hand, "est innée, elle informe du dedans au dehors et réalise sa détermination....." In art, as in nature, all true forms are organic, i.e. determined by the content of the work of art. "en un mot la forme n'est autre qu'un extérieur significatif, la physionomie parlante de chaque chose qui, sans que rien de contingent vienne la dénaturer, rend un compte exact de son essence cachée"(86, n.1). Without attempting to impose too close an identity, it may be suggested that this idea of

Schlegel's contains some of the essential elements of Marcel's doctrine. The possession of organic form in a work of art corresponds to knowledge of the existence of a non-contingent, significant relationship between an individual being and his empirical situation. Organic form evolves from within. In words already quoted above (Chapter II), Marcel urges that it is for the individual not merely to submit to his own destiny but to shape it in his own way and place his own mark upon it; especially, "le recréer par le dedans".[1]

Writing himself about the "mysterious" activity of the genius, Coleridge conveyed that such a person had to discern in external forms the "already existing", "spiritual" signification they have. His task is to "faire de l'externe l'interne, de l'interne l'externe, à faire de la nature la pensée, et de la pensée la nature". His activity implies the inter-penetration of the conscious and unconscious. He has to effect in himself a synthesis, "cette pénétration de la loi et de la liberté par laquelle la passivité et la direction s'impliquent l'une l'autre, et par laquelle l'esprit est assimilé à la nature et mis à même de la comprendre, puisque la nature implique cette identité". Artistic imitation, in sum, is effective collaboration with universal Life(166-168). As between the subject and the object, between the creative activity of the artist and that of nature, there is more than analogy, there is essential identity - in the absolute(104). Marcel's own theory of artistic or any true creation as inducing some response in material things may well have found some measure of inspiration in Coleridge's theory. He writes of the instrument in

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1 Être et Avoir, I, p.145

the hands of the dedicated musician, the laboratory to the devoted scientist, as matter - but matter "perpétuellement renouvelée d'une création personnelle".

Schelling in the System of Transcendental Idealism has a theory of the artist which does not seem to have been adopted by Coleridge and which is not mentioned in Marcel's study, though Marcel possibly knew of it. Schelling saw something living in the artist which is greater than himself, a power which drives him on to the creation of something infinite and eternal. The artist, unlike other men, has a fate of his own ("ein eigenes, inneres Schicksal"). Marcel possibly had this in mind and drew on it in his own lofty conception of vocation as a response to an appeal which basically is of divine origin.

Marcel mentions in The Mystery of Being[1] his debt to Schelling for having helped him to understand that at the level of creative activity the "opposition" between contingency and necessity must be completely transcended. Schelling's arguments on that subject are not expounded in Marcel's study, though Marcel points out that for Coleridge as for Schelling not only are necessity and free-will reconciled in God(199), but necessity and liberty as concepts have a certain identity, differing only according to the standpoint from which they are viewed; necessity may appear as form and liberty as substance.

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1 vol I, p.136

The necessity in question here is the "superior" conception, higher than that of logical or mathematical necessity(191). Marcel's study later refers to Coleridge's consciousness of a divine principle working in, not on, him and his will(197), and this is closely related to the theory of Schelling's set out in the Transcendental Idealism. The working of a Fate, or Providence, is there postulated which allows freedom of action to individuals but at the same time provides that, independently of human decision, what "has to" come about does so. There is an "absolute synthesis of all action" which, however, is not an object of knowledge but of belief. Man is "Mitdichter seiner Rolle", acting freely according to his own conscience but also participating in a totality of activity in which elements of necessity are contained.[1] Marcel would certainly have weighed Coleridge's and Schelling's theories and would not have overlooked the attraction of a postulation of moral liberty together with a basically non-contingent role for man within the total scheme. He met somewhat similar conceptions in the two American thinkers he was to study and also in the thought of Lavelle. But his idea of human freedom was, and remains, more radical than that of "la nécessité comprise" as in Hegel and Spinoza or in any philosophy of immanence. The idea of a divine plan has no place in his outlook

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1 cf in The Principle of Individuality and Value, p.385, Bosanquet's evocation of The Divine Comedy: actual persons are shown as moving freely and obviously themselves and self-determined; while no less obviously, though merely through a deeper insight into their selves, they are exhibited as elements within an embracing spiritual universe (as present to Dante's imagination)

and he does not countenance the notion of a synthesis of all action throughout the world or universe. Rather than regard men as playing their part in a world plan immanent in the whole, as in Bosanquet's conception, his notion of the goal of the largest possible community of mutual understanding is one to be achieved by conscious, individual effort, in total freedom and in the spirit of love.

CHAPTER IV

MARCEL AND ROYCE

Marcel contributed four articles on the American philosopher Josiah Royce(1855-1916) to the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale in 1917-1918. These were collected together and issued in book form with only minor changes in 1948, with the title La Métaphysique de Royce.

As has been seen, one of the attractions of Coleridge for Marcel was the poet's "mouvement vers le réel", and a similar disposition on the part of Royce probably made a strong appeal to Marcel. Royce was concerned above all with "l'expérience concrète, celle qui est la mienne ou la vôtre, mais qui n'est en aucun cas 'Erfahrung überhaupt'"(55)[1], and his philosophy held the promise of an interpretation of life not in purely theoretical terms but as experienced. His writings reflect a warm love of humanity and of all creation and this also drew Marcel's admiration and sympathy.

Royce's philosophy as defined by Marcel is "un monisme idéaliste concret"(79). As such, like the monisms of Schelling and Bosanquet it could be expected to impart a comfortable feeling of partnership in the universal order. Does Royce's system do this? Does he depict the person as enjoying true individual freedom without which the impression of a non-contingent relation with the absolute would lose its savour? Marcel analyses Royce's arguments very closely and takes particular note of the difficulties encountered, not all of which he thinks are satisfactorily resolved.

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1 References are all to pages in La Métaphysique de Royce unless otherwise indicated.

Royce's world, in Marcel's description, comprises "cette irréductible diversité des êtres et des aspirations qui cependant doit concourir à une harmonie supérieure", "cet infini des développements spirituels qui tous ont un sens, une valeur originale et unique". The prospect is bright. What does Royce have to say about causality and necessity? Does the operation of these principles threaten the reality of human freedom? The answer is reassuring. These ideas, Royce asserts, may not be applied to the whole of reality. He does not depict the relation between God and the world, or between the world and an individual, as that of cause to effect. Marcel, it will be recalled, also decided in his turn that "Il faudrait en finir avec l'idée d'un dieu cause, d'un dieu concentrant en soi toute causalité".[1] In Royce's view, from an absolute standpoint, necessity, causality, determination and all the other forms of relative dependence appear as partial facts within the whole. He speaks of the "superstition that whatever is, is somehow subject to absolutely rigid Necessity", adding that "necessity is only one aspect of the fact world, and the more abstract one - a valid aspect in so far as it serves to make possible Individuality and Freedom".[2] To say that something "must be" is, for Royce, an "external" commentary, and is subordinate to the fact: something "is"(66).

With regard to contingency, Royce does not attack this concept as Bosanquet does. Rather, like Renouvier, he allows it room in his scheme which is not a rigorous monism. For him it is a valuable concept. As Marcel expresses it,

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1 L'Homme Problématique, p.63
2 The World and the Individual, II, p.72

"Royce réserve au tréfond de l'Être un élément de contingence radicale auquel . . . se suspendent toute liberté et toute réalité individuelle"(111).

What is Royce's picture of the situation of a human being in our world? The Arrest(67), the act by which the Absolute selects the present real world from among a number of other possibles which can never now be actualised, includes a number of acts of choice contingent to each other, not mutually determining each other, but of which each corresponds to the conscious will of a person as expressed in his life(78). That these wills are quite independent of each other is re-affirmed in the conception of "une contingence des individus qui ne s'enveloppent pas nécessairement les uns les autres, en tant qu'existences, et qui ne constituent même pas un monde d'essences liées entre elles par des rapports rigides"(90-91). If the relation between beings is thus contingent, what is the relation between them and the physical background to each existence? There is no close parallel in Royce to Marcel's notion of the situation as peculiar to the person, or of a correlation implying mutual infuence. As far as the person is concerned, the external events of his life are contingent in origin in the sense that they are the result of the free action of other persons. "Quant aux peines physiques, aux mauvaises chances de toute nature auxquelles nous sommes en butte sur la terre, ne sont-elles pas la rançon des solidarités infiniment complexes qui lient tout être fini à l'ensemble des êtres . . ."(106-107). The "hard facts", in Royce's phrase quoted by Marcel(58), the innumerable facts which do not seem to correspond to any assignable purposes may in the strict monist view be integrated

into the whole and in the global sense appear related and non-contingent. But to a consciousness such as ours, this has to be a matter of trust. Physical pain, "unlucky" happenings are in fact the very condition of truly spiritual being (107). Ignorance regarding the significance of events taken just in themselves has the virtue of arousing faith or - Marcel uses a favourite word of his own - "disponibilité intérieure", by which we can participate effectively in divine life by achieving in its loftiest form conscious realisation of self(59-60).

It would seem obvious that Marcel was deeply impressed by Royce's view of the interaction of human beings upon each other and the fact that this continual coming together of minds and souls is what confers value on existence. To be open to all such encounters and to experience them in all their variety and richness is indeed "progresser dans l'être"(107).

In his examination of Royce's conception of individuality, Marcel takes first the question of the nature of the absolute. This is unique, finding self-expression in the concrete and diverse reality of the universe by an act of divine will in which no causal process is to be postulated. By the Arrest, the "attentive selection", the Absolute reveals himself as individual, the individual indeed par excellence, in an act of love as well as of wisdom directed towards the individual beings whom he creates and in whom he recognises himself - this again being outside the field of causality but in the sphere of "développement téléologique et immanent"(68).

Royce passes on to the subject of human entities and how individuality may be ascribed to them. What is the principle of individuation? It is fruitless just to attach labels of

space and time, and if one is to break away at all from universal forms the individual must be placed in some relation with other persons already posited. The act by which individuality is created is love, the "exclusive interest" which one devotes to a being or to an object. The resemblance is striking between Royce's line of thought and Marcel's theory of 1913 whereby individuality becomes real in love.[1] But the fundamental problem remains: how can we conceive a relation "intimate" enough between the indivual and the absolute Experience, or God, so that the Experience in containing the individual should not cease to be "l'Unité concrète par excellence" and that the individual for his part should not be deprived of a reality of his own?(60). Individuality can only be defined in terms of value. The person in question cannot be thought of as a rigid entity or a chance mixture of different characteristics; his nature can be defined only in relation to an order willed or chosen; it has to be seen as the entirety of a person's experience regarded as a conscious striving towards a coherent plan of life, the embodiment of his unique ideal, inevitably partial but working towards completeness. Marcel in his early days conceived individuality as conferred by the knowledge of being willed by God. Royce went beyond that position with his insistence that a particular person gains true individuality "en fonction d'un idéal auquel il se consacre"(69). The unity of the individual soul is not conferred from without but by the soul itself: we must possess, or rather create for ourselves, a principle by which we can recognise in the life of the world "that position which

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1 Fragments, p.97

must be, which shall be ourselves"(69).

