The Influence of Royce on the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel

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BY

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Contents

Preface.

Most of the work for this thesis was carried out between October 1969 and June 1970, during my final year at St. Chad's College, Durham, prior to ordination. The final writing was resumed after a break of fourteen months due to personal circumstances, and has been completed in the writer's spare-time.

Note should be taken of the fact that quotations are given in English in the text. Where the English translation is my own the French original is given in the footnotes.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Heywood Thomas who has acted throughout as personal supervisor, giving much encouragement and guidance. Thanks are also due to my wife, Cilla, for typing the manuscript.

Darlington,
April 1972.

Abstract.

The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of the influence of the philosophy of Josiah Royce (1855-1916) upon the thought of Gabriel Marcel (1889-). In following the development of Marcel's philosophy it is possible to see how his acquaintance with Royce's philosophy was the intellectual counterpart to the influence on him of his experience as a Red Cross worker during the Great War. Royce's peculiar style of idealism was both the point of contact with Marcel's idealist background and the source of inspiration for his new philosophical condition.

Marcel's main concern was to establish a philosophy of personal relationships which would distinguish personal knowledge from empirical knowledge. He achieved this in his notion of intersubjectivity, with its distinction between I-it relationships and the I-thou encounters. The latter are the realm of all personal values such as fidelity, love and hope.

From an analysis of Marcel's study of Royce, made during the Great War, one can see how Marcel was impressed by Royce, particularly by his theory of interpretation. From a survey of both Marcel's notion of intersubjectivity and Royce's theory of interpretation common aims and interests are clearly seen. But the main influence of Royce's work stems from Royce's theory of triadic relations, which made it possible for Marcel to reinstate the central importance of personal values.

Abbreviations.

B.H.	Being and Having. (Marcel)
E.B.H.D.	The Existential Background of Human Dignity. (Marcel)
H.V.	Homo Viator. (Marcel)
M.A.H.	Men against Humanity. (Marcel)
M.B.	The Mystery of Being - Gifford Lectures. (Marcel)
M.J.	Metaphysical Journal. (Marcel)
P.C.	Problem of Christianity. (Royce)
P.E.	Philosophy of Existence. (Marcel)
P.I.	Presence and Immortality. (Marcel)
P.L.	Philosophy of Loyalty. (Royce)
R.I.	Du Refus à l'Invocation. (Marcel)
R.M.M.	Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale.
W.I.	The World and the Individual - Gifford Lectures. (Royce)

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

A cursory perusal of Marcel's philosophy may lead one to suggest that there is little point in embarking upon such a study as this.. It may appear positively presumptuous to claim that Marcel was indebted to Royce, when there seems to be little evidence to support the contention. In all his philosophical diaries and essays only thirteen references to Royce can be found, and nine of these are to be found in the Metaphysical Journal.. Nor is there any support forthcoming from those scholars who have written about him. All,except one, are silent on this issue. There is no mention of Royce's name in any of the studies by Marcel de Corte (1), Pietro Prini (2), Eduard Sottiaux (3), Roger Troisfontaines (4), John O'Malley (5) and Sam Keen (6). F.H.Heinemann (7), it is true, does suggest that Marcel considered his critique of idealists such as Bradley, Bosanquet and Royce very similar to Kierkegaard's own appraisal of Hegel. Yet Heinemann does not see Royce as in any way an especially significant influence on Marcel's development as a philosopher.

There are of course other pitfalls involved in this exercise. In discussing the influence of one thinker upon another it is very easy to imply that the work of one person has been transferred 'en bloc' by someone else into his own writings. One must never forget that whatever has been adopted has usually been fully integrated into the writer's overall

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1. De Corte (1939) 2. Prini (1953) 3. Sottiaux (1956) 4..Troisfontaines (1953) 5.O'Malley (1966) 6. Keen (1966) 7. Heinemann (1958)

scheme. Therefore, if there are any themes or ideas within Marcel's writings that have been inspired by Josiah Royce, they will have been assimilated into his own philosophy. Again, it is very difficult to assess the extent of such an influence within a philosophy, and Marcel was aware of this himself. Although The Philosophy of Existence was written shortly after Marcel's study of Jaspers' philosophy, John O'Malley points out that Marcel could not tell the extent of Jaspers' influence : " he cannot say how far that work favoured the development of its principal themes." (8) This acts as a warning not to overstate the case for any possible influence of Royce, and to proceed with extreme caution.

Another difficulty arises from the very nature of Marcel's work. In expanding Marcel's philosophy it would be so easy to look for a principle upon which the development of his work proceeded. Marcel himself repeatedly emphasized that this is impossible, for such a philosophical principle would suggest that one's conclusions were reached by preconceived assumptions. Any discussion of how his thought developed must guard against such dangers.

Having admitted at the outset the hazards involved in this study, it is now possible to consider the encouraging arguments for proceeding. Admittedly there are few references to Royce in Marcel, but this is not necessarily an indication of the extent of his influence. Moreover, Marcel did write a series of four articles called La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce and they appeared at an important point in his philosophical career. Surely it may be possible to detect an appreciation by Marcel of the American philosopher.

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8. O'Malley (1966), page 6.

It has already been mentioned that there is one exception to the lack of evidence from commentators, and this one is very significant. In 1930 Jean Wahl produced an article for the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale concerning Marcel's philosophical diaries, Le Journal Métaphysique de Gabriel Marcel. In a footnote he admits that he did not have time to deal with certain very important aspects of Marcel's philosophy. Among the list of topics that he refers to is "the notion of the triadic relationship, inspired by Royce, but in many ways differing from Royce" (9). Wahl at least recognised that Marcel was indebted to Royce, although he did not develop the theme.

Marcel's philosophy cannot be systematised, but it is possible to recognise an underlying harmony. Indeed, O'Malley claimed that the concept of person was just such an important factor in Marcel's work. He was concerned to find a way of understanding the human being as a person that escaped the dangers and failures of empiricism or idealism. Inter-subjectivity became an important principle in his theories. The concept of the triadic relation proved to be crucial in understanding the role of objectivity in connection with human relationships and values, as they are found in the intersubjective bond. In this study we shall seek to show how central these arguments are to understanding Marcel.

In the sentence quoted Jean Wahl adds the proviso that the concept of the triadic relation found in Royce differed from its function in Marcel. Obviously it is not enough to

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9. R.M.M. 37,p.105 : " la conception du rapport triadique, inspirée de Royce, mais assez différente de celle de Royce".

demonstrate that Marcel did read Royce's views and was impressed by them. It is also necessary that one understands just how Marcel made use of Royce for his own purposes. An inquiry into these issues may help towards a grater understanding of Marcel.

After a short summary in the following chapter of Marcel's life, chapter three traces the development of his philosophy from its beginnings through the period when he abandoned idealism to the time when his theory of intersubjectivity came to fruition. After this there follows an examination of La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce, from which it may be possible to ascertain the impression that Royce left upon Marcel. In chapter five the theory of intersubjectivity is surveyed, in an attempt to see how important it was to Marcel. The sixth chapter discusses that part of Royce's work which particularly impressed him. The last chapter summarises how Marcel's theory of intersubjectivity was influenced by the philosophical observations of Josiah Royce.

CHAPTER TWO

The biographical background of Marcel.

In 1889 Gabriel Marcel was born into a middle-class home in Paris. His father held various posts in the Civil Service, and his work brought him into close contact with the cultural world of that time. Having given up Catholicism early in his life Marcel's father was strongly influenced by current philosophical writers such as Taine, Spencer and Renan. In other words, his position was that of a nineteenth century agnostic, in whom the aesthetic had replaced the religious. Gabriel's mother, however, died when he was only four years old, and her place was taken by his aunt, who soon afterwards married his father. Although she was a Protestant convert her only religious allegiance was to a very liberal form of Christianity, in which dogmatic belief was of no importance; religion for her was a matter of strict morality.

Neither aesthetics nor ethics was sufficient for the restless curiosity of young Marcel, as his autobiographical essay in Philosophy of Existence makes quite plain (1). Into the atmosphere of his early background there came another, even more important, influence. He had few visual memories of his deceased mother, but he was always acutely conscious of her abiding presence. This experience presented the young boy with a vivid contrast to the physical presence of his step-mother. This personal awareness within Marcel was to remain with him throughout his life, and it probably was an important factor in the development of his philosophy.

Marcel's experiences of school were no less arid than those of home (2). His father and step-mother had a genuine

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1. P.E. p.82. Much of the material in this chapter is derived from this essay. 2. P.E. p.84

concern for the boy, but neither of their attitudes was able to help him with regard to the experience of his deceased mother. School was equally unhelpful, as it stressed the importance of academic achievement, and paid no heed to his own personal growth. The lycée had little to offer him in comparison to the experiences of his visit to Sweden at the age of eight, when his father was for a short time Minister Plenipotentiary at Stockholm:

> "the Swedish landscape of trees, water and rocks, of which I was to keep a nostalgic memory, symbolised for me, I think, my own sorrowful inward world."(3)

These feelings of dissatisfaction with his own personal life were accompanied by an impatience with the society in which he lived. France, in the days before the Great War, had all the outward appearances of stability, but dullness and drabness characterised its public life. The prevalent dreariness only aggravated Marcel's feelings:

> "I saw the banal and featureless part of Paris in which I lived as an outward expression of a dehumanised colourless world in which greatness and the tragic had no place. In revulsion from such pedestrian surroundings my thought soared towards metaphysics."(4)

As he grew up in these early days his first philosophical attempts were a reaction against his experiences of the dullness of life. Metaphysics was a means of transcending the tensions and dreariness of everyday life.

However, in 1914 the Great War overtook Marcel. He was unable, because of poor health, to enter the army, and so he

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3. P.E. p.84 4. E.B.H.D. p.19

joined the Red Cross, in which he served as an official. He took his place, along with Xavier Léon, at the head of the Information Service; his work involved obtaining news of missing men, and often the news to be reported was the death of the person concerned. Every day he was confronted with visits from the friends and relatives of these missing men.

With the outbreak of war the stability and complacency of France were shattered. Hitherto Marcel had seen his philosophical quest as an attempt to transcend the mundane trivialities of everyday life with all its boredom and ordinariness. But such an aloof standpoint seemed no longer either necessary or justifiable. The idealist biographer, Romain Rolland, as an ardent internationalist, had remained in Switzerland throughout the First World War, and this appeared reprehensible to Marcel (5). These traumatic events seemed to demand his deepest concern, for the disaster that had overtaken mankind called not for his withdrawal but for his commitment. His experiences in the Information Service made it impossible for him to remain detached from such personal tragedy: "so that in the end every index card was to me a heart-rending personal appeal. Nothing,I think, could have immunised me better against the power of effacement possessed by abstract terms which fill the reports of journalists and historians of the war"(6). The effects of these experiences were crucial to the development of Marcel's thought. The contrast between the impersonal information contained in the files and questionnaires of the Information Service and the personal tragedy that each involved led Marcel into new paths of philosophical thought.

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5. E.B.H.D. p.36 6. P.E. p.90

Henceforth he saw his philosophy as a quest to understand the basic experiences of human existence, such as fidelity, faith and love. Areas of concern such as these are very close to religious thought and experience, and Marcel did attempt to establish the validity of religious experience even though he was not at that stage a believer. In 1929 he became a Catholic convert, with the help and encouragement of Charles Dubois and François Mauriac.

His conversion did not alter the course of his philosophy for he had already admitted that a philosophy must take faith and hope into consideration as important facets of human experience. In recent years he has taken an active interest in Moral Rearmament.

Marcel's chief work has been in philosophy, but mention must be made of his other interests - drama and music. Unlike Sartre he did not use his plays as dramatic illustrations of his philosophical theories. Rather, they were particular instances of the complexity of human relationships. They were concerned with the same experiences as his philosophy, but they were independent of any preconceived notions. His dramatic work did anticipate his philosophy, for before the Great War his plays were a means of exploring the depths of human existence. In these early years his father, as an important official in the Beaux-Arts, stimulated in him a love of the arts and this came as a welcome relief from the impersonal educational system. Drama, with its instinctive refusal to ignore the concrete realities of human life, created a tension in the young Marcel between its own concerns and the abstractions of his philosophy. The plays from this early period, Le Quatuor en fa dièze and L'Iconoclaste, published under the title Le Seuil Invisible, explore the

complexities of human relationships. Although they are not based on any philosophical assumptions, they do anticipate a much later philosophical development. At the same time they provided a channel of escape from "the labyrinth into which I had been led by my abstract thinking"(7).

His music is also of some interest. Marcel's early life was one of tensions, and in his plays it is evident that the struggles of different personalities could not be neatly resolved at the end of three acts; human existence cannot be comprehended so easily. But in music it is posssible to find and create a harmony that cannot be found in life or drama.

Marcel's talents and interests are wide and varied. He has never been an 'academic philosopher', and in fact he only held an academic post, teaching philosophy, for a short time. He has earned his living as a free lance writer, editor, critic playwright and lecturer. Perhaps it is this variety of experience that has made Marcel's philosophical writings so fresh and invigorating.

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7. P.E. p.20

CHAPTER THREE

The development of the philosophy of Marcel.

Having been brought up in a family that was familiar with the world of philosophy and literature, Marcel very soon became well acquainted with those writers who enjoyed great favour in France at the end of the nineteenth century. Doubtless his father's interest in philosophy played a very important part in Marcel's development. That interest is characterised in the autobiographical essay where Marcel describes his father as "imbued with the ideas of Taine, Spencer and Renan, his position was that of the late nineteenth century agnostics"(1). The spirit of scientific inquiry dominated the artistic and philosophical life of France at that time. Herbert Spencer's empiricist thought was enjoying great popularity; refusing to grant any significance to what could not be verified scientifically he claimed to eliminate any metaphysical speculation. Positivism, the anti-metaphysical movement, derived from the social philosopher Auguste Comte and recognising only the evidence of facts, had spread into the world of literature. Hippolyte Taine regarded the writer as wholly determined in his creativity by heredity, environment and the time of his writing. The rigour of his theory provided Zola with a philosophy for his own naturalism. Ernest Renan applied a scientific approach to the history of religion, especially in his famous book Histoire des origines du christianisme.

Positivism had enjoyed a great vogue in nineteenth century France, but it did not satisfy the young Marcel.

1.P.E.p.81

Marcel felt his life to be a dull one, and his schooling only served to intensify this feeling. His experience of the presence of his deceased mother created in him a deep yearning to break out of the narrow confines of what he was taught at home and school. He turned to philosophy - not to that of scientific empiricism, but to that of metaphysics, which had asserted itself in France in reaction against the scepticism of positivism.

Both in the philosophical and literary worlds the importance of determinism was replaced by an emphasis upon consciousness and freedom in creative work. As the impetus of this movement increased scholars and writers turned to the great German idealists as a source of inspiration. The works of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer were translated into French, and were widely read. Also the works of English idealists, such as Carlyle, Tennyson and Ruskin, were available. In the literary world the novels of Huysmans and Barrès were a startling contrast to those of Zola, while the symbolist movement shows the same reaction in poetry.

However, it was Henri Bergson (1859-1941) who made the most important attempt to reject the claims of positivism in philosophy. By asserting the superiority of intuition over intellect as a means of apprehending reality, and by his insistence on human freedom from systems of materialistic determinism, Bergson challenged the fundamental assumptions of scientific philosophy. His theories were expounded in Les Données Immédiates de la conscience (1889), Matière et mémoire (1896) and L'Évolution créatrice (1907). The influence of his views on other writers of this period was immense, for they were no longer limited to a static view of psychology, nor to a mechanistic analysis of the world. He gave to philosophy a

spiritual view of the universe that was no longer dominated by positivism and naturalism. The young Marcel came into contact with Bergson's thought at the height of the latter's career, and he admitted that the great philosopher's work presented a refreshing contrast with the rest of contemporary French thought: "apart from Bergson's lectures at the College de France, which I followed with a passionate interest and admiration, the official philosophy of the time was not a great deal more inspiring than the political life."(2)

Bergson was undoubtedly the most significant of French philosophers during Marcel's youth, but there were others. Renouvier was one of them. He was concerned to underline the importance of the human personality in the problem of knowledge. Rejecting the Kantian notion of a "thing in itself" he maintained that knowledge was limited to the scope of the knowing mind. Renouvier understood all knowledge to be personal, as what one knows and believes are personal constructions. In his doctrine of truth and certitude he was neither a subjectivist nor an individualist, but rather, showed affinities with pragmatism. Indeed, William James greatly admired Renouvier and contributed various articles to his Critique philosophique. He had begun his philosophical career as an Hegelian, but soon abandoned Hegel's synthesis of opposites as an impossibility. His final position was the very opposite of that of Hegel; the thesis and antithesis cannot be reconciled for one must be rejected. This law of contradiction became the basis of his philosophy. (3)

The term "pragmatism" was used by another Frenchman, Blondel, to describe the nature of his thought, but he abandoned it when he became acquainted with the work of Peirce

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2. E.B.H.D. p.19

3. Gunn (1922), p. 67
cf. Smith (1964) p. 95

and James, both of whom used the term in a different manner. According to Blondel, man's life is primarily one of action, so philosophy must concern itself with the active life as well as thought. Action cannot be reduced to other factors, certainly not to positive knowledge. But this is no subjectivity, as it is a continual striving beyond oneself, and therefore presupposes a reality beyond.

Another idealist philosopher at that time in France was Léon Brunschwicg. In 1897 he produced a work that displayed considerable Kantian influence, La modalité du Jugement. In his later works Les Étapes de la philosophie mathématique and La vie de l'esprit, he attempted, following Boutroux, to reach an idealism balanced by positivism.

Marcel, in these early days before the Great War, turned to this idealist philosophy, prevalent in France in this period. Maybe this would provide him with the richness of experience denied him by his father's outlook. He tells us at the beginning of his autobiographical essay that he eagerly read the works of post-Kantian philosophers, and Schelling particularly impressed him. However, he grew very suspicious of the systems of Spinoza and Hegel, and the reasons he gives are very interesting:

> "both seemed to me to immerse the reality and the destiny of the individual into an absolute in which they were in danger of becoming lost" (4)

Marcel's schooling was an impersonal one. As has been mentioned earlier, he felt that the educational system was only concerned to test his academic achievement and was not interested in his personal growth. His freedom was impaired

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4. P.E. p.78

and it made a stark contrast with the happier experiences of the personal freedom he enjoyed in Sweden. Marcel's reaction against his education displays the same concern with personal freedom. Whatever weight one attaches to this it is clear from the comment on Hegel and Spinoza that in his philosophical quest his concern was to discover an area of experience where the individual was respected. Obviously empiricism did not fulfil this need, but neither did the Hegelian systems.

Where Hegel was unable to answer his needs, the philosophy of an English idealist proved to be more appealing. He admits that it is difficult to assess the extent of Bradley's influence, but clearly it answered "a fundamental concern already manifest for a number of years - not in my philosophic thinking, but in the working out of my plays"(5). The English idealist movement was known in France, and Taine himself had written a book called L'Idealisme Anglais, although it was primarily concerned with Carlyle. However, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, England was the scene of important philosophical activity. In 1876 Bradley(6) published his Ethical Studies, followed by Principles of Logic in 1883. In the same year Green's Prolegomena to Ethics (7) appeared, and in 1885 Bosanquet's Logic. Bradley's most important work, Appearance and Reality was published in 1893, and Ward's Naturalism and Agnosticism (8) in 1899. Marcel, in his study of idealism, was concerned to find a way of transcending the restrictions of the positivist outlook. For Marcel Hegelian idealism did not do justice to the importance of the person as an individual, and it was this concern that led him to

5. E.B.H.D. p.21
6. M.J. pp.xii,9,41,102,171,190-3,239
7. M.J. p.37
8. M.J. p.231

examine carefully the work of Bradley.

The interpretation of Marcel's philosophical efforts in these early years (approximately 1910-1914) presents formidable difficulties, for it is not easy to detect a clear progression of thought. He describes this early work as a "drilling operation"[8a], for at this stage he was in no way concerned to write a systematic philosophical work. There are tensions in his thought, for, while he was resolved to transcend the empiricist assumptions, he did not wish to forget about the significance of human existence:

> "I was hesitating between an idealism to which I still remained faithful, and the trend of my thought toward transcending this idealism in the direction of an attempt to reinstate existence....."(9)

However, at this stage in his development, Marcel saw the plane of immediate existence, the area of empirical analysis, as incapable of giving any meaning to the world. Philosophy, then, must search for intelligibility on higher planes of being (10). His chief aim was to formulate these levels of philosophical thought, transcending mere empirical interests, while avoiding the pitfalls of abstract subjectivism.

Empiricism sought to establish the area of knowledge that could be verified. Anything that lay outside this field was not true. If an object did not fall within the scope of verification, it did not exist. The philosopher Léon Brunschvicg accepted the intimate connection between truth and verification, and Marcel admitted that he agreed with him(11) Marcel accepted that an object could only be said "to exist"

8a. E.B.H.D. p.22
9. E.B.H.D. pp.29-30 10. M.J. p.1
11. E.B.H.D. p.25

when it lay within the scope of verification. But he staunchly supported the view that there were areas of experience that, falling outside the possibility of scientific observation, did in fact transcend existence.

What were these areas of thought ? Marcel took the notion of "creation" and examined it. According to scientific analysis man is causally determined and conditioned by the biological development that has gone before him. But is this an exhaustive explanation of what man is ? Marcel was critical of the whole idea of causality, seeing it as no more than an abstract rationalisation of a world in process of becoming. Science can discuss observable causes, but it cannot get back to the beginning of the whole creative process. It is impossible to think of time without a beginning, yet such a beginning is unthinkable in empirical terms. The concept of time cannot be restricted to scientific investigation; Marcel called it "the ideality of time"(12). Positivism may retort that, as such questions are unanswerable, therefore they are irrelevant. But the problems of the origin of time and of creation inevitably arise. How is one to demonstrate that such issues are meaningless ? Surely only by " a real employment of pure thought..... and that transcends all positivism"(13).