In the creation of such a principle the will has its vital role to play. Expounding Royce's thought, Marcel writes "C'est une illusion de croire que nous subissons le monde"(46), and this language anticipates a well-known passage in his own Être et Avoir (1933). The more complex and overwhelming this world seems to us, he continues, the greater will be the part played by our "volonté constructive", the "dynamisme interne de l'idée dans la définition du monde". Individuality is enhanced, Royce adds, when we combine our memories and our future intentions with our present; "ce moi élargi, enrichi de mémoire et de finalité" has a sufficient measure of individuality to stand out alongside other realities - other persons, the world of nature and the Absolute.

Marcel proceeds to examine Royce's notion of "cette liaison intime et vivante entre l'Univers et l'Individu" which would certainly constitute a link both non-contingent and spiritual. This will exist in the realm of finality, and being above the sphere of realist conception will allow no role to causation. The key for each individual is to confer upon his life a particular significance which will make him unique; and in Royce's words "whatever is unique is as such not causally explicable".[1] He is to strive to remain different from his fellows, notwithstanding the fact that in the unity of the divine plan he is bound to them. The creation of self is not a leap into the void but is "l'adhésion de tout soi-même à un ordre passionément voulu"(71). This creation of self as a unique being is not however to be understood as a form

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1 The World and the Individual, I, p.467

of isolation from the whole. It is only in his relation with the whole, the universe, that the individual's fullness and total significiance are manifested. As will be seen in Chapter VI, Lavelle insists similarly on separation from the All in the selection of a role but on "reintegration" within the All in fulfilment of the role.

The basic position, Royce established, is that "l'individu est contingent, il n'a pas besoin d'être, mais il est". The individual however achieves reality and significance through freely consented participation in the universal order. Royce subscribed to the notion which has already been noted in Coleridge and Marcel himself, that the individual is free but only because he is in God who himself is free(72). The individual's liberty is a part of the divine liberty; and any individual experience is identically a part of the divine experience; it is not analogous, but is that experience. The *plan* of any given individual is identically a part of the universal plan attentively chosen by God. It would be incorrect to say that God created me, for example, as I am, since there is no question of a causal relation which would imply my own non-individuality. On the contrary, between God and me, between God and all individuals, there is established "une intime solidarité" - not a logical connexion but "un lien de finalité" so that I can say to God "Si je n'étais pas, ta volonté ne serait pas". If I had not chosen the ideal which is mine, the divine will would be incomplete(73). To the observation that in a monist system all individual reality is necessarily implied within the whole, at least in a teleological sense, Royce replies that it is precisely the "liaison", the "solidarité", "cette solidarité

qui le lie à l'univers" which assures the individual's liberty. For this solidarity is reciprocal. If I, for example, were different, the world would in some way be other than it is and accordingly the universe is no more independent of me than I of it.

The words "liaison" and "solidarity" in Royce seem to anticipate terms used by Marcel himself. But the bonds of which Royce speaks are between individuals and God or the universe as a whole, while Marcel's "corrélation intime" is specifically between the individual thinking mind and the physical world which is its own particular field.

The question of creation by God at a specific moment, or of an act of continuous creation - a problem which Marcel also turned over in his mind - received particular attention from Royce. A passage in The Sources of Religious Insight, not specifically referred to by Marcel, seems to sum up his view on "willing" and creation. "The divine will wills me precisely insofar as it wills that, in each of my individual deeds, I should then and there express my own unique, and in so far free, choice. And to assert, as I do, that the divine will wills all "at once" is not to assert that it wills all at any one moment of time, but only that the divine will is expressed in the totality of its deeds that are done in all moments of time".[1] But a further question is that of God's awareness of the life of the world in time. In Royce's view, God's knowledge embraces the whole temporal world as totum simul(122) and yet God knows each moment in its full richness and full determination by experience and not merely abstractly.

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1 p.160

Marcel, in his examination of Royce's thought, finds difficulty in grasping how that is possible. It is of course not good enough merely to say that the eternal knowledge is different from temporal knowledge without specifying the nature of the difference. It is moreover desirable not to detract from the conception of God by the implication that his "conscience intemporelle" is also in some sense "engagé[e] dans un devenir"(124 The difficulties of conceptualisation of this whole subject are great, but it is of direct relevance to the relationship between God and the individual, and it acquired greater depth for Marcel in writing his study of Royce than it had possessed in the discussion in Part I of the Journal. His further treatment of it in his Conclusion is mentioned towards the end of this chapter.

As a monist, Royce was preoccupied with the problem of the one and the many and sought to reconcile the idea of a universal plan with the contingency of individuals, independent of each other as existences and as essences, not bound by rigid links(90-91). Refusing to countenance any lessening of the true liberty of individuals, Royce propounds a solution which in Marcel's words is both far-reaching and audacious. It suggests that each individual, inasmuch as he works out a unique plan, participates in the total scheme of things as the first term of a system, representative (in Royce's terminology) of nothing other than himself, subsequent to nothing, derived from nothing. By this means it is possible to conceive the individual as coparticipating in the free society which is simultaneously "unité réelle et multiplicité réelle"(91). A non-contingent relation between God and man - not, it must

be noted, between man and his physical surroundings - is here postulated together with genuine individual freedom.

The problem of evil is one which has much preoccupied Marcel and he has frequently criticised practitioners of idealist philosophy for regarding it as an illusion (e.g. p.94). He admires Royce for his admission that evil is real and that that recognition is itself an essential element of spiritual life. Royce's view of the role of evil is that "les maux de la vie . . . sont liés organiquement au reste du glorieux univers"(99), from which one truth immediately stands out: "quand tu souffres, tes souffrances sont les souffrances de Dieu"(100). This was welcomed by Marcel as removing all thought of God as an impassive spectator(100). Royce had already rejected "most categorically"(94) any idea of a dualism between our individual experience as our own and divine thought which would cease to embrace this experience. But what of the question of balancing the evil done in the world by good? An act of reparation for the evil of one individual, Royce asserts, will be performed in perfect freedom by another individual; not in the sense that God has directly "caused" him to do so, which would imply a duality[1] between God and finite individual natures, even though the free action of the committing of evil and the free action of making it good were connected for "une unité de conscience plus haute qui les saisit comme libertés"(110); but rather because of the "solidarité spirituelle" which binds human beings regardless of their

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1 Marcel's favourite adjective for use with the word "dualité" is, as here, "ruineuse".

independence of each other(103). The fact that in an individual life different activities "s'enchaînent et se répondent"(110) makes it more understandable. Marcel here makes one of his much-loved analogies with music - likening these different activities in their mutual relationship to ideas in a symphony which call each other into being and confront each other.

In accordance with Royce's views on necessity set out above it would be wrong to say in this connection "il faut que le péché soit expié". This is a case in which "radical reality" transcends necessity. The reparation is "demanded" by the absolute order - but Marcel fears that this leads to a contradiction between conceptions of the Absolute as "totalement déterminé par soi" and as admitting of contingency(111). A possible solution which Marcel sees is for faith to replace "abstract intellection" and understand the nature of God in a relationship of individual to individual, based on love. The ultimate achievement of metaphysical speculation may be the establishment of "un rapport pratique .....un rapport personnel entre l'Absolu et nous"(112). Royce speaks of entering into relations with a "world life" which requires our fidelity and acts of loyalty towards "the supreme cause"; indeed, to imagine God as not really needing our services would be an act of disloyalty which would place us outside the eternal order. Thus a new and more striking connection between the Absolute and ourselves comes into being. God "ne sera vraiment pour moi que pour autant que je le servirai loyalement. En ce sens il dépend de moi qu'il soit pour moi....."

The concept of the "spiritual community" is now introduced(113). By participation in this (in faith and love, the finite consciousness enjoys real being. But here also a problem arises. The future of the spiritual community is assured, since by definition it is above the accidental happenings of the temporal world. Is there any true sense therefore in which individual beings are under a moral obligation to participate in it? Royce did not succeed, in Marcel's eyes, in reconciling his "finalisme dialectique" with a philosophy of liberty(114).

Some consideration of man's attitude to the natural world - as opposed to his relations with God - will b now be appropriate. Royce's world, as set out in his theory of nature, is a world "où tout communique". "Ce que nous appelons l'évolution ne serait pas autre chose que la constante intercommunication de domaines de vie relativement séparés". A vital part of his theory is that nature does not consist in a single stream of development, a single process. The chances are that minds exist which are far superior to ours and capable of grasping the significance of events which to us seem mere successions. But although extravagant conclusions should not be drawn from what is in fact mere conjecture, "cette façon d'interpréter la nature contribue à developper entre elle et nous une sorte de camaraderie féconde, puisqu'elle nous montre que nous aurions grand tort de nous croire exilés au milieu d'un Univers étranger à toutes nos inspirations"(141). Royce's theory

while avoiding Schelling's concept of identity, helps us to understand the existence of "solidarités intelligibles" between disconnected aspects of reality which cannot be seized by reflection, and hence its value in Marcel's eyes. This "liaison vivante" is to be understood not as an element of dialectic or as an abstraction, but in terms of consciousness and value, as a "circulation spirituelle entre des mondes intérieurs qui s'appellent les uns les autres et se complètent"(142).

In another context, his contrasting of the worlds of description and of appreciation, Royce points out that nature as science teaches us to know it, i.e. by objective description rather than by appreciation, is reduced in status to that of a mere "outil socialement utile". This has the "deplorable" effect of accentuating the dualism between man and nature. Nature has its mechanistic aspects, and these are seized upon by industry and commerce for their own purposes. But they are by no means the only aspects(151). Marcel states approvingly Royce's view that there is every reason to believe that nature is "un monde de vies hiérarchisées, qui communiquent les unes avec les autres et se complètent mutuellement en une synthèse animée où tout est dynamisme et finalité"(152).

From relations between man and nature, Marcel passes in his review of Royce's thought to the latter's view of the individual and other people - "le moi" and "le non-moi social". Royce stresses the point that our interior life of reflection and meditation, our spiritual life in general, is nothing more than "un extrait condensé et un résumé de notre

vie sociale littérale", this not being meant in a dogmatic sense. "C'est parce que la conscience réfléchie reproduit en quelque sorte en les intériorisant les relations et les processus de toute nature qui sont impliqués dans le fait de vivre en société, que le non-moi social primitif finit par faire partie intégrante du moi, par contribuer à lui conférer son caractère même de moi....."(157). It is interesting that Royce seems to dwell exclusively on the influence - the reciprocal influence, it may be assumed - of a person's human entourage upon him. Vital though human relations are for Marcel, as his doctrine of intersubjectivity shows, his conception of situation embraces all the other possible constituents of place, time and circumstance.

Royce devoted a whole book to the philosophy of Loyalty and this describes a further instance of the building up, by will, of non-contingent relationships. Loyalty is the special type of relation established between an individual and the cause he adopts, implying personal freedom in the choice and devotion to the cause and at the same time a subordination of the self. The cause furnishes an "appeal" to the loyal will; the will recognises the appeal without however creating it, as in Marcel's thought a particular situation constitutes an appeal to which the will responds in fulfilment of its sense of vocation. Loyalty is "participation voulue à un ordre supérieur"(164), a recognition of the fact that belonging to a community and undertaking to serve it is the only way of grasping reality and conferring a meaning on life. Clearly there will have to be some criterion of value of the different causes which offer

themselves for adoption. "Une cause est bonne", Royce lays down, "dans la mesure où elle est au service de l'esprit de loyalisme, c'est-à-dire où elle contribue à venir en aide au loyalisme de mes semblables et à le favoriser"(167).[1] The agency which arouses loyalty and directs it appropriately is no less than grace. By actions infused with charity and loyalty, one may serve the super-personal community and help to increase the faith of man in man(167). Royce believed firmly in an active intercommunication of beings, seeing in that "le principe vivant de toute réalité"(168). Marcel of course had a similar belief; his plays show how such intercommunication is frequently lacking and the tragic situations which ensue.

Marcel points out in this connection Royce's debt to his predecessors and especially to Fichte who, Marcel states, had the idea of "practical Destiny" by which "notre moi se définit véritablement, c'est-à-dire la croyance à une alliance de la liberté et de la règle dans un ordre essentiellement voulu". It is true that in The Destiny of Man Fichte speaks of a "spiritual bond between God and all finite rational beings; in fact God himself is this spiritual bond of the rational universe. Let me will, purely and decidedly, my duty and He wills that, in the spiritual world at least, my will shall prosper".[2] What is interesting here is not so much

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1 In Royce's own words, "Your true cause is the spiritual unity of all the world of reasonable beings". (The Sources of Religious Insight, p. 205)

2 P. 298

Royce's debt to Fichte as the fact that Fichte's notion of a spiritual bond between God and thinking beings, with its implication of results possibly also in the practical domain, has affinity with Marcel's own notion of the collaboration of human liberty and grace.

Marcel made interesting remarks in his Journal in 1920[1] about Paderewski and his devotion to the cause of the newly constituted republic of Poland; an instance, he stated, of the Roycean idea of loyalty, although "approfondie". Marcel asserts that because of Paderewski's deep personal identification with the cause, the divine will was for him a real factor and he might legitimately entertain thoughts of whether God wished the new state of Poland to survive. To anyone for whom Poland was not "my Poland" in the same sense, such wondering would be "absurd". But the thorny question arises: "puis-je reconnaître si Dieu aime la cause que je sers?" - and Marcel writes that the notion of universal loyalty, which has undeniable value in the field of ethics, is "foreign" to religion. This conclusion, however, relating specifically to universal loyalty, does not seem to be in contradiction with the earlier remark that "Le règne de la grâce sera donc celui de la puissance et des dons qui sauvent, en suscitant la vie loyale et en lui conférant son orientation"(199). Had any contradiction been implied in the Journal, it may be assumed that Marcel would have drawn attention to it in publishing La Métaphysique de Royce.

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1 Journal Métaphysique, p.264

There is a close connection, Marcel states, between the ethical doctrine of the community and the logical theory of interpretation, invented by Peirce but developed by Royce. Interpretation is a third mode of cognition which goes beyond the dualism of perception and the concept(172); and whereas those modes are purely dyadic, interpretation, being a triadic relation, is in essence social and is represented as the only means of making possible a spiritual community. It is the search for the "invisible city", the "promised land", in Royce's words, in which "we learn to acknowledge the being and inner life of our fellow-men; and to understand the constitution of temporal experience, with its endlessly accumulating sequence of significant deeds".[1] It alone enables us to grasp what is significant, what has authentic reality in life(181-182).

Interpretation is mediation in general, of which the Hegelian dialectic is only a particular expression(181). From the logical angle it furnishes a means of overcoming the antinomy of discursiveness and intuition, and it is in the true, the invisible Church that this solution is to be found "concrètement incarnée". What indeed is the reality of the world but the true interpretation of the problematic situation in which as finite consciousnesses we are placed, Marcel asks. It is necessary to compare at least two ideas, that of actual experience and that of experience as it may be consummated, the duality taking various forms such as the wish and the satisfaction of the wish, appearance and reality. As neither idea can be at the same time judge and party to a judgement, another idea must intervene, to mediate: an interpretation. To enquire

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1 The Problem of Christianity, II, p.160

what is the real world is to seek a valid interpretation of the antithesis between the appearance and the reality(185). If the interpretation itself is a reality, and faithfully expresses the whole of the real, the community of interpretation, i.e. the two antithetic ideas and the mediating idea achieves its purpose. But if the interpreter and the community are not both real, there is no real world(186). Again in Royce's words, the goal is to "win a vision which shall look down upon our own inner warfare, and upon our own former self-estrangements . . . It is not more intuition that we want. It is such interpretation which alone can enlighten and guide and significantly inspire". Such is the way to "the attainment of mastery over life".[1]

Marcel unquestionably recognised the value of Royce's theory of interpretation in the general sense as a means of securing a fuller understanding between human minds and hence of achieving progress towards the ultimate goal of the universal spiritual community in which, by definition, inter-personal relations are non-contingent. What of the interpretation of events in the physical domain? A striking case is discussed in the Journal Métaphysique in 1920, some two years after the publication of Marcel's articles on Royce. A certain pastor, known to Marcel, died in the pulpit immediately after preaching with exceptional fervour. The death could be interpreted as divinely willed, in its "étrange beauté",[2] but at the same time an explanation on purely biological grounds is at least possible and Marcel reflects on the innumerable deaths which occur after protracted and painful illness and which seem to

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1 Problem of Christianity, II, p.203
2 p.231

defy reason. He adheres to his conviction that an event is significant only to the person who experiences it and for those in a state of communion with him, forming a community which may be called a church, perhaps Royce's Invisible Church. The interpretation which the community may place on the event may not be judged by outsiders as simply contingent. This whole discussion is in harmony with what Marcel has to say later (see Chapter II) about meeting the tribulations of life with "l'interprétation créatrice".

In his Conclusion to La Métaphsique de Royce Marcel reverts to the problem of reconciling true personal individuality with the assurance that one is known individually to God as an element in the divine creation. Royce states that God has the same knowledge of me as I have. But as Marcel points out, he considers it in relation to the total meaning of the universe and in that way the knowledge must be qualitatively different from that which I have, since by definition I only know myself imperfectly, and if that were not so I should not be myself. "Cette incapacité d'expliciter la totalité de son contexte sous peine de se détruire comme conscience est la rançon de l'individualité" (216). Marcel thinks that Royce fails to provide a solution to this problem which confers the "satisfaction absolue" demanded by metaphysics.

This question of the precise nature of the relation between man and God, if perhaps the most important, is only one of those to which, in Marcel's view, a rational system of philosophy such as Royce's is unable to offer an adequate solution. In seeking to escape from the antinomies, schemes

are devised which are patently artificial. Marcel believed he had found in Hocking a body of thought more satisfactory in that it is directed "vers une interprétation moins systématique, mais plus fidèle et plus profonde de la vie spirituelle"(224).

Royce's theory of interpretation was a late development of his philosophy and leaves unaffected the main body of his work. While he certainly had an intuition of the spiritual community and the Invisible Church, in which relations between individuals and with God are characterised by warmth and love devoid of all trace of objectivity, the rational basis of what are regarded as his principal works leaves an impression of impersonal, in a sense almost mechanical relations between human beings and the Absolute. Hence, although personal freedom is real from the standpoint of the individual, its effects seem to be absorbed and as it were adjusted within the whole. Royce seems to consider the principle of the totality of the universe as the "force" which, through human agency, sets events in motion. Marcel concerns himself more especially with the individual being and the possibility of related developments within his own particular fragment of the universe, regardless of connection with other events in the context of the whole.

CHAPTER V

MARCEL AND HOCKING

Marcel had no opportunity of knowing Royce personally. He has, however, had two meetings with William Ernest Hocking(1873-1966), both of which strengthened the admiration for this philosopher already aroused by a study of his works. It is characteristic of Marcel's dedication to the cause of philosophical truth that regardless of advancing age he should have made or seized opportunities for personal contact with original thinkers of his time, including figures comparatively little known in Europe, like Hocking, as well as the internationally famous Heidegger and Jaspers.

Marcel has not produced a study of Hocking's philosophy of the dimensions of his Métaphysique de Royce, his essential commentary being the single article published in the Revue Philosophique in 1919. From this and from a reading of Hocking's own main works, however, it is not difficult to discern certain ideas of Hocking's which could not fail to make a deep impression on Marcel. Clearly, Hocking's vigour of expression, his non-academic tone, and his refusal to evade awkward issues appealed strongly. If Marcel was attracted to Royce by that philosopher's interest in the concrete and his genuine love of humanity, he might well have been encouraged to study Hocking initially by the latter's declaration in the Preface to The Meaning of God (1912) of "a general disaffection from the religion of reason and from its philosophical framework, absolute idealism". "Idealism fails because it is unfinished - does not admit into its world-picture enough

real opportunity, real freedom, real individual creativity. Idealism shows no adequate comprehension of the attitude of worship, does not give sufficient credence to the authoritative object . . ." Marcel was among those who already shared in that "disaffection" at the time when Hocking was writing, and all the more so when he issued his article shortly after the end of the first world war and could justifiably say that "toutes les valeurs sont remises en question, et nous ne pourrons plus nous contenter d'un idéalisme paresseux qui dédaigne de se fonder sur une critique de la nature humaine telle qu'elle est". Hocking was particularly consious of the danger of losing contact with the individual in himself and of universalising himself: "To live thus with the universal, the abstract universal of action, and with one's own artificial and dutiful embodiments thereof is the beginning of death".(417-418).[1] It is no wonder that Marcel acknowledges Royce and especially Hocking as his inspiration for truly existential thinking.[2]

While Royce, as has been seen, was concerned primarily with the relationship between God and man, Hocking devoted greater attention to man's attitude to the physical reality in which he lives. He laid down that "the thing now required is a simple thing, a common word, a slight increment of ultimate sincerity somewhere that can reunite our roots with mother earth"(ix). Such a declaration is on a different plane from European philosophy of the time (1912). Hocking continues "it is the ultimate problem of practical religion and indeed of all practical thought, to make reckoning, not with the

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1 references are all to pages in The Meaning of God in Human Experience unless otherwise indicated.

2 Human Dignity, p.2

general principles on which this world is framed and furthered, but with the actual data of fortune, the particular shapes and configurations of happening, as fate or providence pile them up about us and with apparently random distribution". To Marcel such an inquiry undoubtedly held high promise.

To engage Marcel's sympathy and support Hocking must have demonstrated a firm belief in the reality of individual human liberty. By something of a paradox, Hocking bases that belief on his monistic conception of the universe. Whereas Marcel in his scrutiny of Royce's works was at pains to discover how true individuality could be accommodated in a monism, he is not repelled by Hocking's conception for the reason that the latter's "monism of the world is such only as to give meaning to its pluralism"(181). Hocking's views are that "If the world were simply random, there would be no such thing as probability in it, nothing to build a reasonable hope or prospect on"(167). "Monism is at once fixity and freedom from fixity; the only possible condition under which freedom in the world of concrete enterprise can be won"(174). Hocking's monism is perhaps no more than the recognition of the play of necessity in the material world, which Marcel also admits, notably in the Journal Métaphysique, where he reiterates that liberty is involved in the realisation of spirit and that the act of self-creation or self-constitution of spirit is possible only "à condition de reconnaître un monde de la nécessité"; or "par la liaison à un monde d'extériorité où tout est explicable, tout est causé".[1] At the same time it has to be noted that Marcel does not credit Hocking's moderate monism with

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1 Journal, pp.103,119

providing the sort of non-contingent relation between mind and empirical reality which was his own particular concern.