The demonstration of the origin of time is beyond the scope of empirical verification, and therefore transcends the realm of truth and falsity.

> "We are incapable of not thinking truth about that which exists, but to speak of truth regarding what is outside existence is a contradiction in terms"(14).

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12. M.J. pp.,5,7,9,11-13 13. M.J. p.11 14. M.J. p.29

Metaphysics was an attempt to understand those realms that lay beyond analysis and reductionism, above the plane of what merely exists.

Although Marcel was brought up in a distinctly agnostic milieu, his dissatisfaction with the tedium of life aroused in him an interest in religious experience; doubtless his experience of the "presence" of his deceased mother made an important contribution to this attitude. Surely the claims of religion could not be understood from an empirical standpoint, and lay beyond truth and the realm of existence. As truth could only be found where verification was a possibility, Marcel in his idealist days could not have subscribed to the notion of "religious truth". He did not conceive of his philosophical task as one of establishing factual conditions that would make religious faith possible; this would be to introduce elements of contingency and potentiality into an area that transcends such factors. No scientific treatment is adequate.

> "To posit as possible a science of what is actually an object of faith is not to think faith, but to go back to what faith has left for ever behind it."(15)

Religious thought, belonging to the absolutely unverifiable, transcends the conditions of existence, and as such exceeds the bounds of objectivity. Since it is impossible to decide by objective criteria whether religion is true or false, one cannot talk about God as existing. How is it possible, then, to proclaim religious beliefs ? Certainly not by objective knowledge, but by faith. Now, care must be taken in this case not to see the relationship between faith and knowledge

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15. M.J. p.97

as parallel to that between probability and certainty.

> "Only if it transcends knowledge can faith justify itself - otherwise when we assign existence to God we are realising him in space and time"(16).

It is as misleading to deny the existence of God as it is to affirm it. In agreement with Jules Lagneau and Brunschwicg, Marcel denied the existence of God, but this did not arise out of an atheistic position, but out of a concern to emphasise the transcendental nature of religious faith. For Marcel faith was not an affirmation of the existence of a deity; even as early as his Fragments Philosophiques 1909-14 he had this to say:

> "the problem of the existence of God - a problem completely devoid of metaphysical meaning - could only have occurred to a crude intellectualism imprisoned in empirical modes of thought concerned with contingent objects"(17)

In other words, in Marcel's idealist days his philosophical attempts were concerned with transcending the plane of everyday experience; this was the only area to which existence belonged,as it was the one in which scientific objectivity was possible. Therefore, when he denied the existence of God Marcel was in no way adopting an atheistic position.

> "In this way the negation of the existence of God is converted into an affirmation of the power of God as transcendent as regards all that is empirically possible"(18)

To deny the existence of God is to deny him as an empirical

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16. M.J. p.32 17."Fragments Philosophiques 1909-14",(Louvain, Nauwelaerts,1962),p.93, quoted in E.B.H.D. p.27 18.M.J.p.34

object, while at the same time it is to deny that anything in empirical experience, anything that exists, is incompatible with God.

Although, however, he affirmed the realm of faith as transcending the scope of objectivity, this does not imply that it is merely subjective. If the object of faith is truly transcendent then it must be radically independent of the act of faith. The relation between God and the believer is one of liberty and love, in which the believer is free to accept or reject God. Marcel puts it this way:

> "In other words, between God and me there must be a relation of the kind that love establishes between lovers". (19)

The relationship, being one of love and freedom, defies all objective analysis. Faith and its object cannot be related in the same way as the perceiving subject and the object perceived.

In his early philosophical papers Marcel developed the theory of a notion which he called "participation", and he realised that this thesis made sense of religious faith. Looking back on his youthful work Marcel saw this as an anticipation of his later work.

> "When I refer to that early period of my thought, my attempt to conceive participation as transcending positive knowledge appears as an anticipation of the insight which came to me a little later that existence precisely cannot be reduced to objectivity"(20).

Fundamental to this theory was his recognition of the

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19. M.J. p.58

20. E.B.H.D. p.26

crucial mistake of both idealists and realists who divorce the subject from the object. Their error lay in attempting to treat the object as a separate entity, "without perceiving that the reality in question owes its being to the participation of the one who is thinking it"(21). The believer cannot objectivise the "object" of his faith. Neither the subject nor the object can be separated from the free act of faith. Nor is the act of faith, which is primarily an act of love and freedom, one of judgement. Certainly a lover can judge the person he loves for what he or she actually is, but inasmuch as he loves he goes beyond judgement. In other words, love and faith transcend the limits of objective analysis.

> "The 'Thou shalt not judge' of Christian morality must be viewed as one of the most important metaphysical formulae on earth"(22).

The act of faith and love puts human beings beyond all determination.

Marcel's theory of participation emphasised the bond that exists between those concerned. For instance, the subject of faith cannot be understood when it is dissociated from the object of one's faith. It is misleading to talk of "the object of faith", for it cannot be objectivised. For Marcel God is the reality of faith. Speaking paradoxically he even suggests that one should think in terms of a "realism of the object" and "an idealism of faith". Marcel was concerned not to introduce any objective notion into his view of God as the reality of faith, because this would be to confuse faith and certitude.

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21. "Fragments Philosophiques 1909-14" (op.cit),p.43, quoted in E.B.H.D. p.22

22. M.J. p.64

In these early speculations Marcel faced the question : what is the relationship between "I think" (cogito) and "I believe" ? For, just as the subject of religious faith cannot be objectivised, so the ego within the cogito is unverifiable, for the cogito itself is a free act. Moreover, Marcel realised that there was no objective link between the thinking ego and ego that can be objectively examined; the relation is established by an act of faith, affirming that they are united transcendentally. This dissociation may appear arbitrary, but it is inevitable when one reflects about it. The subjects of belief and the cogito are both transcendentally affirmed, but Marcel saw that they functioned in a different way. The cogito is concerned with the absolute ego, while religious belief sees the subject as closely related to its experience.

> "Through faith I affirm a transcendental foundation for the union of the world and my thought"(23).

In the act of faith and love, as participation, the subject is no abstraction, holding itself aloof from its experiences of reality, nor is God to be isolated from the act of faith.

The theory of participation, with its deep concern to ensure the full significance of faith and love (24), sought to weld the religious act and the reality that it affirmed into an indissoluble transcendental unity, a unity that transcended the realm of existence. Marcel was not concerned to establish a religious philosophy, nor was he concerned to justify religious activity. His aim was to understand the significance of the human person, and any philosophy with this intention must not ignore faith and love. His theory of

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23. M.J. p.45

24. E.B.H.D. p.27

participation, although not intentionally religious, did clarify for him the significance of religion in human experience.

It could be argued that the theory of participation developed during this period reflects the monist theories of Anglo-Saxon philosophers, since it can be shown that this was precisely the time when Marcel was most profoundly influenced by post-Kantian idealism. In the thought of Bradley, for instance, all relations, categories and concepts are seen to be totally inadequate in defining absolute reality. The empiricist categories of "fact" and "particular judgement" are for Bradley mere abstractions. Use of such words as "abstraction" and "mutilation" is often made in order to pour scorn on the attempt to see the world divided into separate, detachable parts. In fact there is only one thing - the world itself. The Absolute is attained through Immediate Experience, by direct contact with things in sensation. There are no relations or feelings, but simply feeling.

> "All is feeling in the sense, not of pleasure or pain, but of a whole given without relations, and given therefore as one with its own pain and pleasure"(25).

The immediacy of the experience of the Absolute suppresses all external relations.

Despite the fact that in his early work Marcel followed post-Kantian idealism, he already had grave misgivings about the work of philosophers belonging to this movement. As early as 1911, in an essay, Marcel faced the problem posed by the

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25. Bradley, F.H. "Collected Essays", p.220-1, quoted by Richard Wollheim (1969), p.128

Hegelian notion of "Absolute Knowledge" and Bradley's "Absolute Experience". His chief aim was to show that neither could be regarded as a self-sufficient whole, the principal mistake being to hypostatise what was really only a requirement of thought. One could not isolate it and regard it as a reality in itself. The theory of participation had its origin in this very observation.(26)

But it was the metaphysical optimism of the idealists that most annoyed Marcel, even at this early stage. He judged their attempt to integrate all "phenomenal appearances" into the absolute as an enterprise strewn with dangers.

> "The logical faith with which a philosopher such as Bradley posits the unity and the transmutation of appearances in the heart of the real is only an appeal to the unintelligible"(27).

Admittedly the original purpose of these diary notes, contained in his Journal, was to prepare for a proposed systematic formulation of his philosophy. But he became increasingly aware that this was impossible, although he admits that it was not until 1923 that he finally gave up the attempt.(28)

But Marcel, in his search for a transcendental philosophy, was still firmly under the influence of post-Kantian idealists such as Bradley. In the first place, Bradley's thesis that the subject of every judgement is ultimate Reality inspired Marcel's view of the universality of the subject of the cogito, although the latter saw that religious affirmations could not be understood on this level. Secondly, Bradley's understanding of the significance of feeling in its

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26. see note 17 above, p18 27. M.J. p.9 28. M.J. p.vii

relation to Absolute Experience clearly appealed to Marcel and was reflected in his discussions of the importance of "sensation" and "the body" in human consciousness. But it is in his treatment of the problem of reality that his affinity with idealism is most clear. Objective analysis belongs to the realm of existence, to the area of appearances, but metaphysical speculation lies beyond this limited sphere; reality can only be understood on a transcendental plane. Reality is not something that can be objectively verified, but involves the subject. The reality of God cannot be separated from the reality of the believer. Bradley's thought of a thing's essence is not that of a natural ingredient which thought unveils, but as something imposed upon it by thought in accordance with its purpose and interest.

> "In brief, the ideality of a thing lies in the view which you take of it"(29).

Although Marcel was not unaware of the dangers of this position, he was in sympathy with such a standpoint;"the idea of an element out of which thought is made seems entirely meaningless" (30).

Nevertheless, despite Marcel's links with idealist philosophy, his misgivings, already alluded to, do anticipate his later rejection of idealism. In Bradley's philosophy all external relations are thought to be illusory, and are only real in the absolute interiority of the One. This view greatly disturbed Marcel.

> "The idea of suppression thus appears as the fundamental constituent condition and monism cannot be defined apart from it"(31).

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29. Bradley,F.H. "Appearance and Reality",p.63, quoted by Richard Wolheim (1969),p.29. 30.M.J. p.91 31. M.J.pp.94-5

The crux of the argument between monism and pluralism hinges on the question of whether juxtaposition has any place in the real.

The possibility of religious belief was ruled out for Marcel by both solipsism(32) and absolutism. In other words, faith, as participating in the reality of God, is impossible where individuals remain isolated from one another, or where the individual is submerged in the being of the Absolute. This concern of Marcel demonstrates how complex and ambiguous was Marcel's position vis-à-vis the idealist standpoint.

> "The monists, I think, are thoroughly in their rights as long as they limit themselves to stating that the more we elevate ourselves in being, the more the purely juxtaposed tends to be eliminated"(33).

Both the strict exteriority of the pluralists and the interiority of the monists are an inadequate basis for understanding the realities of the spiritual life, or for expressing the full reality of God.

In his early theories Marcel saw participation as a process in which external relations, although necessary, are left behind as the individual partakes in the full interiority of the transcendent. Marcel appreciated the profundity of Hegel's observation that the life of the mind is the suppression of exteriority. It is realised "in and beyond exteriority"(34)

Marcel could not agree with the empiricists that knowledge merely reflects the rationality of the world, but neither did he understand it as the product of a priori understanding. The relation between knowledge and the reality

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32. M.J. p.61 33. M.J. p.95 34. M.J. pp.102-3

of the world is more subtle than either alternative. Rather it suggests "the idea of a thought which is discovered in discovering the world and has its life in that very discovery", (35). The options presented by the idealist-realist polarisation of philosophical attitudes would make the reality of the world and of the causal relations purely subjective or else purely objective. This, however, Marcel rejects; for the mind does not create the world, it "discovers" it, and it is only in this discovery that it sees itself as independent. Thought is not something that is there already; its internal content is derived from external reality. That thought is not pre-existent to its content was well appreciated by the English idealists.(36)

The reality of the mind, then, is constituted by its relation to the world of exteriority, in which all can be analysed and explained in causal terms. As the mind transcends this realm, such external causal relations are "interiorised".

> "Now the intelligible, as I pointed out, is defined in relation to the radical elimination of the pure causal"(37).

The more the mind participates in being the more exteriority is interiorised. Intelligibility is constituted as transcending causal existence, outside time and space, but only on condition that it has passed through time and space.

One of the principal concerns of Marcel in these early investigations was to preserve the human subject as subject against all objectivisation. When the individual is involved in participation he cannot be objectivised. Only when the

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35. M.J. p.108 36. M.J. p.113 37. M.J. p.121

subject is reinstated is it possible to understand the nature of human freedom. Objectivity and necessity are limited to the confines of positive knowledge. The notion of participation in being provided Marcel with a principle whereby he was able to escape the reductionism of empiricist philosophy. He saw that the reality of human values lay beyond the plane of mere existence where positive knowledge of truth and falsity was imprisoned.

Looking back on these early philosophical attempts Marcel sees them as dull and unrelated to everyday existence. On the other hand, his early plays are more concerned with human experience. In his metaphysical work his interest in human and religious values was worked out in dull and abstract terms, as his only means of meeting the demands of empiricism; but his plays provided an opportunity to explore these fields without recourse to idealist schemes of thought:

> "what seems to me now to be still worthy of interest is the way in which, on the dramatic level, I tried to counteract this almost bloodless speculation"(38).

Marcel himself feels that these dramatic works were concerned with those areas of experience that he was soon to turn to in his philosophy. In his Existentialist Background of Human Dignity he chooses his unperformed play, Le Palais de Sable, written just before the First World War, as a clear example of his interests. The action takes place in a French provincial town just before the Great War. The principal character is a politician, Roger Moirans, who is dedicated to the cause of Catholicism. However, when his daughter, Clarisse,

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38. E.B.H.D. p.27

tells him of her wish to be a Carmelite, the shallowness of his position comes to light when he recoils in horror at the thought of his attractive daughter shutting herself away. Clarisse, deeply shocked by his reaction, pleads with him to withdraw from political life and give up this hypocritical stance. Moirans, however, will only comply if she gives up her vocation. In confusion, consulting the worthless counsel of a priest, she persuades herself that yielding to her father's wishes is her first duty. He would have liked her to marry a young doctor, but she is convinced that she is not fitted for the normal role of a woman. She feels herself condemned to live with her father for the rest of her life. At the end of the play Moirans realises that up till then he has overlooked the obligations and responsibilities of the bond that is created when two people love each other.

> "What is presented here as a definite reality is the bond between beings - what I later called intersubjectivity"(39).

Marcel recognised in these early plays an outworking of an area of experience that he was unable to approach in his philosophical writings.

However, it was the outbreak of the Great War that finally made Marcel abandon idealist metaphysics. His search for transcendent values, above the plane of existence, was rudely shattered by the human cataclysm that shook the stability and complacency of France. Existence was no longer the sphere of the mundane and the trivial, but of the important and the tragic. The disaster that had overtaken mankind called for, not his withdrawal, but his commitment;

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39. E.B.H.D. p. 34.

the aloof attitude of someone like Romain Rolland appeared to Marcel as utterly reprehensible.(39a)

His work in the Information Service of the Red Cross brought him into direct contact with the many personal tragedies of the Great War. This was to have far-reaching implications for the development of his philosophy. His work consisted of gathering information about those missing in the war, and this involved the keeping of files and questionnaires. These rather impersonal records formed a vivid contrast with the personal encounters with the people concerned. This profound experience raised in Marcel the whole question of the significance of human existence. If these dossiers, in which people had answered questions concerning their loved ones, could not reveal the full reality of these personal tragedies, in what way is it possible to understand human experience ? This was a painful problem, but it was one Marcel felt his philosophy ought to attempt to answer. The information that he gathered in files and his personal encounters with many of these unfortunate people made him ask himself - what was the significance of "information" and "the question and answer" in human existence.

> "Interrogating, making inquiries, and responding - these were my activities, and, as a philosopher, I tried to throw some light on them."(40)

The answer, the type of information given, depends on the kind of question asked. Every question is an attempt to resolve a state of indetermination (41). A disjunctive judgement is involved, implying that only one of the judgements

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39a. E.B.H.D. p.36
40. E.B.H.D. p.37 41. For details of these arguments see E.B.H.D. pp.37-39, and M.B.1 pp.138-45.

is correct, and that the subject involved is incapable of determining which one it is. Marcel illustrates this principle with the example of a person confined to bed asking if it is raining. For an answer to be given the question must be understood and the person providing the information must be in a position to give it. In order to understand the question he must put himself in the position of the questioner.

> "The consciousness of the answerer is the meeting-ground of the question and answer....."(42).

Certainly this is an obvious consideration when a person is attempting to gain information from another, but there is a difficulty when one considers the more complex activity of the scientist. How can nature answer the question put to it by the scientist ? The instrument does not "answer" him any more than the thermometer answers the doctor. A process of selecting the suitable elements necessary for a specific reading is involved here. In a sense the questioner makes the reply, but only by a mediating process. The scientist must eliminate everything that would make the answer appear arbitrary. The question must be free from ambiguity, for ambiguity in the question results in the impossibility of answering the problem.

Objectivity, then, is bound up with a world of questions and answers. The answer to any question is given by way of dialectics,"through the medium of a thou; that is to say, by coming into communication with a wider and complementary experience"(43). A person may ask himself where his watch is. Possibly a friend knows where it is, or he may remember of

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42. M.J. p.139 43. M.J. p.140

of his own accord. In either case, the objective information required is mediated through his questioning of himself or someone else. There is, however, a distinction between the fact and the answer that conveys it. The answer acts as a mediator between the information and those interested. Nor can this distinction be eliminated, for mediation is always involved (44). Hence, in regard to scientific inquiry, the experiment acts as the mediator and interlocutor.

> "In other words it seems that for us reality is something that never answers but from which all answers must be derived"(45).

When someone asks "when did Descartes die?" and one replies "in 1650", it is not the fact that answers, but the truth "as transformed in an interlocutor"(46). All objective truths, such as the statement "Descartes died in 1650" are defined as an answer to a possible question.

> "Knowledge, the knowledge of someone, can thus only be considered as a totality of answers susceptible of being liberated in this or that given situation"(47).

Marcel's discussion of the implications of the question and answer had important bearings on his understanding of objectivity and its relation to human dialogue. A question can only be answered by a being capable of answering; and therefore all objective information is mediated by such a person. The information that Marcel had gathered in his files was brought to him by people. Such data could not be divorced from the source from which it came. Already he had established a principle that was of the utmost importance for the

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44. M.J. p.142 45. ibidem. 46. M.J.p.143 47.M.J.p.143.

development of his thought.

His concern was to try and understand the significance of one's knowledge of one's fellow-men. How much of it could be set out in terms of impersonal information? The 1914-18 war marks the turning-point in his philosophical development. Until then his philosophical efforts were based on idealist assumptions. He had sought to establish the nature of transcendent reality. Man's beliefs and values belonged to this metaphysical order, above the plane of everyday trivial experience. In other words, philosophy was a means of escaping from the boredom of existence. However, the human tragedy of the Great War set Marcel on a new philosophical course. His primary concern from then onwards was to understand, philosophically, the full significance of human existence. This is the reality that the philosopher must investigate. Empiricism had already been seen to empty human experience of all significance. A philosophical approach was needed that would not attempt to understand human existence according to preconceived metaphysical conceptions, while at the same time, not reducing everything by empirical analysis. Marcel's philosophical aims were directed towards understanding the reality of human existence according to one's experiences. Neither subjectivism nor objectivism was able to meet this challenge. His understanding of the significance of the questionnaire meant that any objective information concerning human beings was to be found within the personal encounter between people. Existence was no longer seen as the plane of mundane objectivism, but was an area that opened up for philosophy a whole area of experience that could not be dealt with by mere scientific analysis.

His philosophical efforts at this time are contained in the Metaphysical Journal. The first part contains diary entries

of those months just before the outbreak of war. These notes were intended to form a systematic philosophical work. The second part, which dates from after the outbreak of war until 1923, is similar in its layout. These were still intended as the basis of a larger work, and as late as October 31st 1922 he was still considering the nature of his proposed book.

"I am still thinking about my introduction - it might perhaps be called Metaphysics and Reality"(48).

But he soon realised that large-scale treatises were not in keeping with the exploratory nature of his work. There was something artificial and dishonest in the wish to "encompass the universe with a set of formulas"(49). His reaction against idealist philosophy brought in its train an instinctive fear of assembling any "system", of imposing an artificial unity and structure on reality. His concern to give priority to concrete existence made the search for a metaphysical unity, a rational principle, whereby everything else could be logically inferred, appear artificial. His intention from now onwards was to examine the concrete nature of human existence, or to put it in his own words,"to inquire more and more thoroughly into the intimate nature of experience, my own experience"(50). The inconclusive and fragmentary nature of his philosophical results is no accident, but in fact reflects the reality of man's existence; "for our condition in this world does remain, in the last analysis, that of a wanderer, an itinerant being

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48. M.J. p.292 49.R.I. p.84:"encapsuler l'univers dans un ensemble de formules". 50. R.I. p.23:" à m'interroger de plus en plus anxieusement sur la structure intime de l'experience, de mon experience".

who cannot come to absolute rest except by a fiction, a fiction which it is the duty of philosophic reflection to oppose with all its strength"(51). Marcel set out to examine those intimate and personal experiences that make up every human individual, without introducing a priori presuppositions as to how man is to be understood.

The difference between the two parts of the Journal in philosophical approach is evident. This can be demonstrated by examining one of his earlier entries in the second part. In the notes for February 1917 Marcel discusses the question of immortality. He admits that before the Great War he would have considered the problem in a totally different light. At that time he regarded immortality, like religious faith itself, as beyond the truth of verification. Belief in immortality could not be proved by verification, for it was an affirmation of faith; indeed it arose from faith. Belief in immortality, like belief in God, was involved in the act of freedom that transcended material conditions. His only comment on this now is that the spiritual order seemed to be nothing but the eternity of Ideas. Now, however, he feels the problem is to be treated more and more in personal terms. A tentative suggestion is made that the subject may best be understood in terms of love - that love wishes for the eternity of its object. He understands himself to be appealing to a common human experience which would then be sufficient verification, but he admits that this is all very ambiguous. But this new mood seems to indicate the direction in which Marcel was now turning. He was now adopting a new form of realism, where immediate

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51. M.B., I, p. 133.

experience was of prime significance.

> "Immortality, understood not in the hyper-idealist sense we were just dealing with, but in the idealist sense can only be absolutely personal"(52).

His understanding of religious belief took on a new significance. Previously, in his concern to preserve the non-objective nature of God, he had stressed his transcendence. Religious faith was a question of participating in the transcendent being of God. But now Marcel expressed man's relationship with God in personal terms. He cannot be objectified, he can never be a third person. In other words, God is the absolute "thou" that can never become a "him". One cannot obtain information about God as a "him" through another person. One can only address God face to face, and this must be the principle with which to understand prayer. In contrast, scientific knowledge is limited to the realm of the third person.

Marcel's investigations into the significance of the question-answer activity had led him into a full examination of the nature of the second person which until then had only been understood as being of grammatical significance (53). As his philosophical work gathered momentum, once the war was over when he would presumably have had more time, he worked out the far-reaching significance of these preliminary observations. The function of the "thou" and its relation to the "he" or "it" opened up the whole question of the nature and significance of human existence and its connection, or rather contrast, with the realm of objectivity.

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52. M.J. p.134 53. E.B.H.D. pp.38-9

The realm of objectivity is the realm of the third person. Religious belief is not to be understood, as it was in the earlier period, as a mode of transcending this realm. Rather, faith and belief in God are to be expressed in terms of the second person - the "I-thou" dialogue; God is no longer to be understood transcendentally, but in personal, existential terms, and those terms are prior to, and provide the context for, objective judgements. Again, previously faith, like love, could not be subjected to judgement because it transcended the objective sphere; now, however, judgement is ruled out because it only belongs to the third person. When one talks with someone for whom one has no particular affection or attachment, that person appears as someone possessing answers to questions concerning himself - in other words, he is treated as a source of information as required on a questionnaire. But clearly this way of approaching a person is ruled out in a relationship of love.

> "The more I love a being and the more I participate in his life the less adequate this way of thinking is shown to be"(54).

Such data, as where he or she lives or was born, are irrelevant. The "thou" can never be a mere store of common facts, to be ransacked by anyone who happens to come along. The notion of "answer" is closely bound up with the "thou", although the "thou" is that which one can invoke rather than judge to be capable of answering me. Any judgement of a person is concerned with "him" as a third person, and does not take the "thou" into account. Someone who loves this person may

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54. M.J. p.158

accept the judgements, but, because he loves, he goes beyond them. He sees his beloved as an individual, and an individual, as a unique person, cannot be compared with another. Love, then, is intimately connected, not with judging or comparing, but with seeing the other person as a unique individual. For Marcel love is an appeal of the "I" to the "I".

Marcel made use of the term "appeal" to safeguard the personal relationship of the "I" and the "thou". God is the absolute appeal, and prayer is an invocation of God as absolute appeal. Marcel was at pains to stress the incompatibility of prayer and speculative thought. When one addresses God as "Thou" no place can be given to such questions as "what is God's attitude towards my prayer?" Such an attitude immediately reduces God to the level of a third person, and then we cease to treat God as God. The question of prayer underlines the problem of how one can speak about God. The attitude of prayer precludes speculative inquiry. God is ineffable, not because of his transcending all knowledge, but because he is related to the individual as a second person. However, the constant danger here is of limiting God to his relations with believers (55). God is a "thou" for the faithful because they matter to him, but the objective world is seen as an "it", because no direct dialogue can take place with it. Yet it is pertinent to ask whether the world can be wholly in the third person to God, and therefore foreign to him. To think that the world could be an object to God is to deny God as God. But is it not natural to understand faith as lifting oneself up to the living God for whom one is a "thou", away from the idea of the world for which one is of no concern?

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55. M.J. p.273

But Marcel would reply that one must beware of elevating God above the universe.

> "I tend to think that this elevation of the soul to to God above all that happens is transitory and is only a preliminary step and a preamble so to speak of religious life"(56).

God, as the absolute"thou", answers prayer, invocation, appeal; but the object, as the "he" or "it", can only be thought of as indifferent to the act in which it is thought of. In this respect Marcel saw the value of the insight of realism.

> "I can only think the object as object in realist terms, - and as soon as I think a subject as object exactly the same applies"(57).

Realism is implied in the very concept of an object. No longer was Marcel concerned merely to transcend the realm of the verifiable, but set himself the task of inquiring into the precise nature of objectivity. In fact, religion itself did not entirely escape the bounds of realism. In an entry for March 17th, 1920, Marcel admitted the latter's importance for the believer; " a certain type of verification is possible or at least postulated"(58). However, Marcel was constantly aware of a twofold danger here. On the one hand, if the absolute "thou" is not to appear arbitrary, he is not to be enclosed within the relation he has with me; on the other hand, there is a danger of restoring an objectivity to God that has rightly been banished from his sphere. Marcel saw human existence as characterised by dialogue, and

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56. M.J. pp.229-30 57. M.J. p.161 58. M.J. p.238

in this theory he sought to resolve the age-old tension between subjectivism and objectivism. Human reality is no longer seen as necessitating the transcendence above existence, but is intimately bound to existence itself. Clearly the contrast that he established between the second and third persons made it impossible to maintain the confusion between existence and objectivity, for objectivity is only to be understood as a third person in relation to the "I-thou" dialogue, which is at the basis of human existence. In this light the following passage takes on significance:

> "For more than a year (and in a confused way doubtless for much longer) I have been inclined to effect a radical dissociation between the ideas of existence and objectivity"(59).

His experiences during the war had led him to see how inadequately the idealist philosophies dealt with the significance of existence, for there it was reduced to a minimum role for the sake of rational principles and definitions. The more the object is emphasised "as object" the more the existential aspect is left out. The object is treated with a certain "insularity", its existence not being taken into account. "In reality existence and the thing that exists cannot be dissociated"(60). Marcel was acutely aware of the chasm that existed between idealist philosophy and integral human existence.

But existence is not some obscure abstraction that has been somehow left aside by the idealists. Rather, it was its immediacy that had been overlooked. There is in fact an

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59. M.J. p.281 60. M.J. p.321

unquestionable assurance concerning existence, and it is to be considered primary - in other words, it cannot be reduced or derived. The immediate experience of existence automatically rules out any proof or demonstration. A judgement is concerned with an object distinct from itself, but there is no question of this here: "the fundamental assurance we are dealing with here is of the order of sentiment or feeling"(61). Existence belongs to a realm beyond objectivity, where immediate apprehension and participation render the traditional relation between subject and object inapplicable. Jean Wahl, in his study of Marcel's journals(62), compared these theories with those of his earlier work. Instead of what Wahl described as the "immediate capable of infinite mediation" Marcel was now propounding a notion that could only be described as "the non-mediatible immediate". This theory of participation is not to be confused with anything in his earlier work. Marcel was now concerned to understand personal experience, and this was seen as participation in the immediacy of existence, not in the transcendent. The One spoken of "in the First Part of the Journal is not simply transcendent, for we are immanent within it; being in the Second Part is not purely immanent; by it we reach beyond ourselves; we are involved in something that is beyond us"(63). Existence, as participation in the immanent, is identified in the primary order of feeling or sensation, and this is radically opposed to objective analysis. Hence, the foundation of objectivity and intelligibility is basically unintelligible.

The importance that Marcel gave to feeling and sensation in human experience is closely allied to the significance he

61. M.J. p.324. 62. Wahl(1930)p.86 :"l'immédiat infiniment médiatisable","l'immédiat non-médiatisable". 63.Wahl p.91:"L'Un de la Première Partie du Journal n'est pas purement transcendant, nous sommes immanents en lui;l'être de la Deuxième Partie n'est pas purement immanent; par lui nous nous dépassons nous mêmes; nous plongeons dans quelque chose qui nous dépasse."

attached to the notion of presence. It is possible to trace these theories back to his constant awareness of the presence of his deceased mother. It is also possible - and for the purposes of philosophical study more important - to recognise an indebtedness to Bradley. Indeed Wahl suggested (64) that Marcel's philosophy of existence was merely a development, or continuation, of the line that leads from Hegel to Bradley. Wahl maintained that Marcel drew much inspiration from Bradley's view of the subjective ego, involving a stress on the importance of sensation; also Bosanquet's theory of the unity of the world and the ego made an impact on him. Marcel, according to Wahl, finally reached a position that was in fact the very opposite of neo-hegelianism, in a restoration of the "immediate".

> "G.Marcel is going to unite the idea of the immediate and the idea of the absolute, which, according to Bradley, were the very opposite of each other". (65)

One cannot doubt that the Anglo-Saxon idealists made an important contribution to the development of Marcel's thought. But Wahl's view takes no account of the impact of such an important historical event as the Great War. It is hoped to show that these shattering events compelled him to look for philosophical inspiration elsewhere. Bradley and Bosanquet did not help him to answer the critical questions of human experience that the war brought to the fore.

That Marcel still appreciated certain aspects of idealist thought can be seen in his arguments concerning the significance of feeling. Intimately connected with Marcel's understanding

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64. Wahl, p.77 65. Wahl, p.77: "G.Marcel va unir l'idée d'immédiat et l'idée d'absolu qui, chez Bradley, étaient encore les contraires l'une de l'autre".

of feeling was his examination of the role of the body; both were not to be treated objectively. He admits his indebtedness to Bradley, but Marcel's aims were somewhat different.

"We are concerned essentially with determining the metaphysical conditions of personal existence"(66).

Such conditions involve the primacy of sensation: "existence can only be sensed, as sensation is the mode in which the continuity of anything whatever with my body can be given to me as a datum."(67)

Consequently, an objective representation of the nature of feeling is misleading, and any analogy with the notion of a message is to be avoided. It is natural to consider sensation as a kind of communication between two telegraph stations, or to imagine it to be like the scent of a flower - in other words, to think of it as a transmission. But for the event to be translated into such language, it would be necessary for it to be given as a datum, and this is clearly not the case. Rather, sensation, as a pure immediate, is incapable of being designated or characterised, and this is doubtless incompatible with the nature of any object. The existential immediacy of sensation must not be thought of as an abstract immanence, but rather as "an effective presence"(68). This presence is not the presence of someone or something, for that would be to reintroduce a duality, a distinction between subject and object. Instead, if sensation is not to be conceived of as a message, as a communication between two stations, but as absolute presence, then "it must involve the immediate participation of what we normally call the subject in a surrounding world from which no veritable frontier seperates it"(69). As mentioned already,

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66. M.J. p.255 67. M.J.p.269 68.M.J.p.331 69.M.J.pp.331-2

Marcel's examination of sensation was accompanied by a consideration of the significance of the body. Being incarnate, like feeling, is a mode of existence; it is indispensable to being in the world.

Inasmuch as a human being communicates with others it would appear that his or her body is interposed between them, as a mediator. But the relation between the self and the body is an elusive one, for there are as many dangers involved in thinking of one's body as an instrument or a machine as there are in imagining sensation as a kind of message. Nor can it be treated objectively as one's possession, as if it can be disposed of at one's own will. The possibility of suicide underlines the problem here, for to dispose of one's body is to dispose of oneself. Incarnation is a condition of human existence. Admittedly, the person and the body are not identical, but they cannot be separated. To consider the body as an instrument is similarly misleading. An instrument as such is an extension of the function of the body. But this would imply that the body is an extension of something else. It may be suggested that it is the soul, but this would be to convert the soul into another body. The notion of instrumentality, then, involves an infinite regress. Instrumental mediation belongs to the world of objectivity. The significance, for Marcel, of the body is not that it is objective, but that it is the precondition of objectivity:

> "The world exists in the measure in which I have relations with it which are of the same type as my

relations with my own body - that is to say, inasmuch as I am incarnate"(70).

The body, then, is a condition of our existence in the world. The immediate experience of being bound to one's own body, which is an object(body) and a non-object (one's own body), constitutes the way existence is defined. There is something in one's own body that cannot be reduced to its objective qualities. At the same time, the world only exists insofar as one acts upon it, and this action is dependent on the fact that one has a body. An object is something that does not take one into account, and insofar as it does not take one into account, one's body does not seem to be one's own body.

In these philosophical inquiries Marcel was attempting to clarify how sensation and the role of one's body were conditions of human existence. As a consequence of his examination of the significance of question and answer, dialogue and communication were seen to have central significance in existential experience. All objective knowledge is understood as a third party in relation to this dialogue. Therefore existence, as it is felt and experienced, does not belong to the realm of the "it", and is thus incapable of being objectivised.

The question now arises: how did Marcel conceive of the relationship between existence and the realm of the "thou"? The person to whom one refers as "him" has been relegated to an object. There is no direct awareness of that person, as knowledge of him is mediated by someone else. Only in the direct existential encounter can personal values be found. In other words, love and intimacy will not be discovered where men treat each other as mere objects, for true human

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70. M.J. p.269

relationships are based on a direct awareness of personal qualities. The bond between the "I" and the "thou" is where the depths of human existence are to be found; here the closely connected notions of presence and value are to be understood. Existence is no longer for Marcel the place of reductionist objectivisation, but the guarantee of worth and value,"for our worth is decreased to the extent to which our affirmation of existence is limited, pale and hesitant"(71). Man can only be examined objectively if one only takes his external characteristics into account; but these considerations are subordinate to the profound realities of man's inner life. Sottiaux has described Marcel as a philosopher of the inner life (72). The full actuality of this inner being, this interiority as Marcel calls it, is only recognised in the dialogue of one human subject to another. External interests take place only as a third party in relation to this dialogue.

The development of Marcel's philosophy especially in the years just after the Great War, was both a struggle with and a development of idealist themes. In his concern to penetrate the hidden depths of human experience he reacted with the idealists against the materialist view that man is a mere body to be examined. Nevertheless he realised that idealist philosophy was too subjectivist. The answer to positivism was not subjectivist idealism, but an examination of personal values as they are experienced. Man lives by a constant process of dialogue and all objective knowledge is mediated within this context. His experiences in the Red Cross led him into new philosophical paths where his primary concern

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71. M.J. p.317 72. Sottiaux (1956),p.9.

was to establish a valid theory of personal knowledge. The theory of intersubjectivity, the encounter between people, fitted neither into the positivist nor the idealist categories. Marcel's point was that knowledge of human beings belongs to a domain of its own.

These preoccupations can be traced back to 1914; yet, to Marcel's own astonishment, it was not until July 23rd 1918 that he undertook to expound the subject, the war years interrupting his writing. The paucity of entries in his metaphysical diaries demonstrate this fact. During these years after the Great War his theory of intersubjectivity was developed. His concern to elucidate the significance of human dialogue was accompanied by a determination to define the limits of objectivity. These themes were to preoccupy him from then onwards; indeed intersubjectivity was to assume a central role in his philosophy (73).

We have seen that the war years were a turning point in Marcel's philosophical development. His experiences in the Red Cross coincided with his study of Royce's philosophy. His philosophical development cannot be explained as a simple development of Hegel or Bradley's idealism, coloured by his experiences during the war. His work in the Information Service gave him a new awareness of the purpose of philosophy, and Royce opened up for Marcel, in this new situation, a whole new field of philosophical understanding. Royce's great work, The Problem of Christianity, appeared at this critical time in Marcel's thought. The notion of intersubjectivity was only possible through his study of Royce,

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73. The theory of intersubjectivity will be expounded in chapter five.

for it will be shown in this work that Royce's theory of interpretation lay behind Marcel's own theories.

Indeed, as Marcel returned to serious philosophical study, the name of Josiah Royce first appears in his journal, and this was in connection with the question of human dialogue and its relationship with objectivity. In his entry for August 23rd 1918 he touches on Royce's notion of triadic relations.

> "Here lies the profound importance of Royce's triadism and I think it has never been made sufficiently explicit"(74).

This reference can be coupled with a similar comment in his essay Existence and Objectivity, written in 1925, in which he discusses the triadic relation between subject and object. The relation may look dyadic, but this is only so in appearance:

> "Only as Royce pointed out with admirable clarity in his later philosophical work, this is only in appearance; the relation is in reality a triad"(75).

During the war years Marcel had made a close examination of Royce's work. The latter's book The Problem of Christianity had not been completed until 1914; it was in this book that his theory of triadic relations was fully propounded. Marcel must have studied this work between 1914 and 1918, which is when Royce's triadism is first mentioned by Marcel. Marcel attached great importance to the notion of triadic relations in his understanding of human dialogue in relation to the

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74. M.J. p.146 75. M.J. p.336

objective world. The intersubjective bond played a crucial role in formulating one's experience of the external world. The relation between the subject and the objective world was triadic.

The development of Marcel's philosophy has been traced as far as the emergence of his theory of intersubjectivity, in connection with which Marcel first shows an interest in the work of Royce. But the position that has been argued in this chapter has much more evidence to support it than the one or two isolated references in Metaphysical Journal. The main evidence is supplied by the series of articles which Marcel published under the title La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce in the Révue de Métaphysique et de Morale for 1918 and 1919. In this critical study he displays a knowledge of all Royce's major philosophical works.

CHAPTER FOUR

Marcel's "La métaphysique de Josiah Royce".

The circumstances of the origin of this work are very obscure. As mentioned in the last chapter (1) it appeared in the form of four articles in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale in 1918 and 1919 (2), but Marcel makes no reference to it in his diaries of that time; nor is it ever mentioned in his later works. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain exactly what it was that prompted him to write this work. After all, if the four articles are taken as a whole, La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce constitutes the largest critical study that he ever undertook - large enough indeed for it to appear in book-form in 1945.

Marcel conducted this study at a time when his own philosophy was undergoing important changes. Royce, who died in 1916, did not complete his last major work, The Problem of Christianity, until 1914; so Marcel must have read this book during the war. This would confirm our contention that his interest in Royce reflects the change that was taking place in his own position. There were certain characteristics of Royce's philosophy that would attract Marcel at a time when he was searching for a new understanding of human experience. Before discussing these basic features it will be useful to give a brief outline of the work.

The first section of Marcel's study closely follows the arguments set out in the Gifford Lectures, The World and the Individual, where Royce examined the various approaches to

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1. See pp.47-48. 2. The first two parts were published in 1918, and the last two in 1919.

the problem of being before he revealed his own theory, the internal meaning of ideas. He concluded that to be is to embody "the complete internal meaning of a certain absolute system of ideas - a system, moreover, which is genuinely implied in the true internal meaning or purpose of every finite idea, however fragmentary"(3). Since the internal meaning can only be embodied in an individual Royce's discussion inevitably led him to the notion of individuality. He was concerned to uphold the importance of the individual. Marcel stresses Royce's aversion to an empiricist understanding of the human individual. The distinction that he drew in his theory of nature between the world of description and the world of appreciation would in no way permit the individual to be treated objectively.

> "The theory of nature allows us to comprehend more fully this notion which at first appears strange, but which demonstrates in a vivid manner the dislike Royce had for every empirical interpretation of the individual, that is, his refusal to adopt in this way an objective criterion which suggests the total misunderstanding of what is in question"(4).

Just as the human individual cannot be objectivised, so human life as such cannot be defined in terms of an objective soul or substance. It is not so much a question of possessing a soul as of simply being. In stressing this position of Royce

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3. W.I. 1 p.36. 4. R.M.M.25 p.384:"La théorie de la nature nous permettra de mieux saisir cette idée qui paraît d'abord singulière, mais qui illustre d'une façon saisissante la répugnance de Royce pour toute interprétation empiriste de l'individualité, son refus d'adopter en pareille matière un critère externe qui implique la méconnaissance totale de ce qui est en question."

Marcel's vocabulary is very reminiscent of his own philosophical language.

> "In short, it is not a question of having, but of being, that is, of becoming; and this self-creation is not a kind of jump into the dark but it is the adherence of the whole of oneself to an order that one passionately desires"(5).

Human experience cannot be objectified. The world of description is both inadequate and inappropriate in this respect. It is impossible to understand one's friend, as a friend, in the categories of the world of description; rather, when one forms a deep relationship with someone, one "appreciates" that person as a human being, and a greater unity is created in this bond of friendship. What is so noticeable here is Marcel's interest in Royce's search for categories in which to express the concrete experience of existence, both in human relationships, and in aesthetical and religious spheres. Scientific positivism could in no way deal adequately with such intimacies; nevertheless the danger of mere subjectivism must be avoided at all cost. Rather, Marcel saw Royce's work as a search for a higher empiricism, reaching beyond the subject-object dichotomy.