Although as Hocking recognises his total conception offers fewer chances for heroism than an alternative system - "not enough leeway for risk"(166) - it makes freedom possible and not merely as a principle; there is abundant scope for the exercise of freedom of decision and action. "The world is infinitely unfinished", Hocking asserts, and adds "There is no fixed quantity of evil fortune mapped out in advance to everyone; no fated "peck of dirt" for each one to eat; there is room for just such hastening or retarding the one process as there seems, in our consciousness of freedom, to be"(181). Within the unity of conscious processes the contribution which we can make will assert our true individuality. All is not predetermined. "There are certainly some regions of reality which are unfinished"(140), and the individual will is endowed with liberty specifically "to give character" to such regions.

However the exercise of liberty in any truly elevated activity is "strangely united with an opposite quality, necessity"(29). Our own wisdom is strengthened if not shaped by something not emanating from ourselves and the feeling is one of "partnership with some invisible source of wisdom"(29). Hocking proceeded to work out a Theory of Participation in his later work Human Nature and its Remaking of 1918 which Marcel studied although his own Theory of Participation, as noted above, took form in 1913-1914. What is the substance of Hocking's thought on the subject? In the first place, unlike Marcel's early theory, it is explicitly Christian, and involves

consideration of the notion of salvation. In brief, Hocking saw a vicious circle in the human situation in that our wills aspire to adopt "the attitude of creative artist toward our milieu", but that, for human beings, is presumption. Stated differently, "to be disposed to save others we must be saved ourselves; yet to be saved ourselves we must be disposed to save others".[1] Christianity breaks the logical impasse by postulating the loan to the human individual of the powers required, through participation. Hocking illustrates his meaning by reference to the act of knowledge: what I "take in" of the object on gazing at it is "at that moment an element in my being". One seeks to associate oneself with, to participate in, what is most lofty and most worthy, as far as one is able in "the nature of God", and thereby one comes into possession of new powers. At the ultimate stage " the fact of participation makes it possible to act as gods without presumption".[2] Hocking does not mention grace, at least in this immediate context. Possibly his meaning is that grace is the gift conferred by participation in the divine and inspiration the power derived from participation in what is sublime but on the human level. The acquisition of new powers, the enrichment derived from participation, is the gaining of a new "idea". The idea, in Hocking's sense, which he explains is different from the Platonic conception, is a "quality of an object in so far as it has become a property of a self". Ideas are conceived by Hocking "not as

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1 Human Nature, pp. 408-409
2 Ibid, p.413

eternal patterns but as living processes of osmosis between self and not-self".[1]

Participation, for Hocking, is a spiritual activity by which the individual may equip himself with higher powers and so be the better able to meet the uncertainties and hazards of life as they occur. It does not seem to postulate anything of a non-contingent relation between man and his empirical surroundings though the notion of the mutual influence of a mind and other reality has clear parallels in Marcel's thought.

Hocking spoke of "partnership" in The Meaning of God, as noted above, before the formal presentation of his Theory of Participation in Human Nature. In the earlier work he somewhat tentatively suggests the possibility of "organic union" between this world and "the other world, whatever it is", and indeed of "some actual intercourse between heaven and earth" by virtue of which "the effects of salvation may echo back and be noted in moral advancement, economic welfare and the success of armies"(6). Marcel must have pondered this striking sentence. He believes that in the transcending of merely spatial categories the beloved dead are present to us in some real sense. He believes also in the collaboration, in very special circumstances, of natural determinism and the human will; but would resist the temptation to suggest that any such explicit results might ensue, especially in the physical domain.

In the Preface to The Meaning of God Hocking declares

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1 Human Nature, p. 410 n.

that the fundamental attitude appropriate to true religion as well as to human dignity, is a "deference to what is given, not makable....." - a view which Péguy for one would have endorsed warmly and which is of course fully shared by Marcel. "We are most creative when we first accept objective fact", Hocking further states in this Preface, offering some illustration later: "Pleasure is evidently a mode of being aware of the world.....Any object or task strenuously attended to begins to glow with some heat of value after a while; there is something like spontaneous generation of values under the focus of attention.....In some way then value is conferred upon the object by that with which we can meet it"(128). This extract is interesting on two counts. Hocking's "pleasure" is akin to the fundamental experience which Marcel calls gaudium essendi and which, he points out, the existentialist philosophies of "angoisse" arbitrarily ignore.[1] Secondly, the "enriching" of objects by human attention is in line with Marcel's intuition of a reality beyond the rigid barriers raised by conceptual thinking. Is not this his "échange créateur" between the individual and the place where he lives, which he knows and loves and in whose life he shares physically and spiritually?

Hocking's philosophy not only postulates the existence of human freedom and scope for its exercise but tackles the problem of the attitude to events caused directly by the free action of other individuals and of happenings which to finite consciousnesses are inexplicable. "That which chiefly marks the religious soul", Hocking roundly declares(28), "is

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1 Pour une Sagesse Tragique, p. 73

a fearless and original valuation of things". As all in the world is not predetermined, the unexpected and the dire may supervene at any moment and only by a courageous confrontation can the religious soul avoid despair. "Religion must make men tingle.....with the sense of an infinite hazard .....the heavenly city to be gained or lost by the use of freedom. The historic contingencies are to be accepted in all their force"(xiv). Hocking's rich and vivid language matches his confidence in the potential strength and resolutiom of the individual human mind. The religious soul, he goes on, "behaves as if no present experience could utterly oppress it, as if indeed all circumstance brought by history to its share might be received with respect, almost with deference as significant and right, not accidental". The individual, even the religious soul, would explicitly reject any suggestion that the circumstances and events of his life were non-contingent in the senses of being specially apportioned to him by a higher power. It is desirable, however, to be able to feel that the empirical reality of one's existence is not a purely chance assembly, and this attitude can be instilled by an effort of the will. As shown in Chapter II, Marcel ceased to comfort himself with the thought that his circumstances were specially given by God and was content to act "as if" that were so. His sense of the non-contingency of his circumstances was preserved by his notion of the unity of the individual and his situation. Does Hocking share the latter view?

Each individual, Hocking considers, must form his own

conception of reality, such as to be able to accommodate every fresh event which may occur. It is necessary to take into account not only "everything I may possibly encounter in the chances of fortune", but what destiny "may have thrust upon others"(218). Each individual must for example have his own grasp of how evil can be brought into the conception of the whole without being accepted as a "finality". There will be constant conflict between the conception, or idea, and circumstances, and each will "modify the other" until the idea of reality has room for all circumstances (133). Hocking reiterates this essential point that "experience.....is an interplay between an active self and an active External Reality"(285), or expressed differently, "The whole life of knowledge can best be understood, I believe, as an intercourse between the self and an independent reality" (559).The "outer reality" - nature - is "essentially creative in its constant action..... - creative of me"(286). Hocking is not merely stating here the uncontested fact of the effect of environment on the person; he posits a reciprocal action. "My own independent activity in making experience what it is may be fairly estimated by that force of expectant imagination with which I meet and place the materials that sensation offers me"(285). His thesis is that as the individual assimilates experience, he increasingly finds the vision and the resolution to induce subsequent experience to take on form in some degree consonant with the pattern of his own will, although it is to be noted that this is meant in a causal sense. What is the relation between this

and Royce's theories ofloyalty and interpretation? There are differences which seem to lie chiefly in the purpose of those activities. Hocking's aim is to be able to face the blows of fate however calamitous with more than equanimity - with a positive feeling of mastery. For Royce the supreme objective was recognition of the spiritual community as alone able to confer a sense on the individual's life.[1]

Hocking accords to the individual will an essential role in the formulation by the individual of his own view of the scheme of things. "In its nature our whole environment of metaphysical reality is no independent fact, passively received, but a determination of our own absolute will"(157). But the emphasis is on experience as a source. The will does not draw on innate ideas; metaphysical being is a matter of experience, not purely an aspiration. "It is on the spur of experience that our wills adopt their aims and their deepest meanings". In Hocking's view the ideal reflects independent reality. "In the order of existence we are first passive and then active: though no analysis can separate our passivity from our activity"(161). Marcel has his own observation on this in a chapter of which the title alone is a clarion call: "Solipsism surmounted". "My reading of The Meaning of God", Marcel writes, "was to show me once and for all that it is actually in experience, grasped at its centre, that we find the means of transcending that experience, and not at all, as I had believed for too long, in going outside it and appealing to a set of a priori principles

1 La Métaphysique de Royce, p. 165

principles".[1]

The fundamental optimism which characterises Hocking's philosophy embraces the belief that "the real is the good and the good the real par excellence". "Everyone must fall back at last on the vis medicatrix naturae when working out his destiny, making mute appeal to this proposition"(177). With this ultimate recourse and by maintaining a state of what Marcel calls "disponibilité" towards the rest of creation, the individual can take all the hazards of life in his stride. By a proportionate effort of mind and will, an unshakable "poise of mind"(218) and true happiness may be attained; such goals are certainly not beyond human reach.

"One must be able to approve the world as it is", Hocking declares. But this will be easier at some times and in some circumstances than others. Hocking does not disregard the "grim and menacing aspect of reality . . . which events may at any time uncover . . . The merciless processes of nature, of disease and death, of fate generally . . ." or in other words situations or happenings which the individual might revolt against seeking to fit into his personal picture of reality. He may momentarily be led to despair. But "despair ends by calling out a certain touch of resentment - resentment having a tinge of self-assertion in it, even of moral requirement directed against reality. Such a being as I, by virtue of this very power of realising my situation, by virtue of my whole-idea and my self-consciousness, has some claim to urge upon the reality that surrounds me, threatening; the reality which, after all has brought me forth. Though by the

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1 Essays in honour of W.E.Hocking

slightest movement of this deep-lying sense of right, one does, in effect, demand justice of his creator . . ."(145-146). This eloquent argument is given a certain logical cogency by Hocking's monism, though no such claim is in fact made. Hocking then goes on to suggest that it is "at least possible that some deeper faculty fundamental to both idea and feeling is . . . giving laws to reality itself . . ." And he invokes: "the loyal determination and resolve which sees the world as it is capable of becoming and commits its fortunes to the effort to make real what it thus sees"(148). There is striking contrast between Hocking's and Marcel's reactions to the idea of "épreuve". Hocking, by his attitude of vigorous resentment permits the dire event to retain its contingent character. He does not seek to integrate it into the course of his existence and so negate its chance appearance. His feelings in this context are somewhat too exigent to have much kinship with Marcel's conception of hope, but at bottom there is an appeal, as with Marcel, to some connection between mind and reality which may conduce to the restoration, as it were, of a more perfect equilibrium in the universal scheme.