> "In fact the objectivity which science seeks to establish is only the substitute for that higher objectivity which would be being itself, and which is to be found in the direct intercommunication of spiritual natures, which are

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5. R.M.M. 25 pp.384-5:"En somme il ne s'agit pas d'avoir,mais d'être, c'est à dire de se faire; et cette création de soi n'est pas une sorte d'élan qu'on prendrait dans le vide: c'est l'adhésion de tout soi-même à un ordre passionnément voulu."

open to one another"(6).

Man's relationship with God is no absorption of the human self into the divine being, nor is it founded on a pluralistic monadism. It is a relationship between individuals(7). Nor can it be objectively analysed. The intimate relation between God and the believer is not one that can be explained in terms of logical necessity.

"Between God and myself an intimate relationship is thus established, which furthermore, where it is understood properly, cannot be seen as a purely logical connection.... but only as a bond based on a common goal"(8).

That Royce was concerned with the issues raised by religious belief throughout his philosophical career impressed Marcel deeply. Royce had discerned a close analogy between the relationship between man and God, and that between human individuals. Throughout the Gifford Lectures he was determined to preserve the integrity of the individual, resisting pressures to allow any absorption into the Absolute.

Royce's theory of being led on to an examination of certain issues - the problem of the one and the many, the problem of evil, and the theory of time. Marcel expounded these themes in the second section of his work. The third part concludes his examination of Royce's earlier work, and then goes on to introduce the notion of loyalty as it was found in the Philosophy

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6.R.M.M. 26 p.129:"En effet l'objectivité que la science cherche à réaliser n'est que le substitut de cette objectivité supérieure qui serait l'être même, et qui résiderait dans l'intercommunication directe de natures spirituelles transparentes les unes pour les autres." 7.R.M.M. 25 p.501. 8.R.M.M. 25 p.386:"Entre Dieu et moi s'établit ainsi une intime solidarité, qui ne peut d'ailleurs bien entendu être regardée comme une connexion purement logique.... mais seulement comme un lieu de finalité."

of Loyalty. Although Marcel recognised in this work the beginning of Royce's final period, culminating in the Problem of Christianity, he did not consider the ethical theories, centred on the notion of loyalty, a radical departure from his earlier idealist philosophy. For Royce loyalty was to be found in being itself, as it was defined in his Gifford Lectures. Loyalty is in no way an external bond between the individual and the community - quite the contrary : "it is the active participation of myself in a concrete order,which one undertakes to serve, and which in return bestows upon one the only reality to which one can aspire"(9). The notion of loyalty came to play an important role in the community of interpretation. The concrete bias of Royce's discussinn of the nature and significance of loyalty in human experience did not go unnoticed by Marcel.

"It is faithful to that speculative empiricism which remains one of the dominant characteristics of his doctrine"(10).

It would be a gross distortion to interpret loyalty in any subjectivist manner, according to which the chosen cause only has its reality in the act by which it is chosen as an object of duty, service and belief.

Royce's concern for concrete reality and his respect for empiricism are already in evidence in his Gifford Lectures and Marcel did stress the importance of this characteristic of Royce's work. Nevertheless, Royce's striving towards a

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9. R.M.M. 26 p.139:"il est participation vivante du moi à un ordre concret qu'il s'engage à servir, et qui en retour lui confère la seule réalité à laquelle il puisse prétendre."
10. R.M.M. 26 p.146:"Il est fidèle a cet empiricisme spéculatif qui reste un des traits dominants de sa doctrine".

concreteness of expression found its maturest formulation in the theory of interpretation that formed the basis of this last work, The Problem of Christianity. An exposition of this book was undertaken in the last section of Marcel's study. The central importance of the community of interpretation in Royce's thought was of particular significance in Marcel's assessment of his philosophy, for it is evident that Royce has taken human experience as the formative criterion upon which to build not only a theory of knowledge, but the metaphysical principle of social organisation. Reality is dependent upon a true interpretation. Certainly the latter phase of Royce's career appeared to Marcel to be the most original and the most interesting.

> "Once more it seems that Royce had only slowly found ways of articulating his most original and profound work...."(11)

The theory of the community of interpretation appeared to Marcel as a profoundly concrete philosophical expression of the nature of human experience and of the universe in general. Interpretation was not merely a third form of epistemology, in addition to conception and perception, but was also a basis for understanding the nature of reality itself. Royce had made a significant attempt to formulate a metaphysical theory that did not lose itself in abstractions, but remained totally faithful to concrete human experience. Not only is man to be understood in social terms, but the universe itself calls for interpretation, and therefore is to

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11. R.M.M. 26 p.238:"Encore une fois il semble que la pensée la plus originale et la plus profonde de Royce n'avait trouvé que tardivement les moyens d'expression...."

be understood in the context of the interpreting community. The universe is dominated by social categories. Human experience furnishes the model for these theories, for communication and dialogue belong to the heart of reality; communion is to be found in the very depths of the spiritual life:"our profound existence is always a spiritual exchange, a discussion or a prayer"(12). Through his study Marcel characterises Royce's final period as "speculative empiricism".

This, then, is the basic outline of Marcel's study. In attempting to analyse his main arguments it is important that one understands Marcel's aims. However, this question does raise a problem, for the unity of Royce's work does present difficulties. It may be argued that Marcel left his exposition of The Problem of Christianity until the final section because he recognised in it a radical departure from Royce's earlier work. Certainly it does appear to be very much different from his former writings, and Royce himself was aware of the apparent disunity of his work. Hence, in the preface to The Problem of Christianity he took great pains to stress how much this book was in keeping with his former work. "I believe my present book to be in essential harmony with the bases of philosophical idealism set forth in various earlier volumes of my own, and especially in the work entitled The World and the Individual"(13). Marcel traced the development of Royce's philosophy with enthusiasm,as the latter strove towards a concreteness of

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12. R.M.M. 26 p.213:"notre vie profonde est toujours un commerce spirituel, un colloque ou une prière." 13. P.C. p.38

expression. Marcel recognised in this concreteness a move towards his own position, as he himself had abandoned the philosophical abstractions of idealist speculation.

> "Last, but not least, the theory of the community of interpretation made it possible for a more vivid and more specific notion of the relation between finite and infinite to take form than the logico-mathematical scheme to which Royce had recourse in the appendix of the World and the Individual"(14)

Certainly the Problem of Christianity, preceded by The Philosophy of Loyalty in 1908, marked an important advance in his philosophical career; and Marcel did consider that this later work "indicates at least a considerable advance in clarifying the basic theses of Royce"(15). But it does not necessarily follow that Marcel was only interested in the later work of Royce, and that there was a definite break in Royce's philosophical development. In a sympathetic study such as this it is only natural that he should reflect Royce's concern to stress the unity of his work.

Marcel stated the aim of his study very clearly, and this purpose applies to the whole of the work.

> "As the very title of this study indicates our purpose here is only to give an exposition and, if necessary, to start off the discussion of the strictly metaphysical ideas of Royce."(16).

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14. R.M.M. 26 p.218:"Enfin et surtout la théorie de la communauté d'interpretation permet de se former une idée plus vivante et plus spécifiable des rapports du fini et de l'infini que le schématisme logico-mathematique auquel Royce avait recours dans l'appendice du Monde et L'Individu". 15. R.M.M. 26 p.218:"marque pour le moins un progrès considérable dans l'explicitation des thèses fondamentales de Royce". 16. R.M.M. 25 p.342:"Notre but n'est ici, comme l'indique le titre même de cette étude, que de donner une exposition et au besoin d'amorcer la discussion des conceptions proprement métaphysiques de Royce."

It is important to stress that Marcel did not see the structure and methodology of his study as determined by chronological analysis; that is, he did not begin his account with an exposition of The Religious Aspect of Philosophy and work his way through to the conclusion of The Problem of Christianity. On the contrary, as an idealist Royce's philosophical work evolved around certain central ideas:"this philosophy is organised around a centre"(17). The unity of Marcel's study is based upon the unifying principle of Royce's work. For the latter active intercommunication was the living principle of all reality, in opposition to monadism with its assertion that each entity is self-reliant; and this thesis received its fullest expression in the theory of the community of interpretation. But Marcel did not suggest that this theory originated only in his later work. It was a development of the theory of being, as it was expounded in his Gifford Lectures. Indeed, his idea of being dominates all of his philosophical writings. Marcel, then, detected anticipations of his later philosophy in these earlier writings. Unlike some idealism, Royce did not present an uncompromising monism; indeed, in the system propounded in The World and the Individual "finite consciousness appears as one of the members of a spiritual community, whose futures are in a sense certain..., and which however, in another sense, require improvement within this very world"(18). The emphasis upon social awareness in the theory of interpretation implies that knowledge of self is preceded by knowledge of others. But this is emphasised in

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17. R.M.M. 25 p.342:"cette philosophie s'organise d'un centre".
18. R.M.M. 25 p.502:"la conscience finie apparaît comme membre d'une communauté spirituelle, dont les destinées en un sens sont assurées..., et qui cependant en un autre sens comporte un développement dans ce monde même."

Royce's earlier work, and Marcel missed no opportunity to point this out. In his concluding paragraph on the theory of nature in The World and the Individual Marcel comments on the priority of social consciousness:

> "consciousness is social, insofar as it lives, if one can say that, from contrasts and contradictions which it transcends, without suppressing them. That is because all true reality is social"(19).

The social nature of being is evident throughout the Gifford Lectures, for all finite selves are closely interrelated, each being a unique expression of the one finite will.

The fourth conception of being, as far as Marcel was concerned, was an important stage in Royce's pilgrimage towards his theory of interpretation. In other words, the Gifford Lectures represent an attempt to understand the social nature of the finite self, and what is here expressed in inadequate language is formulated in more concrete terms in The Problem of Christianity. The ontology of his idealism is necessary for understanding his later work, and Marcel was convinced that it underlies the assumptions of this later period:

> "the theory of interpretation is not a substitute for the fourth conception of being, but, on the contrary, needs it as its basis"(20).

The roots of his philosophy of loyalty are also to be found firmly embedded in his earlier work. To illustrate this contention Marcel quotes from the Gifford Lectures a striking

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19. R.M.M. 26 pp.134-5:"la conscience est sociale pour autant qu'elle vit, si l'on peut dire, de contrastes, d'oppositions qu'elle transcende, mais qu'elle ne supprime pas. Elle l'est parce que toute réalité véritable est sociale." 20.R.M.M. 26 p.237:" la théorie de l'interprétation ne se substitue pas à la quatrième conception de l'être mais la requiert au contraire comme son fondement."

anticipation of his later ethical theory.

> " Be somebody.....Have a plan; give unity to your aims; intend something definite by your life; set before yourself an ideal."(21)

Although Marcel was deeply impressed by the later developments of Royce's philosophy, it does not follow that he dissociated himself from the rest of his work. On the contrary, he continually stressed that the earlier theories prepared for, and found their culmination in, the theory of interpretation.

Marcel recognised Royce's idealism to be an attempt to abandon arid abstractionism and to regain a more concrete expression, giving a fuller value to human experience. It was the endeavour to find a new speculative empiricism that Marcel considered to be the most original and striking factor in Royce's philosophy.

Marcel's exposition of Royce does not attempt to transform Royce's idealism but rather recognises its explicitly idealist character. What it does, nevertheless, make clear is that it is in a "general sense" that Royce is "resolutely idealist"(22) Moreover his method was derived directly from Hegelian dialectic, although it would be misleading to pronounce him a hegelian, even in his earliest work. Indeed he was motivated by a deep scepticism of German hegelianism with all its abstraction and all-embracing claims. Marcel is quite emphatic on this point.

> "In various places he has taken great care to draw attention to all that disturbs him in Hegel's philosophy: the suspicion of positive science, the misuse of dialectics,

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21. W.I. 2 p.288. Marcel's translation is found in R.M.M. 25 p.384 "Soyez quelqu'un...c'est à dire ayez un plan, unifiez vos fins; que votre vie ait pour vous une signification définie; ayez un idéal." 22. R.M.M. 25 p.344:"En ce sens général Royce est résolument idéaliste."

> and also perhaps, more fundamental, all that is so to speak inhuman in the all-embracing logical scheme such as Hegel conceived."(23)

Marcel realised that, despite his idealist standpoint, Royce respected the importance of the empirical in understanding human experience. He suggested, therefore, that Royce displayed certain characteristics that would place him with the English empiricists rather than the idealist tradition stemming from Hegel.

> "In Royce, along with bold metaphysics which are from a different metaphysical climate, there are to be found that cautious empiricism and that ingenious and exact psychology which are very typically English characteristics" (24).

The truth is that Royce sought genuine and intellectual experience whenever it was to be found. In this search he took pains never to lose sight of that concrete reality with which one has contact in everyday life. Marcel spared no trouble to underline the deep impression that Royce's empiricism made on him.

> "Faithful to the empiricist tradition, although in a remarkably profound and fruitful way, Royce on the contrary is concerned before anything else with concrete experience, whether it is mine or yours, but under no

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23. R.M.M. 25 pp.339-40:"Il a pris soin en maint endroit d'appeler l'attention sur tout ce qui l'inquiéta dans la philosophie de Hegel: le mépris de la science positive,l'abus de la dialectique, et aussi peut-être, plus profondément, tout ce qu'il y a pour ainsi dire d'inhumain dans le panlogisme tel que Hegel l'a conçu." 24.R.M.M. 25 p.340:"On retrouve chez Royce, avec des hardiesses métaphysiques qui sont d'un autre climat intellectuel, cette prudence empiriste, ce psychologisme ingénieux et précis qui sont bien des caractères spécifiquement anglais."

circumstances is it experience in general."(25). Royce's concern for concrete reality and his respect for empiricism are evident in his philosophical development. But his was an empiricism that was to be found within an idealist framework. His respect for the integrity of the human individual, founded on an idealist theory of being, led him eventually to his theory of the community of interpretation.

It is evident from his study of Royce's philosophy that Marcel recognised that Royce belonged to the idealist tradition, but this particular type of idealist philosophy impressed Marcel for it displayed a serious concern to explore the full significance of concrete experience and the important implications of being an individual. Marcel noted in Royce's Gifford Lectures a determined struggle against the dangers of absorbing the individual within an abstract system of ideas. Marcel saw Royce's work as a unity, although he perceived that the empiricist bias of his work, evident in all his writings, attained a fuller expression in his theory of interpretation. An analysis of La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce supports the contention that Marcel displayed a warm sympathy for the whole of Royce's philosophical writings, but his later work, particularly The Problem of Christianity, constitutes the area where any direct influence on Marcel is to be located.

Support for this argument can be found in his other writings, although actual references are very few. There are

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25. R.M.M. 25 p.373:"Fidèle à la tradition empiriste, singulièrement approfondie et enrichie, il est vrai, Royce est au contraire avant tout préoccupé de l'experience concrète, celle qui est la mienne ou la vôtre, mais qui n'est en aucun cas Erfahrung überhaupt."

two references in Marcel's own Gifford Lectures, The Mystery of Being; there are two in his The Existential Background of Human Dignity and one in Homo Viator; the remainder (nine in all) are to be found in his Metaphysical Journal.

In his own account of the development of his thought in The Existential Background of Human Dignity he acknowledges the debt he owes to Royce and American philosophy in general(26). In his Metaphysical Journal he does occasionally allude to the work of Royce, and this can be taken as evidence supporting the impression given by La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce. For instance, in an entry for December 1st 1919 he discusses the place and meaning of the will in the act of faith and love. Faith is a refusal to compare. In an individual there is something that transcends the scope of judgement, and anyone who loves that person goes beyond any such judgement. Royce maintained that love individualises, for as an individual is unique that person is beyond comparison. Clearly Marcel was impressed by Royce's interest in the concrete.

Nevertheless it is quite clearly wrong to regard Marcel as at all slavish in his attitude towards Royce. In his Metaphysical Journal he makes it plain enough that he is critical of some of the positions advocated by Royce in his earlier work. For instance, in an entry for December 1st 1920 Marcel admits that Royce's notion of the Absolute All-Knower pays far too little attention to the importance of human relationships. The same theme is touched upon in the entry for December 3rd 1920 when Royce is criticised for maintaining that an omniscient thought is involved in every search for truth.

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26. E.B.H.D.p.1

What we have just said does not, however, weaken our argument that Royce was a formative influence on Marcel, for it is Royce's later work that represents the point of contact. This is very clear from the way in which Marcel speaks of the theme of loyalty. On each of the three occasions when he touches on this theme he acknowledges the importance of Royce's work for his own thinking on this subject. In a passage dated December 15th 1920 the value of loyalty as an ethical principle is admitted. In Homo Viator similar recognition is given to Royce's notion of loyalty to a cause. The true relation of a person to a community is one of loyalty; Marcel quotes Royce's teaching that true loyalty is loyalty to loyalty, and this in turn is loyalty to humanity. Marcel acknowledged the profundity of this, but he admitted that Royce may have ignored the ethical difficulties into which idealism runs. Nevertheless, in spite of certain inevitable reservations, Marcel was obviously deeply impressed by Royce's notion of loyalty; it did play an important role in the working out of Marcel's own views about fidelity. Loyalty to a cause is no mere allegiance to an abstract principle; rather, the cause to which loyalty dedicates itself is of a supra-personal character. That Royce showed great respect for empirical reality when formulating his ethical theories was of great importance to Marcel's own philosophical interests, for the notion of loyalty appeared to Marcel as a serious attempt to come to terms with concrete reality, without reducing human experience to mere objectivism. Loyalty's place within the human community was of the utmost significance for Marcel's own understanding of fidelity in the context of human relationships.

Indeed, it was the stress given by Royce on social awareness that particularly impressed Marcel. Royce's metaphysical theories found their culmination in the theory of interpretation, in which knowledge was understood to be the possession of a community. In his Gifford Lectures the object of one's knowledge is gained according to the aims of the subject. In his later theories, set out in The Problem of Christianity, objective knowledge belongs to a community which selects its information according to its needs and purposes. Ethical principles such as loyalty are intimately connected with the notion of community. The community is maintained by the determination of the individual to follow the cause of the community. It can be seen that these theories can be traced back to the principles underlying his earlier work, although Marcel recognised that they found their fullest expression in The Problem of Christianity.

Marcel did fear that Royce had objectified the universal community when it could be better represented as a discussion of ideas (27). Nevertheless, this small reservation was vastly outweighed by the far-reaching impression that Royce's work left upon him. Royce's own version of idealist philosophy proved to be a lasting influence on Marcel because it was different from the idealism that he had studied before the war, which was totally incapable of meeting his philosophical needs.

Marcel wished to understand the relationship between our personal knowledge of one another, found in human relationships, and the area of objectivity. Royce's

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27. H.V. pp.206-7

epistemology, as it was developed in his later work, set out a theory that coincided with Marcel's own requirements. La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce makes it quite plain that Royce's theory of triadic relations was of crucial importance for Marcel, and this claim is corroborated in the references in the Metaphysical Journal already mentioned (28).

In assessing the evidence of Marcel's study of Royce one can clearly see that Marcel grasped the essential unity of Royce's work. The theory of the internal meaning of ideas as set out in his earlier work was a definite preparation and basis for his theory of interpretation. Royce was able to establish an idealist system that could help Marcel to formulate a philosophy of existence by its insights into the significance of human relationships. An examination of La Métaphysique de Josiah Royce does throw important light on the development of Marcel's philosophy during the period of the Great War and its aftermath. During this time his theory of intersubjectivity emerged and this notion became crucial to Marcel's concept of a person. Having established in this chapter that Marcel attached much importance to Royce's theory of interpretation, our aim in the following chapters is to establish just how he used the insights of Royce's work in forming the fundamental concept of inter-subjectivity.

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28. See above, page 47.

CHAPTER FIVE

Intersubjectivity.

In chapter three we traced the origins of Marcel's theory of intersubjectivity. We saw how this notion arose from the contrast between objective knowledge and personal knowledge. Marcel came to realise that the intimate knowledge that one gains from encounters with other people cannot be formulated in objective terms, such as could be found in the files of the Information Service. In abandoning the idealism of his earlier years he had come to appreciate the importance of intercommunication between men in their personal growth. Indeed, we saw in the preceding chapter that this emphasis upon social awareness found great philosophical inspiration in his study of Royce. Nevertheless, the impersonal nature of modern society, with its mass collectivisation, seemed to hinder men from enjoying the experience of personal communication. In a later work Marcel stressed the problem of man's identity in a modern society.

> "There can be no authentic depth except where there can be real communion; but there will never be any real communion between individuals centred on themselves, and in consequence morbidly hardened, nor in the heart of the mass, within the mass-state."(1)

The dangers of technocracy and the mass-state are only too apparent to Marcel. Life is becoming more and more organised. The Stalinist state is an obvious example of the ever-increasing collectivisation of western civilisation. The state functions as a giant bureaucratic machine, in which

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1. M.A.H. p.200

all that is human and personal finds no place. The effects upon man's self-understanding are calamitous. The emotive words "function" and "machine" underline Marcel's deepest fears. In this automated society man is reduced to a machine himself; he serves a function - a function geared to efficiency and productivity. As a concrete example Marcel took the case of the ticket-collector on the underground(2). This man's life is rigidly time-tabled; even his sleep is a function that will make possible his overall efficiency. Everything in his life conspires to identify him with his functions. Even death is seen as the scrapping of a machine that no longer serves any useful purpose.

There is nothing more grotesque than the modern state's attempt to reduce the significance of a person to a few particulars contained in one or two pages of an official dossier. Such a document was meant to account for all that is important in the man's identity. His personality lies open to anyone who wishes to look. But how can these particulars be divorced from the person concerned? Marcel's experiences during the Great War have already been seen to underlie these observations(3). Such a functionalised world has the effect of overpowering the ordinary person with an uneasy feeling that his personal life has been swamped by his functions, that he is of no significance as a person.

This increasing collectivisation of modern society is accompanied by a process of atomisation. The two are closely linked. For as the collective social order strips man of all personal significance, of everything except the functions he performs, so he finds himself possessing no common ground with his fellow-men except in regard to his functions.

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2. P.E. p.2, cf. M.B. 2 p.37f. 3. See above, p.29

Totalitarian collectivisation produces an atomised society, that cannot be considered a true community.

Life, under the new social organisation, has lost its old intimacy. The personality is gradually coerced into identifying himself with an official, public identity. His interior life, his being, is ignored, and consequently the person himself begins to ignore it. The world we are now living in is, as Marcel describes it, a broken world (4). But, it may be objected, has there ever been a time when the world has been intact? Marcel was not making such a claim. No matter what the historical facts, however, it is indisputable that the awareness of this broken state has become acute in our own time. The technocratic machine has devitalised man; he is being compelled to substitute a function for his very being, the community is being replaced by a machine. Yet at the same time a protest against this violation wells up from the very depths of human nature. It is this resentment that justifies talk of a broken world.

The situation goes deeper than this. Mention has already been made of man's resentment of the encroachments of technological thought; he feels that the link that binds him to his fellowmen in a true community is threatened. Yet the social situation as it is today has so fashioned man's life that he passively accepts this devitalised world; increasingly he is losing his awareness of being threatened. The problem of being no longer occurs to him. Everything is reduced to the purely natural, which is no more than a degraded reductionism. Indeed, this attitude has its foundation in a widespread refusal - a refusal to reflect and imagine (5), and is

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4. See Le Monde Cassé published with Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique (English translation in P.E.)

at the heart of so many contemporary evils. This refusal to reflect is the pathetic outcome of the fragmentation and functionalisation of mass-society. Such a reduction of all reality to the realm of the purely natural is a central factor in the widespread degradation of man in our own times.

Modern techniques, by their very nature, comprehend man only in the realm of the problematic. Anything that cannot be placed in this category is dismissed as being of no consequence. A problem calls for a solution; when a solution is found the problem ceases to be a problem. It has been explained away. Such a high-handed attitude raised Marcel's suspicions, but this is not to denigrate the rightful place of the problematic in scientific analysis. But he did protest against its encroachments into such fields that do not admit of such a treatment. How can the question of man be totally subjected to problematic analysis, as any such objectivist reductionism strips man of everything related to his humanity? The question of what it means to be a man cannot be raised in a world from which technocracy has banished all wonder and dignity, a world where the question of being has become redundant.

Nevertheless, our technocratic world does produce in some men a resentment, a vague feeling that something has been lost. There is a lack , an impoverishment, an aridity. Yet "it is by starting from that point that we can experience what I have called ontological exigence"(6). Reductionist thought has dominated the modern world. Scientific analysis is capable in theory of explaining all phenomena, and this

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5. M.B. 1 p.36

6. M.B. 2 p.40

has resulted in a loss of mystery. Everything can be explained, but positivist thought cannot give any metaphysical meaning to the world. It cannot deal with the ontological question. Behind the apparent confidence in positivist methods there is a deep longing to find some meaning in life. There is in the modern world what Marcel calls an appetite for being (7). This need for an ontology stems from a general anxiety concerning empiricist techniques: "up to what point does explanation actually possess the power to eliminate the thing explained?"(8). This urge to discover an ontology stems from an overwhelming sense of being threatened by the arrogant claims of positivism. Whereas curiosity underlies scientific research, this sense of uneasiness is the prime motive behind metaphysical inquiry.

A word needs to be said with regard to the distinction between curiosity and uneasiness. Curiosity, one may say, is the attitude of a scientist in his striving to grasp and analyse an object, to understand and solve the problems that are posed before him, although they do not affect him as a person. His own identity is taken for granted.

> "To be curious is to start from a particular fixed centre"(9).

In contrast to this, uneasiness is basically an uncertainty of one's own centre. When I am anxious about the safety of a friend it is bound to affect the stability of my own self. Curiosity turns into uneasiness in direct proportion to the extent that it is concerned with what cannot be separated from me (10). Unlike curiosity a solution cannot be applied to

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7. M.J. p.288 8. B.H. p.45 9. H.V. p.138
10. H.V. p.138, P.I. p.24.

uneasiness.

Metaphysical uneasiness takes root in the insolent claims of the objective empiricism of technocracy, posing for us the terrifying danger of reducing everything,especially man, to the purely natural. The machine-like qualities of modern life ignore one's being, rendering it meaningless. The realm of the problematic tends to exorcise everything that is personal and intimate. There is a need, therefore, to restore what has been lost.

> "In such a world the ontological need, the need of being is exhausted in exact proportion to the breaking up of personality on the one hand and, on the other, to the triumph of the category of the 'purely natural' and the consequent atrophy of the faculty of wonder"(11).

The word "wonder" is important. Marcel saw the experience of wonderment (θαυμαζειν) as a fundamental datum of philosophical research (12). This can be linked with the notion of receptivity, which is discussed later. In fact his clear distinction between problem and mystery helps to elucidate the nature of the restoration of what has been lost at the hands of objectivisation. A problem, as was seen, is something which is set before man. The natural is the province of the problematic. A mystery, on the other hand, is something in which one finds oneself involved. It cannot be set before one in its entirety (13).

> "A mystery is a problem which encroaches upon its own data"(14)

Of course there is always the danger of a mystery being perverted into a problem. The problem of evil is a clear

11. P.E.p.4 12. E.B.H.D.p.11 13. B.H.p.109 14. P.E.p.8

example. One may be tempted to view the evil in the world from the outside, seeing it as the defective functioning of a machine. On the other hand, however, one may realise that one cannot step aside from the fact of evil; the question of evil involves one's own being. Evil cannot therefore be analysed objectively. It is a mystery that transcends man; there is no "solution". However, the mysterious is not to be confused with the unknowable, to be dispelled with the advance of knowledge. Rather, the mysterious belongs to the realm of the metaproblematic, where objective analysis cannot be practised. The mysterious, the metaproblematic is the ontological (15).

The problem of being is therefore a misleading designation; "ontological mystery" is much more preferable (16). Unless the ontological mystery is to be distorted care must be taken as to how it is approached. The notion of presence is an important factor in Marcel's argument (17). Presence, like mystery, cannot be demonstrated, solved or analysed. In the world of the metaproblematic presence is revealed. Unlike the problematic, it cannot be reduced to details. Being can be recognised or ignored, it can be acknowledged or it can be denied, and this acknowledgement is a free act.

To recapitulate: metaphysical thought,according to Marcel, is reflection on the freely acknowledged mystery, the mystery of being. It arises from a recognition of the need for being in the aridity of today's world. The starting-point of such a proposed ontology is what has been called uneasiness.

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15. B.H.p.109. 16. See the essay The Ontological Mystery.
17. B.H.p. 110

But this uneasiness, as has already been pointed out, involves one's very being; man is unsure of his centre. So there is an understandably easy transition from the question of being to the questions "What am I? What am I that I should ask such questions about being? Why should I be led to such questions?". The need to answer "What am I?" is intimately linked with the ontological exigence.

All this is closely connected with recollection. Marcel is adamant that no ontology is possible "except to a being who is capable of recollecting himself"(18). The notion has been sadly neglected in philosophy, and the word is very difficult to define. Basically, however, it is the act whereby one re-collects oneself as a unity, against the fragmentation of positivist thought. Yet to withdraw into oneself is not to be for oneself; introspection has no place here in the centre of the mystery of being in which "the I into which I withdraw ceases, for as much, to belong to itself"(19). Metaphysical uneasiness, resolving itself in a act of recollection, is understood as a search for one's centre, for one's unity. Yet this is not enough. This search is not conducted within the confines of the subject. The realm of mystery is the realm in which the subject is embraced; the sphere of the meta-problematic cannot be reduced or analysed. As the subject participates in a transcendent reality the philosophical quest understandably goes beyond the limtiations of subjectivity into that very reality in which the subject is involved.

> "The most authentic philosophic thought, it seems to me, situates itself at the meeting point of the self

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18. P.E. p.12 19. P.E. p.13

and the other"(20).

This is no contradiction of Marcel's claim that the fundamental metaphysical question is "What am I?" The question of others and the question of oneself are one and the same question. If others do not exist neither does the self.

> "If others elude me, I elude myself, for my substance is made of them"(21).

Marcel acknowledges his indebtedness to W.E. Hocking's The Meaning of God in Human Experience for his thesis that we cannot appprehend others without apprehending ourselves (22). This does not imply that the distinction between the domain of the self and of the other is not justified, but rather that it is philosophically sterile.

Although not a pragmatist Marcel holds that there is a direct connection between need and metaphysics. Ontological exigency can, of course, be swept aside and disposed of; on the other hand it can be acknowledged and appreciated as "an appeal to a more intimate understanding, to a more personal communication"(23). Only by communicating with ourselves is it possible to be free from the stifling effects of functionalised automation, but the greatest obstacle to this communication is self-consciousness. There are only two levels where there is no self-consciousness, where communication is possible; one is that of the uninhibited child, the other is that transcendent level where the self has in some way overcome itself. Obviously the philosopher cannot go back to childhood, and therefore he must aim at that transcendence whereby he is able to regain those modes of communication which have been lost.

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20. P.I. p.26 21. P.I. p.24, cf.H.V.p.138 22. P.I.p.26
23. P.I. p.27

The aim is to illuminate the world of concrete relations and communication which the impersonal organisation of technocratic society almost succeeds in destroying. The whole discussion of communication and intersubjectivity hinges on the need of alienated man to discover his true self.

The inadequacy of an objective analysis of the crucial question "What am I?" has been touched upon.

" 'What am I?' cannot be converted into the question 'What is he?' without becoming meaningless"(24).

But granted this, are there no alternatives to considering the question as involving other people? For instance, it may be possible for a person to understand what he himself is by an analysis of the contents of his own life. But is a person his own life? Marcel argues against such a suggestion. A diary may be more personal than the files of the Information Service, but it is totally inadequate in answering the question "Who am I?". The details of a diary may be very intimate and may reveal how the person concerned was feeling at that time. But a diary is very subjective and very selective in its contents. Again, as a person matures his attitudes and thoughts change. Often a person finds it difficult to identify himself with what was written in a diary a number of years previously; such a document becomes of purely historical interest. Many of Marcel's criticisms apply to the artist and his paintings for they do not express everything that he was. Moreover, Marcel poses the example of the man who leaves behind no book or work of art. Is he nothing? Marcel rallies the support of Sartre's Les Mains Sales to demonstrate the impossibility

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24. M.J. p.276

of recognising oneself in the completed act. The act is over and done with, and thereby any intimate knowledge of it is impossible (25). The argument then that one is coterminous with one's life must be rejected.

The impossibility of understanding one's true nature within the confines of one's own subjectivity is underlined by Marcel in his criticism of other idealist notions of consciousness. So much of the difficulty of finding transcendent experience is due to the prejudice that has dominated philosophy.

> "The prejudice consisted in admitting that all experience in the end comes down to a self's experience of its own internal states."(26)

Marcel insists that experience is not subjective, for one is concerned with a reality beyond oneself: "consciousness is above all consciousness of something which is other than itself."(27) The fundamental error in this respect is in thinking that opacity is related to otherness. There is nothing more difficult than attempting to see the true self. The idealists were misguided in treating the consciouness of the thinking self as a kind of luminous centre, trying to penetrate the surrounding darkness. On the contrary, the "obscurity of the external world is a function of my own obscurity to myself"(28).

The considerations just dealy with only serve to demonstrate why "What am I?" inevitably involves the consideration of the existence of others, and why it is so intrinsically concerned with intersubjectivity.

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25. M.B. 1 p.161 26.M.B.1 p.49 27. M.B. 1 p.52
28. B.H. p.17

"I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others"(29). Awareness and knowledge of self is preceded by awareness of others. The "I" relies on its social context for its meaning and expression. Marcel takes the example of a small child to illustrate this assertion (30). When a child has picked some flowers his first reaction, when he brings them to his mother, is to shout "It was I who picked these..... no one else." He is asking for admiration and gratitude. He offers himself to the other in order to receive a special tribute. A similar example can be taken from the adult world, although the reality of the situation may be obscured by subtlety and hypocrisy. Think of an amateur composer. When someone hears him play one of his pieces he may ask "Is that Fauré?". "No," he bashfully replies,"it's my own composition." The same wish for self-acclamation can be discerned here as in the small child.... And so the examples could go on.

In all such cases self-awareness is a product of social consciousness. But is this always the case? What about the statement "I am tired" ? Surely that does not involve anyone else. Here is a simple feeling,a statement in no way related or mediatised. Yet Marcel would claim that even this absolute immediate presupposes a kind of dialogue. Someone is tired. Who is? I am. The "I" only has a meaning in the context of an interlocutor for whom the "I" counts as a person.

> "And I only become a given person for myself through the mediating idea of the other for whom I am a given person"(31)

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29. B.H. p.113 30. H.V. p.13f, M.B. 1 pp.175-7 31.M.J.p.145

It is clear that I am only a given person for myself through the mediation of another. Certainly self-awareness and self-love do presuppose a pre-existent "I". But it can only be postulated; in this vacuum it cannot be defined or qualified. Awareness of the existence of others must precede awareness of self.

Awareness of others, then, makes knowledge of the self possible; a dialogue with the self can take place. The "I" is discovered as an indefinable presence. One is present to oneself. But this presence is more than just being there. It is linked to an awareness of one's existence, bound up with a desire to be recognised by others, to be seen as a person. The other acts as a means of integrating the self(32). Awareness of others around one is integral to any intimacy with oneself.

> But, on the other hand, this intimacy can be lost.
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> "I can become wrapped up in myself to the point of no longer communicating with myself at all, much less with others."(33)

This intimacy can be lost because of self-consciousness. The young child brought flowers to his mother, but this was not really altruistic; the action was a means of winning adulation, of gaining self-confidence. The others exist for the sake of the self. The "poseur", as Marcel characterises him, appears to take an interest in others, but in actual fact is entirely wrapped up with the self. Here is a form of flattery, a pretension.

> "From the moment I become preoccupied about the effect I want to produce on the other person, my every act,

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32. H.V. p.15 33. P.I. p.154

word and attitude loses its authenticity."(34)

There is a basic observation to be made here. The self-conscious I, the egoist, treats the other person solely as a means, not as a person, an end in itself. The other is a medium whereby the egoist can form an image of himself. He is not concerned with discovering his real self, he never faces the question "What am I?". On the contrary his sole aim is to bolster up his preconceived notions of what he would like himself to be; the other person is a means of escaping his true identity.

Consequently the egoist is very vulnerable. Encumbered with his own anxieties he feels the world to be a threat to his self-image. He closes in on himself, unable to open himself (disponibilité) to the presence of others. The other is only a means; any idea of treating the other person as a person is ruled out. This is the very opposite of what is termed intersubjectivity.

When one treats another merely as a means to one's own ends, then there is no communication. In that situation one is not concerned with the other person as a human being, but only with one's own interests. Marcel saw the chief evil of modern technocratic society as fostering this attitude. In our competitive society man is set as rival against his fellow-man. This system inflates self-consciousness and perpetuates individualism, so that one's personal interest in people is obliterated by treating them as mere competitors. Marcel, as was emphasised at the beginning of this chapter, recognised a society such as this as a very impersonal one,

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34. H.V. p.17

for no real communication between persons takes place, for personal encounter is ignored as of no significance. This is a world of self-contained monads, where true self-knowledge is impossible so long as men are wrapped up in themselves. Authentic self-awareness does not come by introspection and self-consciousness.

Marcel's theory of intersubjectivity is an attempt to understand philosophically the importance of personal communication between people and its precise location in human dialogue. If true communication cannot be found in the superficial acquaintances of impersonal mass-society, where is it to be found? In order to answer this basic problem, Marcel distinguished between "I-it" relationships and "I-thou" relationships. Indeed, we have seen that as early as his Metaphysical Journal he had come to understand the full significance of the second person. Far from being just a grammatical term, it indicates the whole area of personal encounter. As an illustration of his theory Marcel took the instance of meeting a stranger in the train.(35) The conversation may at first be trivial, but as the stranger reveals more and more of his personality, he becomes less and less a "him". As one becomes aware of the unique qualities of his personality, one addresses him as a "thou". So long as two people take no account of the depth of one another's being, so long as they treat each other as objects, there can be no personal encounter, no intersubjective bond. Again, Marcel maintained that so long as there is only an impersonal relationship each individual is a prisoner of his own self-made image. We need to experience the presence of another personal

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35. M.J. p.146, E.B.H.D. p.40.

being in order to attain authentic self-knowledge.

> "Generally speaking the more my interlocutor is exterior to me the more I am by the same token exterior to myself; the more I am conscious not of what I am, but of my qualities and my faults, my 'particular characteristics' "(36).

As long as it is felt that the other person is treating one as of no personal importance, one concentrates on one's own public image. But when two people discover something of common interest they are made aware of a bond between them. When the relationship is transformed into a dialogue between two subjects, who are deeply aware of one another's inner self, the participants discover in the encounter with one another's being the hidden depths of their own being. In other words, the intersubjective dialogue opens up a true dialogue with oneself, and this is impossible to attain so long as one is shut up within oneself.

In the "I-it" relationship the other person is treated as a third person: what does he want? At this level there is suspicion, for the other person is seen as an outsider. But when the ice is broken, the relationship takes on an intimate character. One ceases to concentrate on oneself and acknowledges the presence of the other. As he ceases to be a third person, he is drawn into the direct encounter of persons. The "I-thou" dialogue can bring the persons concerned so close together that they form a personal unity: "that is, he participates more and more in the absolute which is unrelatedness and we cease more and more to be 'somebody' and 'somebody else'. We become simply 'us' "(37).

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36. M.J. p.146 n.1

37. M.J. p.146

All human relationships fluctuate in varying degrees between the I-it and the I-thou. Marriage is no exception to this. At some time or other one's wife may be just that "silly creature who should have been darning socks, but there she was clucking round the tea-table with a lot of old hens". (38) On the other hand there are quite mystical momemts when she is seen as the bearer of a unique value. Marcel here refers to a "hierarchy of invocations", "ranging from the call upon another which is like ringing a bell for a servant to the quite other sort of call which is really like a kind of prayer"(38a).

In many of the normal encounters of daily life people are used as objects. One may stop someone in the street to ask him for directions. In this case one is treating him as if he were a reference book. No account is being taken of his interiority, and it is this form of relationship that is being fostered by the technological society. Nevertheless, even in this extreme case some intersubjective light may break through. The stranger one stops for help when one is lost may show unexpected cordiality. The person, that was once merely the source of information, takes on the reality of a "thou".

> "We must take care to notice that the thou appears when I put my emphasis not on the idea of information, but on the idea of answer - which has the implication of community (us-ness)"(39).

The "thou" is someone that is felt to be capable of replying to oneself. But it is essentially something one invokes rather than judges to be capable of answering one. This answering, involving one's interiority, is to oneself as a person, that is, as a "thou".

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38. M.B. 1 p.179 38a. ibidem. 39. M.J. p.199

There is nothing more irritating for someone than when he realises that people are talking about him in his presence. The person concerned feels that he is being treated as an object, a thing. One might say that he feels that he is not with the others. "With" is an operative term in the notion of intersubjectivity; Marcel in fact compares it to the supra-relational reality that Bradley thought he had discovered in "feeling" (40). Bradley considered that feeling was of prime importance. In his idealist philosophy feeling provides the foundation on which all higher forms of knowledge are constructed. Also, feeling is an instance of what Bradley called "a non-relational immediate felt unity"(41) - immediate experience.

The word "with" does not properly belong to the objective world. Probably "togetherness" expresses the reality it represents better than anything else, although there is no French equivalent. Maybe "entre-nous" is the nearest one can get in that language. In a factory the collective mass of men may be considered objectively merely as the sum of various functions. Yet there is something that mere arithmetic cannot take account of. In varying degrees there may be a sense of common fate, a common task.

> "The feeling of community in effort and struggle that such factory workers have is quite enough in itself to deprive us of any right to treat them as simple units of force that can be added to each other"(42)

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40. E.B.H.D. pp.40-1. 41. Bradley,F.H. (1914) Essays on Truth and Reality p.176, quoted by Wollheim (1969) p.128.
42. M.B. 1 p.180.

The experiences of ordeal that men were subjected to in the German concentration camps served to weld them together into an intimate bond. This kind of reality, whether it is in the factory, or on the bus, or in a prisoner-of-war camp, is enriched according to the extent that the people concerned know themselves and know their companions both in their uniqueness as persons and in their common fate.

Obviously the "with" that cements these relationships together expresses something much deeper than mere juxtaposition. When a chair is placed next to a table the relation between the two is no more than one of external proximity. There is no question of it affecting the essence of either of them. In contrast to this, however, stands the intimate relationship between two people mutually accepting each other as persons; unlike the former case here the relationship profoundly affects both parties. In this case an intimate bond is established between the two, by means of a common interest; a unity is created in relation to which all non-participants are "third party", intruders. Two men may have shared common experiences in a concentration camp. Even their wives, not having shared their husbands' common fate, would be outsiders. To a third person the two men seem to share a common "secret". Marcel on various occasions cites his play "Quatuor en fa dièze" as anticipating this important theme (43). Here is portrayed the interaction of the complex relationships that exist between a woman, her first husband (a musician), and the musician's brother, whom she marries after the divorce. In the course of the play the woman comes

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43. M.B. 1 p.180, E.B.H.D. pp.48-50.

to a realisation of a supra-personal unity between the two men, in relation to which she feels herself to be an outsider.