Although Hocking has spoken of the individual's power freely to shape "unfinished regions of reality"; and in the passage immediately above he stakes a moral claim in respect of specially grim occurrences, postulating a certain effective power of the individual, he deals in a later section of The Meaning of God with "the authority of facts". "The reality is that which, in knowing, I cannot change, that which corrects my errors, and that which determines how error shall be corrected. My objects as they come to me in history are my fate". "My attitude to reality as it

particularly is (except for my will that there be a particular reality) is not one of constructive willing, but one of refusing to reject; and I continue to refuse to reject, that is, to hope' or to 'believe', in part because I know the ontological relation between my will and the will of the whole"(571-572). Hocking here explicitly falls back on his monism. There is no contradiction in his thinking: one may draw on the will in creating one's idea of reality; and one may affect some aspects of reality. But there are other aspects which are not subject directly to the creative activity of our wills but in the context of which a spiritual activity such as hope may come into play. As in Marcel's philosophy, the notion of hope demands belief in the efficacy of powers superior to the human.

The culmination of Hocking's thought in The Meaning of God on the individual's attitude to the reality confronting him is his doctrine of the "prophetic consciousness". Hocking describes the stoical position - recognition of the in-ability to affect external events, combined with the ability to exercise control of the influence of external events on the mind - and states that it is now generally regarded as inadequate. Other principles in which the world has taken refuge - altruism, or vicarious happiness - also fall short of our true requirements. "In short", Hocking says, "no man can be happy.....without a conscious control of his own fortune; without a fundamental and necessary success of his own in dealing with the world of objects beyond him. This.....demands what both altruism and stoicism have assumed to be impossible, a power over facts

even in the midst of our finite circumstances". The individual legitimately insists on being totally responsible, in omniscience and in omnipotence for "some fragment, however minute, of the historical work of the universe". "Cette connaissance de la valeur historique de mon acte, Marcel writes in his article on Hocking, "de son insertion réelle dans le cours du monde est ce que Hocking appelle la conscience prophétique. Si une semblable conscience est impossible, il faut reconnaître que le monde se réduit au règne du hasard, qu'il est imperméable et en dernière analyse hostile à l'esprit....."

The mention of chance leads Hocking to explain that although scientific discoveries and their application, and legislation, "may banish luck gradually to these borders [of the universe], luck [illegible] returns to operate in human life - "distributed, perhaps, in its incidence, yet none the less menacing and vast". Hazard has not been overcome. But to be forced to acknowledge the ultimate power of chance, or luck, would be intolerable. "It is the last fruit of religion to produce, or approximate, a prophetic consciousness, that is to say, a natural, historical consciousness..... capable of seeing the divinity of its own present fact and acting upon it. It is the work of faith to face the bulk and detailed circumstance of nature, banish its luck, remove its mountains"(515). Faith is vital here for unless we can believe in some "other control than our own" in the ultimate stages of the creation and ordering of the world, "there is no such thing as absolute certainty of historic

action". "Without the cooperation of an environment not less than infinite, the best prophet comes at last to zero..." (516)

Prophetic ambition is undoubtedly beset with difficulties. Whereas nature is a "single order, persistent, invariably faithful to its own principles.....", the human world lacks these qualities. The prophetic mind must therefore as it were impose on the world of free individuals "an order, unity and inflexibility of purpose like that of nature"(517). "It must find in the current of history a unity corresponding to the unity of the physical universe, or else it must create it". Not only is that possible, but inasmuch as the activity is religious, it will also be "socially contagious". Hocking lists among the most contagious of all attitudes "the practical attitude towards facts which comes out of worship:....enthusiasm for suffering, conscious superiority to hostile facts....knowledge of their absolute illusoriness so far as they pretend finality, - in a word the practical certitude of the prophet. When religion has thus acquired a ....contemptus mundi", it "begins to be potent within this same world of facts...." "The prophetic attitude begins at once to change facts, to make differences, to do work"(518). "Every prophetic will is something of an environment for every other; as the group widens and pervades human life with its principle, it becomes, as an environment, more adequate to its task, and may reach complete adequacy"(519). There is perhaps something of Hocking's "practical attitude towards facts" and "practical certitude of the prophet" in Marcel's comparatively recent notion(1943) of "animer le monde", of being able to recognise

and identify oneself withthose situations ("ces occasions fécondantes") which are like "autant de prises sur le courant inépuisable qui traverse notre univers".[1]

In sum, by prophecy, or by an enlightened understanding of human experience, one may foresee in some measure, however small, the course of one's future; and with the further help of faith in the underlying principles which govern the earth, meet the future in full knowledge and security of mind with consciousness of total responsibility for the particular fragment of history in question. Marcel in his article notes especially Hocking's remark that man can be fully happy even in defeat if he has foreseen the events and if he meets them not as Napolean going to his island but as Socrates embracing death.

Like Bergson, Hocking urges men to live consciously and not dream through their existences. Most people are "incredulous of the distant contingency, incredulous therefore of the present moment". There is much evil in the world, especially in the form of "meaningless accident", or contingency, and it is man's original sin not to be roused by this but instead to be "benumbed"(515). Hocking's message is that man can achieve some mastery of life through the power of his will, and as Marcel indicates in his article, the term "power" need cause no alarm since it is not man's own property but "lent" expressly to enable him to render his existence significant. The contingencies can be fitted into the coherent total scheme of a life, and by the prophetic consciousness man can prevail over destiny.

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1 Homo Viator, p.193

There are interesting differences between Hocking's and Marcel's positions. Hocking was not disturbed as was Marcel, at least in his early days, by the thought of total unrelatedness between man and his physical environment. His monism assured a certain fundamental relation. As he expresses it in The Meaning of God "every soul of us knows the whole, and feels in his own limbs the thud and impulse of the engines of reality". That accidental events take place is undeniable, but the wise individual has the means to make them appear non-accidental. Contingency to Hocking, signified new events; to Marcel it is equally a person's basic situation in life. If for Marcel the necessary principle is assimilation of the situation, for Hocking it is much more the overcoming of the buffets of fortune. In his commentary on Hocking Marcel draws no comparison between his own thought and Hocking's but notes that Hocking's philosophy "met plus qu'aucune autre l'accent sur la nécessité pour la pensée créatrice de se manifester au plan de l'effort, de l'action historique". The conscious effort is indeed a basic condition for human happiness. Hocking could not be content, as was Royce, Marcel further points out, with reaching an assurance that the good cause would triumph. What for him is essential is the personal share in the triumph.

CHAPTER VI

MARCEL AND LAVELLE

In turning to Louis Lavelle (1883-1951) after Coleridge, Schelling, Royce and Hocking, we come at last to a compatriot and close contemporary of Marcel's. The allusions which Marcel makes to this philosopher indicate that he held him in high respect, though he does not speak of him as he does for example of Jean Wahl, Charles du Bos or Le Senne as a friend. More particularly, he has not written a study of his work, and does not consider him, as he does Hocking, a valuable guide. Nevertheless Marcel could scarcely help feeling a close kinship with a philosopher who was in the opposite camp to the atheists and marxists, who followed the French spiritualist tradition, who avoided the extreme positions of idealism and asserts that the object of God's creatures is not only to be the authors of their destiny but to form a spiritual society. A central feature of Lavelle's philosophy moreover is a theory of participation which Marcel admires as a construction of thought, although he considers it over-systematised and therefore unsatisfactory in the same way as some of Royce's conclusions. This chapter will single out elements in Lavelle's very detailed thought which have a particular bearing on the subject under discussion.

Lavelle's philosophy, like Royce's and Hocking's is a variety of monism. There is "l'Être absolu . . . à qui rien ne peut être extérieur".[1] What are the conditions of existence within the All? In a relatively early work[2] Lavelle reveals

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1 De l'Intimité Spirituelle, p.24
2 La Conscience de Soi, 1933

that he did not believe in a rigorous, mutually exclusive distinction between mind and matter. His views are not dissimilar from those expressed by Marcel in Existence et Objectivité (1925). In the act of knowledge, Lavelle states, the activity is not one-sided; it is not only on the part of the subject. Between the intellect and its object there is a sort of "appel réciproque", the object seeming to offer itself to the intellect in a "mouvement d'amour", to experience the need to "féconder" the intellect, making a gift of itself on condition that it is "desired".[1] Matter resists attempts to force it; but to someone whose approach is "spirituel", it is "une servante docile qui vient d'elle-même répondre à ses voeux". Knowledge is not a question of victory or defeat, but rather "une communion avec le réel".[2] In God the act of knowledge is perfect because it is indistinguishable from the act of creation. On the human level that is not the case, but here, as knowledge becomes more profound, the world becomes more really present to us; not merely as the object of our gaze, but in that it penetrates more deeply into us. Between our consciousness and the real the distinction tends to disappear - not into a rigidly fixed identity but "une vivante communion".[3] With these views Lavelle has laid a foundation on which a theory of relation between mind and the empirical background may be built.

Lavelle carries us a stage further in his review of the age-old but nonetheless real problem of the "opposition" of form and matter. He believes it a mistake to think of the two concepts as heterogeneous. As both originate from the

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1 La Conscience de Soi, p.29
2 ibid, pp.125,34
3 ibid, p.38

same absolute Act there is "parenté et réciprocité" between them, and in participation they express the indivisibility of the absolute Act, form being conceived as the initiative of the participant and matter as the limiting factor. Matter acquires greater diversity, subtlety and richness from actions taken "upon" it. The act of apprehension, far from implying in any sense opposition to matter, achieves in matter its full consummation. Intelligibility is superimposed upon quality. Passiveness, far from being the negation of our activity, is integrally associated, providing it with a "content" and giving it particular concrete existence. Lavelle reiterates that quality "responds" to an act of consciousness; it is not only consciousness which displays activity.[1] These views supplement those outlined above; the principle which they illustrate is generally in harmony with Marcel's thought.

What does Lavelle have to say on the crucial subject of individuality and personal freedom? A fundamental point, he argues, is that we cannot be confused with total Being because we can do no more than participate in it. Lavelle defends himself against potential charges of pantheism by pointing out that in his system the All and the parts are not homogeneous to the extent that the parts are without independence and, in the All, virtually cease to exist.[2] On the contrary the entire concept of parts within the All is conditional upon the ability of the parts to acquire an existence of their own. The experience of birth into the world has as its own counterpart "une insertion de l'activité du moi dans le tout d'une activité où il trouve, dès qu'il en dispose,

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1 De l'Intimité, p.110-111
2 ibid, p.25

la conscience qu'il a de lui-même". Physically I am a part of the world, "mais en tant que moi je n'existe que dans l'acte par lequel je me crée, je participe à une puissance créatrice . . ." [1]

In Lavelle's thought, the freedom of each being is demonstrated by his ability to consent to be, to choose to exist in full consciousness, to fulfil a personal role within total existence. This act of consent is always "un premier commencement, c'est-à-dire un témoignage de sa liberté". It is at the same time participation in the absolute.[2] The most perfect being does not contain the less perfect beings in the way in which the largest thing contains the smaller things. Spirits do not obey the same laws as things. God's will is to "susciter . . . des libertés comparables à la sienne, douées d'initiative, capables de responsabilité et qui deviennent à leur tour les causes de leur existence en collaborant à l'oeuvre de la création". It is the role of the individual, Lavelle reterates, to be "indivisiblement créateur de lui-même et collaborateur de l'ouvrage entier de l'univers".[3] Participation is "le don d'une possibilité dont l'actualisation nous est laissée".

With regard to the principle of individuation Lavelle recalls the controversy in the past as to whether individuality should be attributed to form or to matter and, for his part, stresses the role of time as the true agent. It is the time in which a person is involved which establishes his real individuality by obliging him to connect up the successive phases of his development. [4]

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1 Du Temps et de l'Éternité, p.17
2 De l'Intimité, p.16
3 De l'Acte, p.48
4 Du Temps, p.87

This is not unrelated to Marcel's plea for patience and respect for "la durée" in his treatment of the subject of hope.

Lavelle describes our regular experience, "notre respiration dans l'être" as a "double mouvement" by which the self separates from, and rejoins, the All. His view is that logically, we cannot ascribe existence to the self unless the existence is in some degree separate. But equally, this existence can only have reality if it is "solidaire" with "le tout de l'existence". The mode of separation is to "give" oneself a future which one has to fulfil regardless of the form which will be impressed upon it independently of our own vision by the free acts of other individuals. If we do not "take charge" of this future, if we do not participate, we become mere playthings of nature. But by virtue of being a part of the All, we are able to exercise powers which are not our own and which are adequate for the task. This separation from total Being however takes places only to admit reintegration. The possibility which the self actualises, the choice and fulfilment of an individual role, "permet d'inscrire dans l'être du tout un être qui est le sien puisqu'il est son oeuvre même".[1] Every part of each life, every action, while it may be stamped with individuality, is nevertheless within the All.

Marcel would sympathise with Lavelle's conception of liberty as the ability of each individual to make a "premier commencement". It is related to Royce's conception according to which each person's act may be the first term of a series. But Lavelle's stipulation of the person's "rejoining the All" would, in Marcel's eyes, prejudice this freedom.

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1 Du Temps, p.90

In his treatment of liberty, Lavelle gives full consideration to its correlative, necessity, by which liberty is subjected to the action of the world. Lavelle is far from seeing necessity as a sort of power ruling the world with real existence of its own. In the first place "l'être est supérieur à la nécessité précisément parce qu'il la fonde et qu'il n'y a rien de nécessaire que par rapport à lui".[1] Necessity is no more than an expression of the fact that all the free actions in the world exert some limiting effect on each other in order that all may occur in a specific time relationship.[2] How should necessity be expressed, Lavelle asks,[3] otherwise than by "l'action limitative exercée sur la liberté créatrice par tout ce qui a été, par tout ce que nous avons fait et par l'impossibilité où nous sommes de l'abolir?" The role of necessity is to bind the present to the past, to testify that nothing enters into the present without undergoing the pressure of the past. As pure liberty achieves its end immediately, it does not require time for its exercise; and as absolute necessity does not require time for its demonstration, time when it elapses must represent a compromise between liberty and necessity. As already remarked, time makes possible individuation through liberty in the sense that endless demands are made upon liberty by reality and that liberty has to co-ordinate its own operations with the situation in which it finds itself and with the action of all other liberties.[4] If time is allowed, the pressure of necessity can be relaxed by human liberty.

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1 De l'Être, p.5
2 Philosophic Thought, ed.Farber
3 Du Temps, p.138
4 ibid, p.98

Fatalism is described as pure illusion. The future is an open and multiple possibility. No-one can be certain what form circumstances may take or what free actions may be performed. "Il n'y a pour nous d'autre nécessité que l'accompli".[1]

To illustrate the reality of liberty in his scheme of thought, Lavelle observes that the child does not ask to be born, and in its earliest life is the plaything of its environment. But as it grows up space and time, which at first were "les chemins de la nécessité" become the way of liberty. "Il suspend peu à peu la fatalité qui le pressait de toutes parts, pour prescrire au monde un ordre nouveau dont il est le créateur et l'arbitre".[2]

Lavelle expounds in La Présence Totale "la loi universelle de compensation". The notion is integral to his monist conception and has close affinity with some of Royce's thought. The essence of compensation in Lavelle's scheme is to express the "principle of justice" which, similar to determinism in the phenomenal world, requires at each moment the maintenance of a harmony between all the particular forms of "l'être réalisé"; which compels us, "en inscrivant notre propre figure dans la trame de l'univers" to modify the shape of the entire universe; which forbids us any "recommencement" but nevertheless makes us perceive in each of our acts "un retentissement infini" - such that no acts are lost, no merit is without effect somewhere and that there is no fault which does not demand redressing somewhere, even if the connection between the fault and its redressing is not known. The purpose of the law of compensation is to safeguard the totality of being, its perfect

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1 Du Temps, pp.269-270
2 D l'Intimité, p.195

indivisibility.[1] Under this "loi merveilleuse de compensation", Lavelle claims, individuals are helped and in a sense obliged to discover and work out their own particular destinies. Shortcomings in participation on the part of some individuals are made good by others, "car rien ne peut manquer au tout". But, "il dépend de nous qu'elles le soient plus tôt ou plus tard, que ce soit grâce à nous ou sans nous".[2] Hocking, it will be recalled, had expressed as his view that "there is room for just such hastening or retarding the one process as there seems, in our consciousness of freedom, to be".[3] Lavelle's words are an invitation to us to play an active part in life (mentally, of course, and not necessarily physically) - to consent to be - and to perform all actions of consequence with due deliberation in the certain knowledge that however limited their apparent scope, they will have some essential place in the universal scheme. Within the whole, as a whole, the question of contingency does not arise.

Marcel would certainly support Lavelle in the latter's effort to present necessity as a factor less oppressive and menacing than it appeared to nineteenth century minds. The theory of compensation, however, despite its obvious attraction, depicts the universe as more tightly organised than in Marcel's view. Like the movement "in and out" of the All, it appears to prescribe too closely the scope of the individual's action and hence limits his true freedom.

In his theory of participation Lavelle postulates a relationship between man and the absolute which, as seen from the human standpoint is personal and non-contingent. But what

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1 La Présence Totale, pp.18,19
2 ibid, section V
3 Meaning of God, p.181

of the relation as seen from the opposite angle - between the absolute and his creatures? Marcel sees no escape from certain specific dangers in a system in which "les catégories de totalité et d'univers restent au sommet de la métaphysique".[1] For, as he points out in the Conclusion to his study of Royce, either God takes in only "l'ordre global", and human joys and sorrows are unknown to him in their individual detail; or, to take the other extreme, God is too close to us for this conception to accord with the attitude of transcendence which our faith ardently demands; or a compromise is attempted, which would inevitably result in a system too rigid and too obviously contrived. A reviewer of De l'Acte had similar misgivings, wondering whether the "Acte Pur" in Lavelle's system, like the God of Aristotle, "garde son cours indépendant et solitaire, qui se suffit à lui-meme et ignore ce monde qu'il appelle à l'être".[2] Marcel for his part considers it vital from the metaphysical angle that the absolute should not be conceived as contemplating the universe in its totality, but as apprehending it "d'une façon partielle et latérale".[3] His desire for, and his postulation of, a non-contingent role between God and man as well as between man and God could not be more clearly expressed. To quote again from his Conclusion on Royce, philosophy must, for him, expressly recognise an order of freedom and love (the emphasis on love is so much stronger in Marcel than in Lavelle) "où les rapports d'être à être, loin de s'intégrer en un système rationnel unique.....demeureraient les expressions d'individualités solidaires et distinctes qui participent à Dieu dans la mesure même où elles croient en lui".[4]

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1 La Métaphysique de Royce, p.223
2 Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, 1938 vol, pp.2-3
3 Philosophie Concrète, Introduction, p. 10
4 La Métaphysique de Royce, p.224

Lavelle does not dwell on inequalities in men's physical situations, but implicitly recognises the existence of such differences when he enjoins us to accept the world as it is.[1] The empirically given is contingent to the eyes of the individual, and may have its grim aspects, though in the wider perspective it is not wholly contingent inasmuch as all actions are integral parts of the great pattern of the universe and, as seen above, compensate each other. This understanding, Lavelle asserts, "nous empêche de considérer le donné comme un scandale fortuit qu'il s'agirait pour nous de réduire, puisqu'il n'est pas hétérogène à l'acte [pur] lui-meme . . ."[2] Moreover the whole aspect which the given will assume depends on the way in which we ourselves confront it and react. The empirical world is "une donnée dont la figure est mobile et toujours corrélative des actes que nous faisons".[3] The objects which fill the world of our reflection are the correlatives of our acts of thought and will which endow each of them with new significance and reveal in them new tasks for us to perform.[4] The entire complex of our character, the circumstances, time and place of our birth and subsequent life, constitues so many calls to which we respond in our individual manner and thereby fulfil a vocation which is exclusively ours.[5] It is for us not to abandon our lives to nature but by utilising nature to confer upon them some spiritual significance.

Inequalities in the distribution of natural gifts among individuals are specifically mentioned by Lavelle; he deliberately "leaves aside" the question whether there is some mysterious

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1 De l'Acte, p.360
2 ibid, p.289
3 De l'Intimité, p.225
4 ibid, p.42
5 De l'Acte, p.330

compensation, whereas Marcel categorically rules out any such conception. Lavelle takes a view which the layman would perhaps regard as over-optimistic, that the possibilities furnished by nature to a given individual are not determined and circumscribed once for all but can be increased in number, and their value strengthened in that we are perfectly free to discover their "communication" with the totality of the universe.[1] Lavelle's purpose is probably to assert the equal dignity, "en droit" at least, of all individual beings.

Having discussed the "principle" of individuation from the theoretical angle, Lavelle describes the reciprocal "action" between the person and the given which makes both unique in their mutual relationship. The unique character of each conscious individual, distinguishing it from all others, is the effect not only of the situation in which he is placed but also of the perfectly free "choice" which the individual makes of himself and therefore of his vocation in that situation. The "originality" of each individual lies in his power of obtaining unique awareness of the All of the universe, the All revealing itself "sous une perspective unique, privilégiée", i.e. uncovering relations between the parts which the individual alone grasps because he in a sense has devised them.[2] Lavelle speaks later of an"admirable réciprocité entre moi et le monde", the "action" of the world consisting first in providing "une situation unique et privilégiée" and then in "reverberating" in me, responding by a sort of echo to all the actions by which I solicit it.[3] The reciprocity of action exerted and action undergone, Lavelle states elsewhere,[4] is what confers being

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1 De l'Intimité, pp.87-88
2 ibid, p.18
3 ibid, p.92
4 De l'Acte, p.301

upon us and makes us "solidaires" with the universe.

Lavelle's remark about "le donné comme un scandale fortuit" expresses clearly his unwillingness to contemplate the physical world as an accidental concourse of things, unrelated to each other and to conscious beings. His recourse is twofold. It is for individuals by an effort of the will to form their own pictures of the empirical world. There will be strict correlation between minds and the physical reality which constitutes their fields, and this conception of being-in-a-situation has obvious affinity with that of Marcel and Jaspers. Lavelle, however, is able to reconcile himself to "le donné" with the thought that, whatever its aspect, it is there because of the order of the universe and is not to be seen as unconnected with Pure Act. The individual is not to be "defined" only in terms of his empirical situation but of the "vision" of the All which he obtains. Lavelle remains here on philosophical ground whereas for Marcel such contemplation would be a religious activity.