This close bond between people could be described as togetherness. But this togetherness is not necessarily dependent on spatial considerations. Marcel illustrates this point with this example: two people may be eating together, but because one of them is so engrossed in his food the other feels a sense of isolation; he feels that his companion is more interested in eating than in fellowship. This irritation can lead him to think of his greedy companion as a "him"; he conducts a dialogue with himself concerning this other person. As true dialogue between these people is impossible there can be no fellowhip, such as is to be found in the "I-thou" relationship. Because one man is uninterested in the other the latter is compelled to fall back on himself. But the relationship will be transformed into an encounter between two people as soon as both parties take notice of each other's presence and personal integrity.

"From the moment he takes me into consideration, he ceases to be pure object for myself"(44).
As soon as such a rapport is established then one can say that these persons are together. But the point is that this togetherness is not dependent on spatial considerations. For instance, a long and deep relationship can be maintained,even if the two people involved are parted for some time. They can still feel that they belong together, even though many miles separate them.

Marcel stresses that it is impossible to objectivise

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44. P.I. p.154

the "I-thou" relationship. Such an attempt is utterly inconsistent with the theory of intersubjectivity.

> "If we cling to a mode of objective definition it will always be in our power to say that the Thou is an illusion"(45).

Intersubjectivity is to be defined in terms of "presence" and "invocation", rather than in objective categories. Only participants can fully understand the realities of the relationship. The important feature of the intersubjective bond is the "secret". By this Marcel means that factor which binds two people together. The I-thou relationship is exclusive in that the outsider has no knowledge of this secret; he cannot see the essential nature of the relationship. To use Marcel's terms, the third person is excluded from the relationship, and is in no position to make an informed judgement about it.

Marcel uses two extreme cases to illustrate his point (46). In the first, a banker has approached someone and the latter has entrusted him with some money. A friend of his informs him that the banker is a suspicious character, and his warning turns out to be correct. In the second case a mother refuses to despair of her son, despite the fact that he is a crook and a layabout. On the surface the two cases seem similar, and yet in the first case there is no personal relationship between the banker and the other person, while in the second there is the intimate bond between mother and son. The intersubjective unity is born of faith, hope and love (47). It cannot be asserted in terms of a logical principle. In fact,

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45. B.H. p.115. 46. M.B. 2 p.80f. 47. See below, p.93f.

it cannot be asserted at all, for assertion belongs to the world of given fact. But the intersubjective nexus cannot be given to someone intimately involved.

> "Without doubt the intersubjective nexus cannot be in any way asserted: it can only be acknowledged"(48).

The paradigm of every intersubjective relationship is that between the believer and God. God as absolute Thou cannot be recognised by the third person. Any treatment of God as a "him" is to be ruled out. The presence of God can only be evoked and acknowledged by the believer.

It is impossible,however, to continue examining intersubjectivity without saying a little more about presence. It will serve to clarify the distinction between objectivity and intersubjectivity. Many of the arguments, however, duplicate what was said concerning the significance of "with". What is the distinction between an object and a presence ? It is possible for one to be in a room with someone, but he is not really present, he does not make his presence felt. It is not because it is impossible to communicate with him, for one may indeed do so, but there is something missing. Marcel expresses it as "communication without communion"(49). He may understand what is being said to him, but he does not take the person who is addressing him into consideration. Consequently this lack of true communication affects one's relation with oneself: "this stranger interposes himself between me and my own reality, he makes me in some sense also a stranger to myself; I am not really myself while I am with him"(50).

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48. M.B. 2 p.10 49. M.B. 1 p.205,P.I. p.237. 50.M.B.1 p.205.

On the other hand, the presence of someone can really make itself felt. It reveals a person to himself: "the other, if I feel him present, renews me interiorly in some way"(51). To Marcel this was one of the most profound existential experiences. In such situations the words used are immaterial. The experience of a bereavement is illuminating here (52). Friends that one has known for years may only utter platitudes, while a comparative stranger, by a look, a gesture, an intonation or even a thoughtful silence, may bear witness to his presence. All this indicates that there are presences and loyalties in this life that go deeper than worldly and professional relations.

It may be objected, however, that such cases of a felt presence or non-presence are still based on an objective relation. Is it right then to dissociate presence and objectivity ? But, Marcel maintains, there are cases of telepathy where presence is not concerned with spatial relations. Moreover, the continuing presence of his deceased mother had a profound significance for his philosophy (53).

Is this experience of presence merely private and incommunicable ? Certainly not. But on the other hand it is not open to anyone. Rather, it is an intermediary position between the two: "this intermediary given is for a concrete us; it is an open communion of selves, the kind which is formed around a work that is intimately loved but which we know will remain a closed book for an infinity of creatures"(54).

All this helps to clarify the reason for the difficulty in speaking of presence. One cannot teach a person to make his presence felt. The terms acquiring and grasping are

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51. P.I. p.238. 52. E.B.H.D. p.67. 53. E.B.H.D. pp.24-5.
54. E.B.H.D. p.68.

completely out of place here, being related to self-consciousness. On the contrary, presence "belongs only to the being who is capable of giving himself"(55). In this respect presence is closely allied to charm, and neither can presence be abstracted from the personal subject. Both belong to the world of intersubjectivity. If presence is not a quality to be acquired, then it is misleading to think in terms of a transmission of presence from one subject to another. The transmission of objective messages and the communion in which presences become manifest to one another are not the same thing. Rather, it is to be understood as "the expression of a will which seeks to reveal itself to me"(56). At the heart of the presence there is someone who takes the depths of another person into consideration.

When discussing the example of the two people eating together it was evident that one's own preoccupations can act as a barrier between oneself and others. Moreover, one can be so self-conscious that one is unable to open oneself to the presence of others. Indeed, true communication is only possible when individuals are willing to accept the presence of other beings. Marcel called this willingness "receptivity".

The notion of receptivity, which is neither purely active nor passive, is vital to Marcel's philosophy. O'Malley sees a close link between this notion and intersubjectivity.

> "It also furthers the reconciliation of the person's distinctiveness with his very real fellowship with other persons, so providing an experiential basis for

55. P.I. p.153. 56. P.I. p.153.

Marcel's equally important concept of intersubjectivity"(57). This receptivity is the act whereby one opens oneself to the presence of another. "Disponibilité" is the keyword here. This could be translated as "availability" though Marcel himself prefers "handiness". The opposite of this, "non-availability", is identical with being occupied with the self (58). According to Marcel, where there is self- consciousness or non-availability, there can be no intersubjective bond.

Intersubjectivity then, is essentially an openness. Marcel used a variety of metaphors to deepen our understanding of his theory. His distinction between open and closed, found in Bergson, is probably his most important one (59), although he used the imagery of light as well. Intersubjectivity involves being together in the light of mutual awareness. All these metaphors seek to elucidate the notion of presence. The following extended passage draws out the full connection between presence and intersubjectivity.

> "The other, in so far as he is other, only exists for me in so far as I am open to him, in so far as he is a Thou. But I can only open to him in so far as I cease to form a circle with myself, inside which I somehow place the other, or rather his idea; for inside this circle the other is no longer the other qua other, but the other qua related to me"(60).

The intersubjective bond is sustained by fidelity, love and hope. Marcel gradually came to appreciate the importance of fidelity. He finally arrived at the expression "being as the place of fidelity"(61). Fidelity, he says, is the recognition of something permanent. But how is this possible ?

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57. O'Malley (1966) p.11. 58. B.H. p.80. 59. P.I. p.239.
60. B.H. p.116 61. B.H.pp.47 & 113.

How, for instance, can I remain faithful to someone by means of a promise ? Marcel has Gide in mind when facing this dilemma (62). From his own experience he relates how, when visiting someone in hospital,he was moved by compassion and promised to visit the sick person on other occasions. Yet he knew that his feelings towards the plight of the sick person would change. Should he remain faithful to his promise, regardless of his own feelings ? Or should he be honest with himself as Gide would suggest ? But there are the even more serious implications of a promise of marriage. How can one undertake such a betrothal without knowing the conditions and unforeseen events of the future ? Surely this deficient knowledge of the full conditions and implications of such a promise makes it basically dishonest.

Understandable as this dilemma may be, Marcel maintains that it implies a mistaken view of fidelity. The following passage expounds his position.

> "Faithfulness is, in reality, the exact opposite of inert conformism. It is the active recognition of something permanent, not formally, after the manner of a law, but ontologically; in this sense, it refers invariably to a presence, or to something which can be maintained within us and before us as a presence, but which, ipso facto, can be just as well ignored, forgotten and obliterated; and this reminds us of that menace of betrayal which to my mind, overshadows our whole world"(63).

The closeness of fidelity to the notions of presence and

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62. E.B.H.D. p.66. 63. P.E. pp.21-2, E.B.H.D. p.66.

intersubjectivity is evident. Being is to be found in intersubjectivity and being is the place of fidelity. But if fidelity is linked to the presence of others what about fidelity to a cause ? For Marcel the latter, if it is not a form of idolatry, is at least a derivative of the former. Fidelity is active and creative, it is not passive obedience to some abstract principle or ideology as found in the modern totalitarian state. It is the active sustaining of the living presence of another. A loved one may die, but his presence will not necessarily be limited to the photograph treasured by the bereaved. The image, after all, is only kept for the love of the being himself. Fidelity keeps alive the intersubjective bond between the two people. Such fidelity makes it impossible for the loved one to be reduced to a mere memory or image (64). Fidelity, therefore, sustains presence: "fidelity is never fidelity to one's self, but it is referred to what I called the hold the other being has over us"(65). Later on Marcel has this to say:

> "The role of fidelity consists not in creating anything at all, but in unrelentingly dissipating the clouds which threaten to overcast - what? an image? Surely not but a presence...."(66).

In modern society the alienation that the individual experiences makes it impossible for him to owe any allegiance to it. He does not recognise society's goals as his own. Therefore the relationship between the individual and the society is an external one. But Marcel maintained that true being cannot be found in external relations. Being, with the values of faith, love and fidelity cannot be found in mass

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64. P.I. p.191, H.V. p.198. 65. B.H. p.53 66. P.I. p.193.

society. It is in the intersubjective bond, where individuals meet in a situation of mutual respect, that trust and love can be established. Such relationships happen where certain individuals share a common concern. They pledge themselves to a cause. They remain faithful to it, no matter what happens, because they recognise their own self-fulfilment in their sharing of this common inspiration. Marcel's language in the Gifford Lectures is reminiscent of Royce: "the more definitely I am aiming at some purpose or other, the more vividly I am aware of being alive" (67).

The cause to which one is faithful does not merely serve to bind two people together. Fidelity is creative in that the relationship it creates allows the people concerned to gain an intimate awareness of each other and of themselves. Knowledge of an individual cannot be separated from the act of trust, fidelity and love. Just as in Royce true human relationships are founded by an act of loyalty to a cause, so in Marcel the intersubjective bond is established by fidelity. Creative fidelity is bound to the consecration of oneself to a cause that transcends the individual. The true being of human existence cannot be attained by an isolated individual, but through the richness of deep relationships.

Just as fidelity is the unconditional act whereby the intersubjective bond is sustained, so is love. In the proposal of marriage the promise of fidelity is made no matter what lies in store in the future; similarly, the lover in his proposal to the one he loves makes an unconditional vow: "I shall continue to love you no matter what happens".

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67. M.B. 1, p.162.

Again, when the two lovers are parted by death the bond cannot be broken. Love is in fact an affirmation: "Thou shalt not die". The departed loved one is evoked. The act of love sustains the bond between them. True, the dead person in this evocation does not answer, but all that can really be said is that he does not inform: "we have no grounds for stating that he does not enrich by his real presence."(68).

By this connection with presence, love or charity is closely linked with availability. At the heart of love is a presence which is the absolute gift of oneself.

The sustaining power of fidelity and love in the inter-subjective relationship would not be complete without hope. Hope is always to be associated with communion. As a corollary of this Marcel identifies despair with solitude. Hope is to be radically dissociated from desire. Desire is the expression of egoism and self-consciousness for it arises from an experience of captivity, or any other ordeal, and the natural dangers that are entailed.

"I shall always be exposed to the temptation of shutting the door which encloses me within myself "(69).

The only remedy to such a temptation is hope and communion. "I hope" cannot be fully understood within the narrow confines of "I". Hope is the means of rising above the despair of solitude towards a more intimate and fruitful communion.

"I hope in thee for us " is perhaps the very heart of hope's significance for intersubjectivity. It is here that the connection between the "thou" and the absolute "Thou" can be seen, for the latter is the link between "thou" and "us".

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68. M.J. p.163. 69. H.V. p.60.

It is the guarantee, the cement that holds us together. To despair of the self, or of us, is essentially to despair of Thou. (70). Nevertheless, the absolute Thou is not to be deduced from the finite thou (71), but rather evoked by the intersubjective communion as a means of sustenance and strength.

This constant evocation of the world of intersubjectivity from which the "I" can truly emerge, by fidelity, love and hope, is in constant danger of degenerating into the world of designation, of objectivisation. Marcel suggests a series of metaphors, especially from the world of music, as the best safeguard against this.

> "It is a world in which everything is in communication, in which everything is bound together."(72)

But this is beyond the world of pure relations, in which the "I" is reduced to the "status of one element in a numerical total"(73). Instead, intersubjectivity emphasises the underlying reality, a community that is fundamental to an ontology. Without this community, which the intersubjective bond evokes, it would be impossible to understand human relations.

Clearly this community that has been invoked cannot be objectivised or verified. The secret of the relationship is hidden from the objective scrutiny of a third person.

The world in which the question "What am I?" can be answered is a world in which everything is in communication, in which everything is bound together. This lies in marked contrast to the mass competitive society with its perpetuation of self-consciousness. Here the human world is reduced to

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70. H.V. pp.60-1. 71. M.J. p,284. 72. M.B. 2 p.15.
73. M.B. 2 p.17.

an agglomeration of non-communicating monads. Yet in the world of intersubjectivity, the sense of community is brought to the fore.

> "Person - engagement - community - reality: there we have a sort of chain of notions which, to be exact, do not readily follow from each other by deduction ..... but of which the union can be grasped by an act of the mind."(74)

The "we" has priority over the "I" (75). One cannot constitute oneself as interiority except in the context of the underlying community that exists between oneself and others. Only when we are together in the light of one another's presence do we gain access to each other. At the same time one is one's true self only in connection with this communion. If it were broken one would lose one's very self.

The significance of this community, constituted by the infinite interweaving of human relationships, is well illustrated by Marcel's understanding of sin (76). Sin makes us aware of the community of mankind. If we are unaware of the fact that sin involves others we can so easily become isolated from them.

> "Whenever sin is misunderstood in its essence it can isolate us. On the other hand, it can bind us and become the principle of communion."(77)

The problem, or rather mystery, of sin can only be revealed, and revelation for Marcel is concerned with an infinite communion, while at the same time God is "the place of infinite communion"(78).

In relation to this communion the "him" is a third person, an outsider. One does not address a "him", one talks about "him" with a "thou". "He" belongs to the world of objectivity.

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74. H.V. p.22. 75. P.I. p.201. 76. P.I. pp.99-114. 77. P.I.p.109
78. P.I. p.112.

Indeed, all objective knowledge is understood as a third party in relation to a dialogue. Moreover, it is only in this relation that one can understand objective knowledge at all: "it is in function of this dialogue and in relation to it that a he or it can be defined, that is, an independent world"(79).

Marcel concluded that knowledge is a product of a community; men learn by their dialogue with others. Royce, of course, maintained that scientists belong to a community in which they share their findings with one another. Marcel recognised the importance of this theory in his own search to understand the distinction between objectivity and personal knowledge, although its implications needed to be developed.

> "The notion of this ideal city is only a halt, or a lodge, on a steep, stony, mountain path that must lead us much further on"(80).

Although he criticised Royce for objectivising the ideal community, when it ought to be understood as a discussion of ideas between men with a common interest, nevertheless he recognised his indebtedness to Royce's work on this point. The information forms a third party in relation to a conversation in which both participants are mutually enriched by their exchange of ideas. Whereas Royce saw truth as the possession of an ideal community, Marcel argued that men were continually striving towards it in their continuing dialogue. Marcel puts it this way:

> "It is just as if two climbers were tackling the same hill, up different approaches; allowing that the climbers can communicate directly with each other, at any moment, through portable radio or television sets"(81).

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79. M.J. p.146. 80. M.B.1 p.73. 81. M.B.1 p.74.

To sum up his thesis: objectivity involves a dialogue, in relation to which objective knowledge is triadic. It has reference to "an order that implies threefold inter-relations"(82).

In other words, when one is concerned with a fact of information one is involved in a triadic relation, not dyadic (83). If the relation were dyadic it would include oneself and the object of interest. But this does not happen, for Marcel has established that one is continually in dialogue with someone else. For instance, if one was wanting to learn about flowers, one would consult someone else or a book. In a triadic relation there is always a subject, an object and a mediator; in this case a book or someone else acts as a mediator between oneself and one's object of interest - flowers. The three terms of the triadic relation are to be found whenever there is a dialogue (I-thou) concerning an object (him or it). The third party, the object, could be anything,including another person. One may be discussing someone with a friend and in this situation the friend acts as a mediator between oneself and the third party. There is never any direct dialogue between subject and object.

Of course, it is possible to have a dialogue with oneself concerning something or someone. "There is in me something intersubjective, that is to say, some possibilities of intimacy with myself."(84). But, as has been stated, there is a constant danger of this possibility being forfeited by one's own self-consciouness. In all these variations Marcel is attempting to demonstrate the all-embracing reach of the intersubjective dialogue. Objectivity is not an illusion as the idealists

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82. M.B.2 p.13 83. M.J. p.146 84. P.I. p.153

would have us believe, but it should not dominate our thought. It is subordinate to the sphere of personal knowledge; that is, to the reality of personal communication. Wherever the triadic relation is to be found it is constituted by the three basic terms - the "I", the "thou" and the "he" or "it".

Marcel's central aim was not to demonstrate the importance of the triadic relation, but to establish the fact that, important as it was, it was an inferior form of knowledge to personal knowledge. The latter can only be found within the dyadic relation - the intersubjective bond. On many occasions the triadic relation is merely a prelude to the dyadic relation. Within the dyad there is no mediator. The "thou" of course can act as a mediator to a third party, but the latter lies outside the relationship. Within the I-thou encounter there is a direct awareness of two subjects. Two people can become totally aware of the depths of another soul as well as their own. This, for Marcel, is the pinnacle of human knowledge.

It is interesting to see how a triad is transformed into a dyad. One may have been discussing someone with oneself or a friend. But when one becomes aware of this person as a thou the former dialogue is no longer necessary, for one can gain a deeper knowledge of him personally.

Moreover, as long as this person was a third person a dialogue continues within oneself. One is not a fully integrated personality. Yet in the presence of a thou an integration takes place within the self. Marcel is more explicit in the following vital passage.

> "Instead of all objectivity, especially that of 'him', being related to a certain dialogue between me and myself, which implies a triadic relation, when I am in the

presence of a thou, an inner integration takes place within me, by means of which a dyad becomes possible"(85). A triadic relation, formed between two people, is only stopped from becoming a dyad because of the self-consciouness of one or both of them. Once a dyadic relation is established fidelity, love and hope can be discovered. Intersubjectivity is dependent on all those concerned possessing the quality "disponibilité". The triadic relation, consisting of "I", "me" and "him" becomes in the intersubjective bond a dyad, comprising "I" and "thou". The triad has become a dyad. Within the community there is a dyadic relation, while, in regard to objectivity, the community forms a triadic relation. Within the dyadic relation there is no place for the third party. The third party lies outside the dyad.

Obviously the integrating process that takes place within the subject is crucial. Human relations tend to oscillate between the triadic form and the point where two people become "one", when the primacy of the "we" is asserted.

At the outset the priority of the question "what am I?" was asserted. What bearing do the above conclusions have on this? Clearly the crisis, the metaphysical uneasiness with regard to the question "What am I?" came about because of a confusion between the personal and the objective. Only when a true perspective can be restored will the question be answered. An objective analysis was inadequate; but at the

85. R.I. p.53:"Au lieu que toute objectivité, et notamment celle de lui, se réfère à un certain dialogue entre moi et moi-même, ce qui implique une relation triadique, lorsque je suis en présence du toi, une unification intérieure s'opère en moi, à la faveur de laquelle une dyade devient possible".

same time this is not to deny a rightful place to objectivity.

The question, then, first demands that objectivity be placed within its true perspective. It is to be understood only with regard to a world of communication, a world of dialogue. Here lies the profound significance of a distinction between the triadic relation and the dyadic. In intersubjectivity the triadic relation does not have a "person" as a third party; this is reserved for the field of objective knowledge. True human relationships and persons are to be found within the intersubjective dyad. The objective independent world can only be understood in relation to this dialogue. By firmly understanding the significance and limits of the triadic relations and the intersubjective bond, Marcel hoped to discover a means of expressing what it really means to be a person, to answer the question "What am I?", while at the same time trying to find a true perspective for the world of objectivity.

CHAPTER SIX

The Theory of Interpretation.

It has already been shown that Marcel, in his attempts to distinguish between the realms of objective knowledge and human existence, found in Royce's theory of interpretation a way through the impasse (1). Knowledge does not merely involve a subject and a object, but includes a third party. It was this conclusion, that knowledge is triadic, not dyadic, that provided Marcel with so much help. It remains, then, to understand more fully what Royce meant when he said that knowledge is triadic.