Lavelle is fond of the term "va-et-vient" which he uses in the context of reciprocity between mind and physical reality and in the relation between the absolute and individuals. It corresponds, broadly speaking, to Hocking's "osmosis" and to Marcel's "interaction" and "interplay". Lavelle depicts as the "drama" of existence the double relation between body and mind, the body as contained in the world and the mind as containing the world. One's personality consists in the "va-et-vient" in which greater attention is accorded at one moment to body and at another moment to mind.[1] There is also an uninterrupted "va-et-vient" between mental reflection and the physical world, by

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1 La Conscience, p.4

which all the given is spiritualised in being shown in its role with absolute activity.[1] The deepest spirituality, Lavelle states later, must be a "va-et-vient" which on the one hand enables individuals to recognise within themselves the "acte absolu" from which they proceed, and by which on the other hand the Absolute furnishes individuals with their effective powers.[2]

There is related thought in Lavelle's consideration of the relation between the self and the "non-moi". The role of the self is not to "conquer" and "assimilate" the "non-moi". The Absolute Act is "l'intimité de tout ce qui est". Things, although they limit our activity and separate us from other conscious beings play the parts of witnesses and signs which by their truth and their beauty actualise the powers within us and indeed are the paths leading us to other beings. They have their "parenté avec nous". They and all forms of existence in the world constitute a vast system of mediation and are all necessary to each other. Conscious life, far from being an effort of conquest and assimilation, resembles a dialogue with itself, with things, ideas, other persons and with God.[3]

It frequently costs us some mental effort not to look upon the given as "un scandale fortuit". But if we exert ourselves duly we experience an incomparable metaphysical joy in discovering precisely "l'homogénéité entre le monde extérieur à nous et celui que nous portons en nous. Car notre moi qui paraissait jusque-là fugitif et précaire, acquiert désormais la stabilité qui est le caractère de l'être, et du tout, tandis que le tout acquiert l'intimité lar laquelle, au lieu de nous écraser, il ne cesse plus de nous comprendre et de nous répondre"[4]

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1 De l'Intimité, p.42
2 ibid, pp.109-110
3 ibid, pp.30-31
4 ibid, p.134

Lavelle would appear to be close to Marcel in asserting this homogeneity of what is outside and inside ourselves. But the difference between his view and Marcel's is that between the monist and the non-monist. While Lavelle implies the homogeneity of all reality, Marcel is concerned rather with the abolition of the separateness of the individual and those particular parts of reality which are his own. Moreover, while Marcel is certainly open to such metaphysical joy as that of which Lavelle speaks, he would perhaps be more disposed to discover it in some context of personal experience other than the purely mental; and leaving the strictly philosophic field might ascribe it to grace. But is there in fact so great a difference here between the two thinkers? Lavelle wrote in La Conscience de Soi that while the monastic life claims to achieve the highest realisation of spiritual life possible upon earth, we should prefer to the solitude of the cloisters "toutes les rencontres que Dieu met sur notre chemin dans une société plus ouverte où toutes les existences sont mêlées".[1]

It is an essential element of Lavelle's philosophy that there exists in the universe "un ordre qu'il nous appartient d'épouser et non de prescrire".[2] Lavelle stresses more firmly than does Marcel "cette législation universelle et rationnelle" to which we must seek to subject our individual natures; and the "laws of the world" of which we cannot make ourselves masters and which determine the manner in which reality responds to our activities.[3] But these laws are not beyond our reach; they seem to be deducible, Lavelle states, from the very conditions which allow individuals to act freely and in relation

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1 La Conscience, p.166
2 ibid, p.121
3 De l'Acte, p.362

to other freely-acting individuals.[1] The ultimate aim of understanding and accepting the fundamental order is no less than to desire that things should be as they are and that the order between them should be the product of our own minds. The vital act of personal liberty is to substitute for the things themselves the reasons which, in the individual's eyes, make them as they are. This is "la justification du réel".[2] Our sole real metaphysical ambition is to reach the point at which there is no longer any distinction between our being and our doing, between what we desire and what we are - "notre point d'attache avec l'Absolu".[3]

The consent to being which is participation is the acknowledgement and acceptance of the existence of an order beyond the perspective of individuals and which is coherent and significant in its wholeness. The notion of vocation, essential in Marcel's thought, is important also in Lavelle's philosophy. It is not merely a matter of overcoming obstacles in order to enhance our own merits, but something far more subtle. Since the world has a sense, our participation is "voulue" only if we are alive to the responses as well as the calls which the life of the world makes to us, if in fact the world appears to us as "un jeu de correspondances" which it is for us to activate in the exercise of our freedom.[4]

Lavelle is insistent that the course we take in the work of collaboration in the whole creative scheme of the

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1 De l'Acte, p. 221
2 Ibid, p.138
3 De l'Intimité, p. 13
4 De l'Acte, pp. 307-308

universe is not to be arbitrarily chosen. Although as parts of the whole we do not have to follow a path already delineated, there must be "une borne de départ, une disposition du terrain", by which our course may be regulated. An early injunction is to repose sufficient confidence in the order of the universe to believe that the good things which are presented to us without our thinking of them (health, happiness, virtue...) are superior to those that we ourselves have sought and desired.[1] Moreover a sense of fitness of word and deed is needed in a wider context than that of individual existence. It is not sufficient for a thing to be good in itself to justify its being done or expressed; it has to be at the right time and place, "c'est-à-dire qu'elle soit à sa place dans l'univers". The best things become detestable if they are separated from that order to the production and maintenance of which they should contribute. Life, Lavelle continues in La Conscience de Soi, consists in making the best use of time and of the opportunities which time offers. Difficult as it is to harmonise our wishes with the occasions, our destiny is realised in full only by "une admirable rencontre de notre initiative et des événements".[2] Participation, as already stated, involves our accepting the world as it is; but seeking to animate it so that its latent powers can be made to collaborate in the fulfilment of our vocation.[3]

The "admirable" meeting of our initiative and events

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1 La Conscience, p.119
2 Ibid, p. 121
3 De l'Acte, p. 359

has its parallel in the "happy" meeting in us of our freedom and our nature by which we are to some extent determined. The judicious exercise of our freedom can prevent our sinking into identity with nature, and enable us to turn to our own account the natural forces which are unconsciously at work in us.[1]

When contemplating the field of our possible action in the world we may be tempted to take the pessimistic view that the "gap" between our aspirations and a world seemingly "indifferent" and "hostile" is too vast. We should not, however, be despondent for between our capabilities and the empirical reality in which they are to be exercised there exists "une correspondance au moins idéale" and by "interpretation" of a situation we can recognise where our path lies; it depends on us whether harmony or conflict result.[2] It is for us to discern "une certaine proportion" between the powers we have in us and the circumstances which present themselves. Then again, there is the possibility of "harmony" between the order of the world and the vocation proper to us.[3] Once our course is decided we must not only adhere to it but accept also the world's response, which may overwhelm with joy or disappoint us.[4] Lavelle further explains that although the act of consent to being is always "un premier commencement" it is so only for the person carrying out the act. The possibility which

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1 De l'Intimité, p. 84
2 De l'Acte, p. 289
3 Du Temps, p.41
4 De l'Acte, p.386

I seize is dependent on certain situations in which I am involved, which "font corps avec le moi".[1] It is a basic rule of wisdom that participation does not allow a person to create himself "absolutely", as though he were "un esprit pur". He must accept the situation in which he is placed in the world, "qui le fait tel et non pas autre".[2]

Lavelle's assiduous pursuit of "harmony" as illustrated in the preceding and following paragraphs is a remarkable feature of his philosophy. The prudent, measured course which he prescribes contrasts sharply with Hocking's "fearless" attitude and indeed with Marcel's. Lavelle's "justification du réel" is in a sense equivalent to the establishment of a non-contingent relationship between the thinking self and the real. But if the real is "une épreuve", Lavelle's philosophy merely situates it in its relation to the whole, while Marcel, acknowledging its chance origin, seeks to endow it with a meaning which is personal rather than absolute.

Lavelle sets out his view of how being at its "sommet" may be achieved. As seen from one angle, the contact with the "non-moi" mustbe such that the individual may obtain a privileged awareness of the All in which he is placed and which in its turn finds room in him, in his mind, and a revelation of the relations between the parts which, as mentioned above, have no meaning except for him and of which he is, in a sense, the deviser. This unique flash of comprehension which is reached only "à certaines minutes bien-

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1 De l'Intimité, p. 26
2 Du Temps, p. 267

heureuses", and which implies union and as it were identity with the "non-moi", is attained by the effect of attention, grace and love. All other mental states of ours involve a separation of the subject-object type.[1] In true intimacy of being, external events seem no longer to be so many pressing solicitations, but rather responses which are almost expected in advance.[2]

Lavelle's whole conception of spiritual intimacy implies the elimination of contingency. His view of external events appearing as responses seems at first to be an echo of Marcel's theory of non-contingent develppments. The essential difference however is that in Lavelle's thought the events are merely "like" responses whereas in Marcel's there is the conviction that they are possibly related to him.

Considering the matter from a different angle, Lavelle points to the dangers for the self of yielding excessively either to interior impulses or to resignation in the face of "une donnée qui l'arrête". It is vital to achieve a balance; and in the combined activity of attention, grace and love, a summit is reached in which the two forms of passiveness meet and where "l'appel qui m'est adressé vient se confondre avec la réponse qui m'est faite".[3] It is precisely at times when the summit is not attained but is being sought that the individual is most keenly aware of his relation with himself, with things, other beings and God, and reactivates his dialogue with them.

Lavelle discusses this question with particular

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1 De l'Intimité, pp. 18-19
2 De l'Acte, p.134
3 De l'Intimité, p.28

reference to time. Although the Absolute, the "acte pur" requires no "donné", we as finite beings need matter as the object of our activity and we are dependent on that matter and on the response which it makes to our activity and which never wholly conforms to our expectations. No human act is ever perfect or terminated: it takes place in time. It is only at the rarest and happiest minutes of our lives that the "acte" and the "donnée", our activity and the reality at which it is directed, appear to coincide and that the sense of time disappears.[1]

In one of his last writings Lavelle describes what he regards as the true course of human wisdom. It consists in the aspiration towards a form of existence which affords contact with the Absolute at each moment of time and each point of space. To achieve this objective, we have to strive for a completely harmonious relation between our active sides, our wills, and our passive sides or sensibility. More specifically, our activity must seek to become totally spiritual, so that its motives are indistinguishable from its essence, and liberty and necessity are fused in that our actions could not be different from what they are. The summit of wisdom is reached when attention, which itself overcomes the dualism of will and intellect, becomes indistinguishable from love which itself comprises the fusion of will and sensibility. With the aid of true wisdom we see not only what things are but the sense which they possess, especially in relation to our spiritual lives, as they appear as signs or instruments of values.[2]

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1 Du Temps, pp.46-47
2 De l'Intimité, pp.250-255

There is no parallel between Lavelle's notion of the combined working of attention, love and grace and Marcel's idea of the collaboration of the human will, nature and grace. Lavelle prescribes the harmonisation of human activities, the will, intellect and sensibility which, aided by grace, makes possible a perfect understanding of the whole. While Marcel would certainly countenance no derogation from the supreme value of that understanding, his own notion of "tripartite collaboration" involves also physical events which seem mysteriously to cooperate with him. The illumination which grace brings for him is generally of events or changes in time.

CONCLUSION

In the four preceding chapters a brief examination has been made of the ideas concerning contingency of certain thinkers. It will be apparent that although Marcel derived inspiration from Coleridge and Schelling, Royce and Hocking his thought is in no sense modelled on theirs. His doctrine of the non-contingency of the empirically given is more far-reaching than that of Lavelle, his contemporary and a philosopher with whom he shared some fundamental sympathies. Marcel's scheme does not go so far as to embrace the virtual identity of spirit and nature of Romantic vision, though it retains the notion of the correlation of the two. It is influenced by Royce's dynamic insistence upon true individuality, the invitation to each man to make himself different from his fellows even though he is linked to them in the total scheme. Marcel's profound attachment to the notion of an order of human souls which ideally would constitute the universal communion was probably nourished by Royce's idea of the spiritual unity of all as the supreme object of loyalty. Marcel, however, found in Royce no hint of a theory of events happening non-contingently except in the broad terms of universal finality, and that he considered unsatisfying. For him the essence of the doctrine is that the individual should himself be precisely aware that a particular event is related to him personally and is something integrally a part of himself, not to be conceived as outside him - rather than that he should vaguely trust that his activity, mental or physical, is linked to some development affecting persons unknown, isolated perhaps in space and time,

in fulfilment of the immanent plan of the universe. The stress in the monist philosophies is on the whole; in Marcel's thought consideration of the individual is uppermost. In Hocking Marcel noted the repeated allusions to "osmosis" between self and non-self, corresponding to his own notion of reciprocal action between the animate and the inanimate which he had already begun to formulate. Lavelle, developing concurrently with Marcel the idea of being-in-a-situation, stressed the point that the individuality both of a person and of his situation is determined by the mutual relationship. But with individuality thus assured, what in Lavelle's view is the summit of human achievement? - a sudden revelation of the wholeness of the universal scheme, in all its majesty, such as Coleridge obtained from his imaginative insights, though incorporating perhaps a greater contribution on the part of the mind. This privileged vision may be less cold and austere than amor intellectualis dei, but is on the purely spiritual plane. Marcel's tripartite collaboration may manifest itself in events. Hocking, whose monism is not restrictive, advances a vigorous claim for the scope of human achievement: by exercising prophetic consciousness the individual is able to make himself wholly responsible for some portion, however small, of world history. But in Hocking as in Lavelle the call is to accept the situation as it is and by a fearless approach, based on intimate understanding, to make events assume the appearance of being non-accidental. Is there allowance for the actual occurrence of events which superficially seem fortuitous but which on a higher plane of reality are not so? It is true that Hocking appeared to believe in a connection between

his will and the will of the whole by which the shaping of physical developments might be affected; and perhaps there is contained there some vague expression of the idea which Marcel was to elaborate into a doctrine.

The conclusion of this thesis is that Marcel has made a contribution to thought concerning contingency in his theory that, over and above the existence of a significant relation between a person and his empirical situation, events may occur to the individual who is pursuing an elevated vocation or whose mind is concentrated upon some spiritual course, which are not a matter of chance. No physical agency is involved. The events are part of the vocation or the total situation, their coordination lying in the domain of mystery but affording us a glimpse of an order of reality existing on a higher plane. Marcel frequently displays impatience with the barriers separating us from what he regards as the truer reality. As his plays testify, the supreme difficulty is mutual understanding between persons, the almost inevitable creation of a subject-object relationship, such "cloisonnement" being all too often "l'implacable loi de nos expériences", But Marcel has the knowledge, which to him is certain, that "il existe une dimension au sein de laquelle le cloisonnement disparaît".[1] Writing late in life about the "inexhaustible" subject of unexpected meetings, but still recognising that the matter is "peut-être imprécisable" he suggests that it is as if they were brought about "à partir de ce qui se présente à nous comme étant un avenir", and asks whether this notion does

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1 En Chemin, pp. 154-155

not force us to "briser les cadres de la représentation chronologique dont nous restons normalement prisonniers".[1] So much for arbitrary time divisions. To attempt to demonstrate the existence of a category which transcends the logical opposition betwee necessity and contingency is the goal of the doctrine under consideration. Marcel's first instance of such non-contingency is perhaps in his play La Grâce,[2] written in 1911 when he was twenty-one, and it was at the age of seventy-one that he drew the conclusion of the non-contingent nature of his invitations to Aberdeen and Harvard. There appears to be no precise parallel in the thought of the other writers considered. By attempting to express aspects of Marcel's theory in conceptual language it is possible to make the gap dividing it from Lavelle's or Hocking's thought appear very slight or almost non-existent. But any such move would be inappropriate and Marcel's theory should be accepted as far more positive.

Nothing resembling it is to be found in the German philosophers whom Marcel admires, Jaspers and Heidegger. It is a matter of good fortune that we have Marcel's own interpretation of the former's work in the essay Situations chez Karl Jaspers.[3] Marcel points out that Jaspers accepts his basic situation as a whole as contingent; it is his

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1 En Chemin, p. 199

2 The character Gérard having recently refound his faith is nevertheless in a troubled state of mind when he unexpectedly comes into contact with le père André. He is profoundly influenced. To his hard-natured wife the meeting appears accidental, but the wider view which the dramatist suggests is that it was not fortuitous.

3 Included in Essai de Philosophie Concrète, pp. 327-376

"détermination historique", the chance accumulation of the results both of hazard and of absolute necessity, of "dépendance inévitable" on "le donné naturel" and the acts of other peoples wills. In the case of the "situation-limite" he makes the basically contingent situation his own: "mes circonstances et moi, nous ne nous laissons pas réellement séparer. Mon destin cesse de m'être étranger". There is nothing however to suggest the happening of non-fortuitous events. The emphasis is rather on acceptance of what has happened. Similarly, Heidegger's "anticipatory resoluteness" seems to be directed mainly if not entirely to grasping and "taking over" one's own fundamental situation.

An early glimpse of Marcel's meaning is conveyed in the brief Journal[1] entry of 1920 already quoted in which he writes that "les événements s'ordonnent peut-être - au plan où il y a des âmes - par elles, en tant qu'elles sont des âmes....." The short paragraph could be interpreted as meaning that we are to be "defined" in terms of the physical events in our lives; or, more positively, that we may have some connection with the course of events other than that of direct physical cause and effect. It is in the latter sense that it bears interesting resemblance to the concluding remarks in a passage by Merleau-Ponty: "Jamais les hommes n'ont mieux vérifié que le cours des choses est sinueux, qu'il est beaucoup demandé à l'audace, qu'ils sont seuls au monde et seuls l'un devant l'autre. Mais quelquefois, dans l'amour, dans l'action, ils s'accordent entre eux et les événements répondent à leur volonté.

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1 Journal Métaphysique, p.262

Quelquefois il y a cet embrasement, cet éclair, ce moment de victoire . . ." [1] Such falling into place by events happens only "sometimes". But in any case Merleau-Ponty indicates that it is the causal "result" of men's agreeing among themselves. Marcel's notion seems to involve more than good-will among men, vital though that is; the "cooperation" of physical circumstances is postulated.

It must be recognised that some form of "explanation" of Marcel's non-fortuitous developments is offered by psychology. In the case of meetings, the psychologist's opinion is that the person chooses to regard them as non-contingent in order to gratify some personal aspiration or simply to flatter the ego. Marcel would agree that the recognition of an occurrence as non-contingent is a matter exclusively for the individual concerned, but would reject the "explanation" as an arrogant denial of any linkage of minds and the physical world other than in terms of mechanical cause and effect. Modern psychology has the concept of "self-actualizing" people who "are not dependent for their main satisfaction on the real world" but "on their own potentiality and latent resources . . . The independence of environment means a relative stability in the face of hard knocks, blows, deprivations, frustrations and the like". [2] Clearly such people would be well equipped to place an "interprétation créatrice" on accidental misfortunes and so render them non-contingent. That however is not the main issue here. But psychology further informs us that in self-actualization, dichotomies are resolved. "The age-old opposition between heart and head, reason and instinct, or cogni-

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1 Sens et Non-Sens (Le Héros, l'Homme)
2 A.H.Maslow, Motivation and Personality, Chap.12

tion and conation was seen to disappear in healthy people . . ." "The cognitive, the conative and the emotional coalesce into an organismic unity . . ." [1] That there is truth in this conclusion could scarcely be denied. But at the same time Marcel's or Lavelle's "tripartite collaboration" could hardly be regarded as reducible to degrees of mental and physical health.

The subject of contingency has undoubtedly again become a major contemporary preoccupation. As Merleau-Ponty argues, evil is contingent, since there is no principle of human life necessarily driving us to destruction. The good is contingent also; social progress may be effected, "mais à quel prix, par combien de détours?" In the meantime anything could happen and the entire thinking world is alarmed.[2] Jacques Monod's more recent message, based on his scientific research, that "l'homme sait enfin qu'il est seul dans l'immensité indifférente de l'univers d'où il a emergé par hasard",[3] brings no comfort to timid souls.

Marcel's doctrine is not specially related to this new awareness of contingency. He decided for himself as long ago as 1933 that, on the physical plane, "pour chacun de nous à chaque instant le pire est possible"; and he has long had his vision of transcendence. But he does not think on the sociological scale. He is concerned with individuals as such, or at most with small communities in which persons are known and loved individually. He is pessimistic about the present course of the world because in his view the human race is arrogating to itself a position which is more and more completely isolated

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1 A.H.Maslow, Motivation and Personality, Chap.12
2 Signes, pp.303-307
3 Le Hasard et la Nécessité, p.194

from the natural world. As the "points d'attache" become fewer, as life becomes more artificially organised and as the human mind comes to admit into its view only the everyday, worldly level of reality, life loses its essential richness and being loses its density - one symptom of which is the fact that no place is allowed for beneficial happenings recognised as non-contingent. Alquié, writing admittedly in wartime, and deeply aware of the innumerable factors which determine the pattern of events, states that the future never depends entirely on us, on our prudence or on what becomes of our tendencies, but on the course which things take, on the unfolding of a universe "où nous ne sommes pas rois". In short the realisation of our plans requires "le concours de hasards heureux".[1] While no disciple of Marcel's would be likely to wish to read non-contingency into each and every "lucky" occurrence in his life, few would be satisfied with the opposite position implied by Alquié of mankind as dependent on a force of destiny which is indifferent to its aspirations and strivings. Man is not so totally separated from the rest of the universal order. Marcel's doctrine expresses a sincere thinker's conviction that there is a relation between the activities of the human soul and the physical world which is closer than it may visually or conceptually appear, and that this is grounds for satisfaction rather than the reverse.

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1 Le Désir d'Éternité, p.38

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