In The Problem of Christianity Royce's concern was to give a detached appraisal of the issues raised by Christianity, namely those of the individual, the community and atonement. But these were not to be confined to the Church's dogma, no matter how basic they were to the Christian faith. These were questions that had deep roots in human existence. In other words, even if Christianity as a faith did not exist, if there were no Christians in the world, the questions that Royce raised would still be asked. What is the place of the individual in the wider community? How does the community survive if its members are disloyal? A true community is one that enables its individual members to relate to one another, and for Royce Christianity meant the establishing of such a community. The book, then, was concerned mainly with examining the nature of this community, and it was his theory of interpretation that provided him with an answer to this problem.

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1. See above, pp. 64-5.

In surveying the general trends of western philosophy Royce saw epistemology dominated by two basic schools of thought. Knowledge was derived either from one's perceptions or one's conceptions, and philosophers had usually fallen on one side of the fence or the other. Cognition could be interpreted in either way, but there was no consideration given to a third way. This basic classification of philosophies sees them as either an intuitional empiricism or a rationalism. In clarifying his argument Royce chose two philosophers to represent these alternative modes of thought - Bergson and Plato. The former maintained that unlimited perception would render conception superfluous, while the latter considered perception to be a vain show since conception alone could bring one face to face with reality.

In either case the dual classification of perception and conception was thought to be an exhaustive account of man's cognitive processes. But is this right? Royce did not think so. Both approaches to the problem of knowledge did not take into account important aspects of human existence. If everything can be known by perception then all knowledge stems from observable data. On the other hand, if conception is the primary means of knowledge then everything springs from abstract ideas. But there are some aspects of experience that cannot be explained either as data or as abstract ideas. One of the most central facts of human experience is the contact with, and understanding of, one's fellow-men, and yet this cannot be understood in terms of perception or conception. Knowledge of one another is not a question of observing objective facts about other human beings; nor can intercourse between people derive from preconceived ideas. To fathom the

thoughts of someone else involves comprehending his or her attitudes, behaviour, facial expressions and so on. There is no direct way in which two people can understand one another. Communication between humans always involves for Royce a process of interpretation.

Royce goes further than this analysis of the special case of the knowledge of other selves and makes the notion of interpretation the key to his whole theory of knowledge. As communication and dialogue stand at the very heart of human experience, then the theory of knowledge that seeks to understand this process must take precedence over other epistemologies. Interpretation is not merely a third means of approach to epistemology, it is the most important. The failure of philosophy in the past to do full justice to all aspects of human experience was due to its insistence on seeing the problem of knowledge in dyadic terms.

Before proceeding further in the argument a question arises. Can interpretation be understood as a synthesis between conception and perception? To clarify the peculiar nature of interpretation Royce took up an illustration from Bergson's discussion of conception, for in the course of his argument for viewing conception as a derivative of perception Bergson used the analogy of a money transaction. The hard cash of gold coins corresponds to perceptions, while conceptions are represented by mere bank notes. The latter have value only so long as they can be cashed into hard currency.

> "The notes are promises to pay cash. The conceptions are useful guides to possible perceptions"(2).

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2. P.C. p.282.

Bergson's point was clear, and it is certainly true that in some way perceptions do indeed correspond to cash values and conceptions to credit values. But Royce made an important observation here: "in the world of commercial transaction there are other values than simple cash-values and credit values. Perhaps, therefore, in the realm of cognitive processes there may be analogous varieties"(3). In order to adapt Bergson's illustration to his own thesis Royce took the example of the traveller crossing the boundary of a foreign country. On traversing the border both his coins and his bank-notes are no longer the legal tender; it is necessary for him to exchange his money for the currency of the country he is about to enter. This procedure is neither the presentation of cash values nor the offering or accepting of credit values. It is a process of interpreting the cash values of one country into the cash values of another; this constitutes a much different style of transaction from the one conceived by Bergson. By taking up the challenge of the latter's analogy Royce was merely demonstrating that a man's communication with himself and with others involves a mode of cognition very distinct from either perception or conception.

> "Each of us, in every new effort to communicate with our fellow-men, stands, like the traveller crossing the boundary of a new country, in the presence of a largely strange world of perceptions and conceptions"(4).

Certainly it is often the case that one's neighbour's thoughts, intentions and desires can often be regarded with a certain amount of probability as identical with one's own, but usually

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3. P.C. p.282. 4. P.C. p.283.

one's thoughts and fears are highly individual, in which case it is difficult to compare them with a neighbour's. Just as the exchange of bank-notes for cash differs from the exchange of one's own coins for foreign ones, so the process of verifying concepts by obtaining corresponding percepts differs from the process of interpreting the mind of a fellow human being.

The traditional epistemologies involved a dyadic relationship, seeking to define the interaction between subject and object; but the illustration above underlines Royce's dissatisfaction with this approach. As long as philosophy insisted on defining the problem of knowledge in dyadic terms a crucial feature of human existence would be sadly neglected. In discussing the relationship of one human being to another any attempt to explain it in terms of one lonely subject alone with its object would be completely inadequate, as far as Royce was concerned. Dialogue between people involves persons confronting the individuality of one another and trying to understand each other, and this involves a process of interpretation. In other words, when dealing with human existence and relationships one is concerned, not with a series of individual subjects each with their objects, but with a community. Before the process of interpretation is defined it would be as well to elucidate the significance that Royce placed upon the concept of "community".

A community formed by persons involved in interpreting one another is no mere agglomeration of individuals, but a harmonic unity. Indeed, Royce saw the nature of a community as behaving in very much the same way as an individual, and in this respect he was deeply impressed by the work of Wundt (5).

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5. P.C. p.81f.

Wilhelm Max Wundt (1832-1920) held the Chair of Philosophy at Leipzig for 45 years, and in 1879 he founded the first laboratory for psychology in the world, the Psychologisches Institut. It was in the years 1873-74 that Wundt published his monumental Grundzüge de Physiologischen Psychologie, in which he set out the findings of his research. His influence was tremendous and to him is attributed the establishment of the study of psychology as an experimental science (6). In his experimental approach Wundt was greatly concerned to bring psychology into relation with anthropology and sociology. Indeed he believed that experimental psychology would have to be supplemented by "Völkerpsychologie", and in a long series of volumes in the last twenty years of his life he set himself too this task as he had done for experimentation. This great work definitely brought modern psychology into relation with cultural anthropology, to the advantage of both sciences. In his analysis of the workings of the mind he considered the community as important as the individual for our understanding of human behaviour. Wundt saw the human community as behaving like an entity with a mind of its own, and this was for him an empirical conclusion, not a mystical opinion. Languages, customs and religions are all intelligent mental products, which can be psychologically analysed.

Wundt's work equipped Royce for his own theory of the community involved in interpretation. How is a community to be distinguished from a mere crowd ? A crowd is a collection of individuals with no internal coherence, but a community behaves like an individual. Just as the latter has a past,a

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6. The information here is based upon Shipley(1961) and Flugel (1933).

present and a future, so has the former. Both possess a memory. The community has traditions and customs that are an integral part of its behaviour; it is this that decides what is a mob and what is a community.

"A community requires for its existence a history and is greatly aided in its consciousness by a memory"(7). A mere crowd, or even mass society as it is found in modern civilisation, has no such past to share in, nor common future to look forward to. It does not function organically: "hope and memory constitute, in communities, a basis for an unquestionable consciousness of unity, and that this common life in time does not annul the variety of the individual member at any one present moment"(8). Royce argued, in applying these criteria to contemporary experience, that modern society ceased to be a true community as soon as it lost its common identity. Unlike the lifeless impersonal qualities of mass society the true community is a living organism; here men can experience constant communication and dialogue, which is essential to true human living.

If a community possesses an identity, then all its individual members can identify themselves with it, and this is something that members of a crowd cannot do. It follows that when a community enjoys a rich history and culture its members take their inspiration from this, identifying their own past, present and future with that of the community. Hence, when the individual members of a society are unable to identify their pasts and their futures with the past and future of society, then that fellowship degenerates into the collectivism

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7. P.C. p.243. 8. P.C. p.260.

of mass society, where unity is maintained by external coercion. The continuity of the true community depends on the ongoing interpretation of its past to its anticipated future, in which process the present acts as mediator.

> "A community requires for its existence a history and is greatly aided in its consciousness by a memory"(9).

Like an individual, the values of a community have their source in common ideals, and traditions and customs.

In his earlier work Royce had already understood self-awareness as a product of the contrast of oneself with others. The individual becomes aware of his own qualities, peculiarities and deficiencies by his experiences of society. As far as Royce was concerned the self was to be understood in ethical terms, and not as some kind of substance. It is an ideal, not a datum.

> "I am whatever my remembered or anticipated powers, fortunes and plans, caused me to regard with emphasis as myself in contrast with the rest of the world".(10)

Social awareness, then, must come before self-awareness. However, it was his later work, especially in The Problem of Christianity in which this theme was developed. Here knowledge of oneself is still the result of the contrast between the self and the social milieu. To take an obvious example, the person who has a limp will only become aware of his deficiency when he sees other people walking normally: "all such more elaborate self-knowledge is, directly or indirectly, a social product, and a product of social contrasts and oppositions of one sort or another"(11). Only by a comparison with others is it possible

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9. P.C. p.243. 10. W.I. 2 p.288. 11. P.C. p.107.

for a person to discover who he is and for what he is aiming.

The individual, then, attains self-consciousness as a moral being in direct proportion to his awareness of himself as a social being. But a distinction has already been made between what constitutes a true community and what is merely a crowd. The individual is able to identify himself with a community, but how does a person behave when he becomes aware of himself as belonging to a crowd ? According to Royce experience of contemporary society involved many tensions and strained relationships. The individual not only imitates the trends and attitudes of modern mass society, but also reacts against what he feels to be a threat to his own individuality. Unlike a true community, the crowd, far from helping the individual to find his true identity, alienates him. Such a society can teach its members to be its servants, but as it becomes more cultivated the social will becomes increasingly vast and oppressive. It breeds more and more highly self-conscious individuals, who see the contrast between their own will and the overwhelming power of the social will. His self-assertion as an individual is a product of the conformism of collective society.

> "Cultivation breeds civilized conduct; it also breeds conscious independence of spirit and deeper inner opposition to all mere external authority"(12).

An advanced civilisation, such as western society, produces individual rivalries, as each strives to assert itself. Collectivisation, for Royce, goes hand in hand with social fragmentation.

"It is the original sin of any highly developed civilization

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12. P.C. p.113.

> that it breeds cooperation at the expense of a loss of interest in the community"(13)

The vicious circle caused by the constant tension between mass society and the individual creates within the social order both individualism and collectivism, and this situation leads individuals into increasing isolation and selfishness as they attempt to escape the grip of society's impersonal power. Not only does collectivism and tyrannical conformism strip the individual of all personal significance, but the ensuing individualism cuts him off from that kind of social environment in which he can discover himself. If the impersonal nature of mass society is not conducive to forming and nurturing human bonds, then where is the individual to find the fullness of human experience ? Where can he discover his identity ? Maybe his relationships with other people provide a solution. But surely all other individuals are just as much isolated.

> "Escape through any mere multitude of loves for other individuals is impossible. For such loves, unless they are united by some supreme loyalty, are capricious fondnesses for other individuals, who, by nature and by social training, are as lonely and as distracted as their lover himself"(14).

People who share no common interest or cause are in no way participating in the same experience, for there is no bond between them. Collectivism intensifies self-assertion and introspection. Therefore, only where there is a common factor linking people can there be found a true relationship.

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13. P.C. pp.253-4. 14. P.C. pp.131-2.

Royce was sufficiently impressed with Schopenhauer to lay stress on the importance of expressing the human will; but cultivated society fosters the individual's will in reaction against the social will. In other words, the individual feels that contemporary society stifles any individual will. Royce saw the necessity of the individual will to transcend the confines of the self in order to attain its own fulfilment. However, collective society is incapable of accomplishing this task; man must direct his will towards a cause, a social purpose, to which he can be loyal. For loyalty is the means whereby the individual self can break out from the confines of self-consciousness whilst retaining his integrity. Loyalty makes possible a unity among individuals and is essentially social.

> "You can love an individual. But you can be loyal only to a tie that binds you and others into some sort of unity, and loyal to individuals only through the tie"(15).

Through loyalty to a cause it is possible to resolve the tension between the need to be social and the desire to be an individual. To be loyal is to succeed in uniting private passion and outward conformity.

But loyalty is more than just a question of controlling the urge to assert oneself; nor does the cause to which one is loyal act merely as a useful channel for excessive passions. The ideal which a person pursues and the goal for which he aims give that same person a unity around which his will can build his life. Royce, in fact, defined a person as a life lived according to a plan.

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15. P.L. p.20.

Loyalty to a cause not only provides the basis for an individual's unity, but it is also of great social significance. The cause to which one is loyal provides a unity for two or more individuals, for it welds them into a higher unity, into a state to which they could not aspire as mere individuals. But one is always loyal to a third factor, never just to another individual, for this would not offer a basis for true unity. In his Philosophy of Loyalty Royce attacked the American mistrust of the notion of loyalty with this rhetorical question.

> "Can they come to see that loyalty does not mean the bondage of one individual to another, but does mean the exaltation of individuals to the rank of true personalities by virtue of their free acceptance of enduring causes, and by virtue of their life-long service of their common personal ties?"(16).

The relationship of two individuals remains on the level of individualism, but the relationship of two people both committed to a common cause, a third factor, provides a true and lasting human bond. In other words, the unity that a common cause or purpose establishes is much more than the mere juxtaposition of two individuals; it is more than the sum total of individuals concerned. Here Royce found the heart of the true community. Collective society, being the juxtaposition of individuals, presents no inner cohesion, for it is held together by external pressure. Until society is united by an inner purpose the individual will not be able to identify his will with it.

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16. P.L. p.227.

As far as Royce was concerned neither individualism nor collectivism were able to provide a way of understanding the needs of man's will. The former considers the will as waiting to override the will of others, while the latter appears to demand the sacrifice of the individual's will. Loyalty is a way through this impasse, for it appeals to the individual's enthusiasm whilst calling for personal sacrifice at the same time.

> "That union of self-sacrifice with self-assertion which loyalty expresses becomes a consciousness of our genuine relations to a higher social unity of consciousness in which we all have our being"(17).

This "higher social unity of consciousness" resolves the tension between the need for self-fulfilment and the duties of living in a society, between the duty to self and the duty to others.

Royce, in his Philosophy of Loyalty, went on to consider the various problems that the concept of loyalty raises. For instance, where there are conflicting demands for loyalty what is the criterion for the right choice? His answer was to be loyal to loyalty itself. If the choice made facilitates the growth of a spirit of loyalty in humanity, then it is the right choice. The true unity of mankind does not reside in a collective uniformity, but with this very spirit of loyalty.

> "The unity of the world is not an ocean in which we are lost, but a life which is and which needs all our one. Our loyalty defines that unity for us as a living, active unity"(18).

The unity of the world is ensured by the establishing of the true community, founded on a spirit of loyalty.

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17. P.L. p.311. 18. P.L. p.395.

But what is this "higher social unity of consciousness"? Two individuals without anything in common cannot enter into a proper human relationship; but if there is a common interest or cause mediating between the two, then a unity can be found. Loyalty establishes a community and this is made possible by the cause of loyalty acting as a third party. In other words, Royce understood the true human community as being triadic as opposed to the normal dyadic view. Knowledge of others, and even oneself, involves a third factor which acts as an interpreter.

Royce saw the full potential of human existence brought about as the true community of human beings, founded on the spirit of loyalty, is established and developed. This community is characterised by a continuing process of interpretation which makes possible a true understanding and knowledge between the individual members. If there is to be a true community, if human beings are to enrich their experience, then their knowledge of one another, of themselves and of the world, must proceed by way of interpretation.

The reasons for Royce's concern to establish the criteria of a true community and the importance of loyalty have been discussed. It is now possible to face the crucial question: what exactly is interpretation ? In other words, what is meant when it is claimed that knowledge is triadic, not dyadic?

It has been seen that both conceptual and perceptual cognition are dyadic, in that they involve only the conceiver and the concept, or the perceiver and the datum. Royce saw this dyadic view of knowledge as being responsible for the spiritual desolation so prevalent in contemporary society. Indeed, theology's current difficulties were understood by him

as due to its use of dead conceptual language when expressing something that is alive and in need of interpretation. The hegemony of this dual classification has had dire consequences:

> "every philosopher whose sole principle is perception invites us to dwell in a desolate wilderness where neither God nor man exists. For where either God or man is in question, interpretation is demanded"(19).

Where man or God is concerned a community is involved, and the community functions by a process of interpretation. Hence when the communication of two people is in question, the situation is not dyadic. No direct contact can be made with another person's mind. Nor, when a person is concerned with knowing himself, is he in a dyadic relation with himself. In both cases the situation demands interpretation, involving a third person. John E. Smith sums up the necessity for a theory of interpretation:

> "interpretation is appropriate for the knowledge of selves and communities, for each is a living unity of understanding and loyalty and neither can be known as if it were a datum of perception or an abstract universal" (20).

A straightforward example of this argument makes this clear. A man trying to learn the intentions of another person has no direct way of acheiving this; for this he needs to consult other factors that would help him to make up his mind. These may be that person's actions or even facial expressions, or someone else's experiences, and these are termed "signs", which allow the subject to interpret another's intentions. Hence,

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19. P.C. pp.290-1. 20. P.C. p.31.

the process involves three parties; or, as Royce puts it: "interpretation is a triadic relation"(21). Unless human existence is to lack all spiritual depth and vitality the crucial importance of interpretation must be stressed.

To say that the triad involves three parties is a truism, but the difference between a dyadic relation and a triadic is not just a numerical question. Unlike the act of perception whose subject is alone with his object, interpretation involves the subject in a dialogue with an interpreter concerning the object. As there is no direct intuition or perception of the self, the subject is not an isolated individual confronted by its object. As Royce puts it:

> "interpretation is a conversation, and not a lonely exercise"(22).

The three parties are involved in the act of interpretation.

However, "an interpretation is a relation which not only involves three terms, but brings them into a determinate order"(23). In illustrating what he meant Royce drew upon the example of the work of a translator. The translator acts as a mediator between the material he is studying and those who will benefit from his work, the readers. In this situation the three parties concerned are in no way interchangeable, for the translator is the only one who can carry out the role of interpreting. It may be that in another case he may take the place of the readers, for he may require some material translated from a language that he does not understand. Like this instance of translating Royce understood all knowledge as taking place within the context of a human dialogue. There

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20. P.C. p.284 22. P.C. p.285. 23. P.C. p.287.

are three terms involved - the interpreter, the object interpreted and the person for whom the interpretation is intended. Knowledge involves an activity in which a dialogue takes place. The major mistake of all dyadic views of knowledge is that area where direct cognition is out of the question, that is, human dialogue, is ignored; these also do not realise that all human knowledge must eventually take place within the milieu of human intercommunication and experience. There is a world of difference between the limits of dyadic knowledge and the scope of triadic knowledge.

In the deepening of his understanding of tradic knowledge Royce admitted his debt to Peirce. During his life Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) was esteemed in various expert circles for his original work in mathematical logic, the philosophy of language, the history of the physical sciences and the theory of errors of observation. To readers of philosophy he was known, through the acknowledgements of William James, as the inventor of the word "pragmatism". Peirce himself had read and admired Royce's early work, but he was quick to realise that Royce suffered lamentably from a lack of knowledge of logic. However, after the completion of his Philosophy of Loyalty, Royce made a close study of Peirce's earlier papers (24) which were to furnish him with the logical ammunition with which to develop his theory of the loyal community. Cotton considers that Royce was indebted to Peirce for four basic propositions: namely, his theory of signs, his view of the human self, his conception of truth, and his theory of induction (25). Through these studies Royce

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24. For a fuller account of Royce's study of Peirce see Cotton (1954), chapter 5. 25. Cotton (1954) p.224f.

corroborated his earlier conclusion concerning the social origin of knowledge and found a way forward to his theory of interpretation set out in The Problem of Christianity. Peirce's refusal to understand the human self as a self-explanatory datum, open to the direct apprehension of all those that care to perceive, proved an invaluable ally in his own search for an epistemology.

> "Charles Peirce, in the earliest of the essays to which I am calling your attention, maintained (quite rightly, I think) that there is no direct intuition or perception of the self"(26).

Peirce, then, played an important part in the development of Royce's understanding of the triadic structure of knowledge.

It might be thought, however, that Royce's view of the human community as a series of interpretations, or triadic relations, reflects the philosophy of Hegel. It is well known that Hegel saw human history as the development of ideas along a dialectical pattern - thesis, antithesis, synthesis; this progression is a triadic relation. But Royce repudiated any such influence, and insisted that his view of the triadic relation was indebted to the pragmatic philosophy of Peirce. The latter was a logician, who was highly suspicious of idealism, including Royce's own "Absolute" in his earlier work; there was no room for metaphysical speculation. The triadism of Peirce and that of Hegel are not to be confused.

> "Peirce's concept of interpretation defines an extremely general process, of which the Hegelian dialectical triadic process is a very special case."(27)

Far from being attracted by Hegel's idealism, Royce was deeply impressed by Peirce's empirical approach, and indeed he

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26. P.C. p.285. 27. P.C. p.305.

recognised in the theory of triadic relations a strong empirical foundation for his own philosophical theories. The empirical orientation of Peirce's triadism opened up for Royce fields unknown to Hegelian speculation.

> "Peirce's theory,with its explicitly empirical origin and its very exact logical working out, promises new light upon matters which Hegel left profoundly problematic". (28).

Royce saw the development of his later work as a combination of this deep influence of Peirce and his voluntarist tendencies.

> "My present interest lies in applying the spirit of my absolute voluntarism to the new problems which our empiricial study of the Christian ideas, and our metaphysical theory of interpretation, have presented for our scrutiny."(29)

Clearly, Royce applied the insights of Peirce's logic to his own needs.

"It was Peirce's own "theory of signs" that enabled Royce to develop and deepen his understanding of the triadic structure of knowledge. Not that Royce merely transplanted Peirce's views without modification. Peirce may have been a formative influence, but Peirce's own notion of a sign was just part of a logical theory of categories, and Royce realised that his own development was peculiar to himself.

> "My own metaphysical use of Peirce's doctrine of signs, in my account of the World of Interpretation at the last time, is largely independent of Peirce's philosophy"(30).

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28. P.C. p.305. 29. P.C. p.350. 30. P.C. pp.344-5.

Peirce pointed to the peculiar logic of a sign. A datum or object of sensory experience is understood by a process of perception; a thought or abstract universal is an object of conception; but a sign belongs to neither cognitive process. The sign is related to interpretation, for a sign needs and determines an act of interpretation.

> "A sign, then, is an object whose being consists in the fact that the sign calls for an interpretation"(31).

But what is a sign, as Royce understood it ? He defined it as expressing a mind, or as a mind itself, or what he called a "quasi-mind". The sign belongs to the world of human dialogue and not to the sphere of impersonal objectivity. For instance, a clock is an obvious sign in that it expresses man's way of calculating the time and relies on other people being capable of interpreting what it means. Similarly a sign-post expresses the intention of someone else to help others to find their way,and therefore requires another mind to interpret it.

The sign by its presence establishes an interpreting situation in which the scope of either perception or conception is very limited. In the triadic situation the interpreting mind acts as mediator between the sign and the mind for whom it is intended. For example, a cartographer sees the map that he has drawn as an interpretation of his knowledge of a geographical area, and this interpretation becomes a sign which needs to be interpreted by another interpreter if the map is to be of use. The translator stands as a mediator between what he sees in front of him and the interpretation

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31. P.C. p.345.

he is to give and this interpretation, or in his case, translation, becomes another sign or object to be interpreted. Peirce expressed his view of the function of a sign in the following way.

> "It (the sign) addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of the person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the 'interpretant' of the first sign."(32)

Peirce was using the word 'interpretant' to signify any such development of a sign, for it in no way duplicates the sign, for simple reiteration does not constitute interpretation. The sign does not stand in a dyadic relation like an object and its meaning. The sign functions as a sign only insofar as it is part of a working system of signs. Gallie explains Peirce's thesis:

> "it (the sign) means what it does only in virtue of the fact that other signs belonging to the same system mean the slightly - or immensely - different things that they do"(33).

Royce recognised Peirce's category of the sign as a corroboration of his theory of social experience. Of course he was fully aware that Peirce was interested in it primarily as a category of logic, but he foresaw its value and importance for his own theory of "The World of Interpretation". The world can be perceived and it can be conceived, but it can also be interpreted, and this is made possible by means of signs.

> "The universe consists of real Signs and of their interpretation". (34)

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32. Gallie(1952),p.110, quoting from Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce,vol.2,p.231,ed.by Hartshorne and Weiss,Harvard.(1931-5). 33. Gallie(1952)p.125. 34. P.C. p.345.

Men are always interpreting their experiences; this may involve relationships with others, or knowledge of themselves, or they may be seeking to understand the world beyond themselves, which is the object of scientific enquiry. These acts of interpretation produce further needs of interpretation in an ongoing activity. This steady sequence of signs and their interpretations constitutes the history of the universe. Where Bergson saw the world in a constant state of flux in which intuition was the appropriate mode of cognition, Royce understood the knowledge of the world as an ongoing process, in which mankind progresses from past experiences through the present towards a deeper knowledge in the future. In this process the memory is the sign of the past and one's anticipations are the sign of the future. Man's knowledge of the universe is governed by these signs.

To return to the example of the sign-post; its function can never be understood if it is seen merely as an object. As a sign it is used to help other human beings and therefore requires interpretation. In other words, its function as a sign depends on human beings understanding it; it would not be a sign if it was only understood by one individual, as it would then be superfluous. It needs a community to interpret it, and the minimum number here is three. Firstly, there is the mind whose intention is expressed in the sign; secondly, there is the person for whom the sign is intended; thirdly, there must be a third who will interpret the sign, for it is not self-explanatory. Signs are important factors in the life of the community.

At this point in the argument certain points can be summarised. As a theory of knowledge interpretation has proved

to account for human experience more fully than the usual modes of cognition. Instead of the subject being alone with his object, as in all dyadic processes, the object is understood within an act of interpretation, and this implies a community. The relationship between the world of human dialogue and the world of knowledge is a triadic one, in that knowledge involves three parties. What then is this triad ? Peirce's theory of signs enabled Royce to solve this problem. The object of one's knowledge, whether it be inanimate nature or other people or even oneself, behaves as a sign in that it points to and needs an interpretation, and hence requires an interpreter. If these three basic areas of knowledge - of other people, of oneself, of objective data - belong to the context of a community, if interpretation is the fundamental mode of cognition, then man's knowledge is the possession of a community, never merely of an individual.

If man is seeking greater self-awareness, then he must learn from his fellow-men, and this can only be achieved by entering into a deeper relationship with them. Interpretation can succeed here where the usual dyadic epistemologies are wholly inadequate. Once this unity is achieved and a community is operating, then it can share its common experiences and its common knowledge. How, then, does the triad function in these regions ?

First of all, interpretation binds individuals together in a triadic relation. When one is endeavouring to interpret a neighbour's mind the interpretation is never perfect. The interpreter, the person to which the interpretation is addressed, and the person who is the object of this interpretation, may be in our social world three distinct persons, and it is

likely that the gulf between these individuals may appear impossible to bridge. Certainly, in contemporary society this gulf between persons has been described as alienation. One's neighbour, although not totally incomprehensible, is estranged from one to a certain extent. But, as social beings, human persons could not allow this situation to continue.

> "I am discontent with my narrowness and with your estrangement. I seek unity with you."(35)

One particular act of interpretation may not bring those concerned very far, but the continuing indefinite process of interpretation does have as its goal the harmonisation of mankind in a true community, although this may be very much an ideal.

> "I am ideally aiming at an ideal event - the spiritual unity of our community"(36).

The aim of the interpreting community is nothing less than the unity of humanity, and this unity is a unity of consciousness. Royce saw the aim of interpretation as the reconciliation of those who were once estranged.

Collective society with its faceless numbers could in no way achieve a unity of consciousness. Nor can the dyadic modes of knowledge, so prevalent in technological society, bring people closer together. Fragmented society contains individuals who continually misunderstand one another, and such failures stem from an inability to recognise the intentions, interests and motives of their fellow-men. The interpreter can be, quite literally, anything or anybody. It has already been seen that a common loyalty brings men of different backgrounds and interests together. The common loyalty of

35. P.C. p.314. 36. P.C. p.317.

two individuals acts as a mediator between them. Formerly, when they were strangers, they were unable to understand one another as persons, because the dyadic relation made it impossible to bridge the gap between them; but in this new triadic relation in which loyalty functions as mediator, they are able to meet on a new plain of discernment. Royce maintained that only through these mediating processes can men come to understand one another in a true community. Where any number of individuals meet together with a common interest acting as mediator, then a community is formed based on the triadic relations that can be found. The founding of a true community of men is dependent on the reality of such relations, and on the effectiveness of mediating ideas and interests to bring about mutual understanding. Such a community with its basic triadic structure is only possible when the individuals involved identify themselves with these mediating ideas.

This common denominator may be a friendship, in which case two lovers are loyal to their relationship. But it may also be a social cause, a common task or an interest. When two men actively cooperate in a common task, as their involvement increases, so the task becomes part of them. Cooperation becomes more than mere juxtaposition of men when the task involved becomes part of their lives.

> "They form a community, in our present limited sense, when they not only cooperate, but accompany this cooperation with that ideal extension of the lives of individuals"(37).

Loyalty and its cause not only grant an individual his self-fulfilment, but also weld a living bond between him and his

37. P.C. p.263.

followers. The loyalty, or common cause, that a person sees in another acts as a sign, pointing to the interpretation of his or her mind.

The community is unlimited in its scope. The aim of interpretation is the unity of the whole world, even though the final reconciliation of all men could only be achieved, as far as Royce was concerned, by the mediation of God. This is indeed how he viewed the role of Christ - as the interpreter of the universal community.

Of course, the community, with its loyal cause, not only provides knowledge of other people; it also acts as an interpreter for oneself. Not only is each individual in dialogue with his fellow-men, but he is also in constant dialogue with himself. The community provides him with self-knowledge, because his companions act as mediators between himself and his self. To return to the example of the lame man: he is not wholly aware of his impediment until his contact with other men has shown him how others walk. The same principle applies to his knowledge of his personality. The closer to a true community that human relationships reach, the more successful they are in aiding self-awareness. Royce maintained that collective society could reveal to the individual merely the superficial aspects of his person, whilst the true community was capable of making him fully aware of the innermost depths of his being. The self is not a mere static nature that can be scrutinised by the scientific analyst, but is a constant process of interpretation. Man has a memory and an anticipated future to look forward to. His present self cannot be separated from his past and his future; the self comes down from its own past. It is itself its own history. Royce sets out his theory in the following words:

> "the self is no mere datum, but is in its essence a life which is interpreted, and which interprets itself, and which, apart from some sort of ideal interpretation, is a mere flight of ideas, or a meaningless flow of feelings, or a vision that sees nothing, or else a barren abstract conception"(38).

The constant interpretation that goes on within an individual is parallel to the behaviour of a community. In fact each individual is himself a microcosm of the universal community. Since the individual is so much identified with the community in that he shares the latter's past and future, both are dependent on one another. In other words, the community needs its members to partake fully in the process of interpretation.

> "The concept of the community depends upon the interpretation which each individual member gives to its own self - to his own past - and to his own future"(39).

According to Royce, knowledge is mediated through the interpreting community. Firstly, it has been seen that the loyalty of the community is the sign that points towards a knowledge of others; and secondly, the community acts as interpreter of oneself. In both cases the loyal community constitutes the third party in the triadic relation.

This, then, is how knowledge of people as individuals is structured. But according to Royce, not only is human dialogue triadic in structure, but all knowledge is triadic also. So how is scientific knowledge to be understood ? Surely the relationship between a subject and his object is a straight

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38. P.C.p.253. 39. P.C. pp.248-9.

dyadic one, as Bergson insisted. But Royce maintained that this was not enough. All knowledge belongs to people and people belong to a community, in which true dialogue is already taking place. It is true that individuals do discover scientific facts, and they often reach their conclusions by a laborious process of induction and deduction, with perception and conception playing an important part. But Royce, inspired by a paper, Problem of Age, Growth and Death, by Minot (40), suggested that although individual research is essential, nevertheless these new discoveries must be corroborated and confirmed by the scientific community - that is, by those who are bound together by a loyalty to scientific truth. In this way scientific knowledge becomes not so much the possession of the individual concerned, but the heritage of a community, so that future generations can draw on these sources. Since it is obvious that empirical knowledge requires observation and experimentation, perception and conception have their place. At the same time, Royce fully appreciated the value of the pragmatist's position in this context, since the scientist's theory must be seen to work. For scientific discovery to become scientific knowledge it must be used, tested and verified by the scientific community. Science does more than simply provide perceptual answers for conceptual questions; it involves a process of interpreting data within a community so that it can be assimilated and used. Minot's own belief in the paramount importance of the community served to support Royce's theories. For just as a common cause can act as mediator in a triadic relation between men, so a common object of knowledge

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40. P.C. p.321.

can perform the same function.

> "Our social consciousness is, psychologically speaking, the most deeply rooted foundation of our whole view of ourselves and of the world."(41).

Because objective knowledge operates within the context of a community Royce stressed that interpretation, not perception or conception, is the principal mode of cognition. Any objective fact becomes the experience of the community. In Royce's philosophy his chief category was the community, not the self nor the one and the many, for one's experience of the whole world was dependent on the community:

> "the physical world is an object known to the community and through interpretation"(42).

Royce, following the idealist tradition, saw the relation between the knower and the object of knowledge as an internal one. In other words he disagreed with the realist standpoint that reality is totally independent of the act of knowing. Indeed, Royce maintained that an object of knowledge is selected according to one's own purpose. Ewing, in his Idealism:A Critical Survey, emphasises the importance of purpose in Royce's epistemology.

> "According to Royce, progress in knowledge consists in the advance from a less determinate to a more determinate purpose"(43).

Royce saw the possibility of error arising from a failure to find one's true purpose, and a purpose is true only if it conforms to the will of the Absolute. Knowledge is dependent on the will of the individual. It can be seen that this

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41. P.C. p.330. 42. P.C. p.361. 43.Ewing,A.C.(1934) p.50.

idealist principle lies behind his epistemology in the theory of interpretation. Here knowledge, as the third party, is dependent upon the purpose and interest of the community. Reality is neither independent of human dialogue, nor is it purely subjective. Rather, it is attained through the constant process of interpretation. This theory was indeed the culmination of all his earlier work.

What, then, in summary are the conclusions of Royce's thesis ? Knowledge is triadic in structure in that an individual needs the mediation of a third party in order to reach the object of his knowledge. If a man is trying to understand his companion then he needs a third factor, such as a common cause or love between them, in order to penetrate through to him. Again, if he wishes to learn more about his natural environment he needs the help of other members in his community. The work of the translator is an example here. Or finally, if he wishes to gain greater self-awareness he needs the mediation of other people to interpret himself to his self.

Royce's theory of interpretation, as it is found in the Problem of Christianity, was the culmination of his philosophical career, and it was this which was his main contribution to the philosophy of Marcel. Inasmuch as that is a philosophy of the meaning of social existence, a concrete philosophy of knowledge - neither rationalist nor empiricist - and an ontology of personal relationships, it has clear links with Royce. We now turn to the task of showing these links.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion.

As we followed the development of Marcel's philosophy we were able to see how his acquaintance with Royce's philosophy was the intellectual counterpart to the powerful influence on him of his experience as a Red Cross worker during the Great War. What we have tried to show is how Royce's peculiar brand of idealism was precisely the kind of philosophy which at one and the same time made contact with Marcel's idealist background and spoke to his philosophical condition. Until then he had accepted an essentially idealist outlook, the aim of which was to transcend the limitations of mundane existence, but the events of the war shattered these assumptions. From this period onwards his philosophical work was characterised by a concern to understand the significance of human existence.

However, chapter three showed us that Marcel, even in his idealist phase, was not unconcerned about personal values. He soon rejected hegelian idealism because it immersed the individual into an abstract absolute, although he eagerly read the works of post-Kantian philosophers such as Schelling. But Marcel himself realised that his philosophical attempts were worked out in dull and abstract language, although he saw in his plays an interesting anticipation of his later philosophical work.

The tragedy of the Great War was a turning point in his career for these events forced Marcel to look for a new philosophical language. Wahl was mistaken in ignoring the importance of Marcel's war experiences, for his philosophical

development was not a smooth progression from hegelianism through post-Kantian idealism as he maintained. The autobiographical passages in Marcel's writings make it quite plain that he regarded his work in the Information Service as a crucial factor in the formation of his philosophy of existence, and it is equally manifest that philosophers such as Bradley and Bosanquet could not adequately help him to answer the critical questions that the war brought to the fore. In his effort to establish the significance of human relationships and the sphere of personal knowledge he followed neither an idealist nor a materialist approach. He was enough of a realist to recognise the validity of objective knowledge, but this was not to be confused with personal knowledge, which only comes from the direct encounter between people. It was at this point in his development that he studied Royce and discovered in the latter's writings a philosophy that had struggled with the very problems that he himself was then facing.

There are various general considerations that can help us to understand why Marcel was so impressed by Royce, even though the latter was an idealist. Firstly, Royce's idealism bore the stamp of a highly independent mind. Marcel fully appreciated this, for he continually emphasised Royce's respect for the empirical in understanding human experience. Indeed he suggested in his Métaphysique de Josiah Royce that certain characteristics of Royce's philosophy could place him within the tradition of the English empiricists. Moreover, we have seen that the empiricist tendencies of Royce's thought were reflected in his use of Peirce's insights. Secondly, Marcel was searching for a philosophical understanding of

personal relationships, and this was a central theme of Royce's work, especially his Problem of Christianity. In the latter work Royce demonstrated the inadequacies of traditional epistemologies, whether rationalist or empiricist, in dealing with the complexities of human dialogue. Neither conception nor perception could account for that intimate knowledge of others and of oneself that is gained from personal relationships. This was precisely the experience of Marcel, for he too realised that neither idealism nor empiricism could make sense of personal experience. Royce's theory of interpretation showed Marcel the way forward by corroborating his own view that the most pressing task of philosophy was to reinstate the importance of personal knowledge, as distinct from objectivity. Thirdly, and this is closely connected with the second point, both philosophers considered social awareness to have priority over self-awareness, for the former determined the latter. Indeed, Marcel saw this theme as pervading the whole of Royce's work, for social awareness was to be found in the Gifford Lectures, although it was in the theory of interpretation that it reached its culmination.

These, then, are the general reasons for Marcel's appreciativeness of Royce's work. It is now possible to state the precise nature of Royce's influence on Marcel's philosophy. We have argued already that Royce's philosophy of social relationships, culminating in the theory of interpretation, provided inspiration for Marcel's own work, especially his theory of intersubjectivity. In the last two chapters we considered the arguments of both philosophers separately, so we can now summarise the extent of Royce's

influence.

Both Marcel and Royce engaged in a vigorous criticism of the impersonal nature of modern society, for they both saw that the drift towards collectivism produced a fragmented and individualistic society. Behind the observations of both philosophers a common aim can be detected - to define the nature of authentic human relationships and to clarify the distinctiveness of personal knowledge, which they saw as being threatened by the impersonal structure of society. Marcel and Royce saw the need for a fresh theory of knowledge for both recognised that the arrogant claims of empiricism were the chief cause of the diminished status of personal values. Throughout our study of Marcel's development it is possible to detect a struggle to make a clear distinction between the realms of objectivity and personal knowledge, for only by differentiating the two modes of cognition can one safeguard the validity of empiricism and the distinctive reality of personal knowledge. The encroachments of objectivism on the personal in modern society have created a crisis of identity for many individuals. Certainly in our study of Marcel's notion of intersubjectivity we saw the importance of the question "What am I?". It was Royce's theory of interpretation that provided Marcel with the means of articulating the distinction between the objective and the personal. We have seen that Royce saw the relationship between subject and object as triadic, in that the object of one's interests needs to be interpreted by a mediator. Objective reality is always a third party in relation to a dialogue. Marcel seized upon this as a solution to his own problems.

It is at this stage in our argument that we can see how Marcel has used Royce's work and how they differ from each other. Royce's theory of interpretation was an epistemology that tried to do full justice to all types of knowledge. Both objective and personal knowledge need to be interpreted and are triadic in structure. But Marcel wished to make a bolder distinction between the two modes of knowledge. Unlike Royce, Marcel restricted the triadic relation to objective knowledge. Personal knowledge cannot be triadic, for it cannot be interpreted. The I-thou dialogue is a direct encounter between two people involved in an intersubjective bond - it is dyadic in structure. This is not the dyad that can be found between subject and object, but a much more intimate dyad that is formed between subject and subject. Marcel's thesis was based upon the observation that objective knowledge, that is the I-it relationship, is indirect in that it is dependent upon human dialogue, whereas personal knowledge is the most direct and intimate mode of cognition, for it is achieved when men are willing to acknowledge the depths of one another's being. Marcel saw the validity of both types of cognition, but he maintained that personal knowledge took priority over empirical data. But, to admit these crucial differences is not to undermine the importance of Royce's triadism for Marcel's own philosophy. Rather, the theory of triadic relations made it possible for Marcel to articulate the distinction between the two modes of knowledge, and hence he was able to formulate his notion of the intersubjective dyad. Royce's theory of triadic relations and his observations on the characteristics of a true community made it possible for Marcel to reach this important conclusion.

Although Royce's true community and Marcel's intersubjective bond are not the same, in that the former is triadic whilst the latter is dyadic, they do have many common characteristics. Both theories acknowledge the aim of authentic relationships - the attainment of personal unity, a feeling of togetherness, in which all those concerned are truly aware of each other as unique individuals. In Royce's argument loyalty was a crucial factor in this unifying process, for without loyalty Royce saw that a community would degenerate into a collective society. Marcel agreed with Royce's observation that the unity of mass society is false, in that it is maintained by external pressure, and he followed Royce's argument that an authentic unity of persons is based on an act of will on the part of the individual. It is natural, then, that we should find in Marcel a parallel notion to that of Royce's loyalty. Indeed, we saw in chapter five that Marcel's description of fidelity is very reminiscent of Royce's language concerning loyalty. Naturally Royce's theory of loyalty and Marcel's notion of fidelity are not identical, in that Marcel does not understand fidelity as playing the role of interpreter in a triadic relation, for we have seen that he restricted the triadic relation to objective knowledge. But he did follow Royce in seeing fidelity as a characteristic of personal relationships. Just as Royce saw loyalty as binding people together into a true community, so Marcel realised that the intersubjective bond relies on fidelity for its continuance. The intersubjective bond, as the place of being, is where personal values are to be found. We saw that to enter into a close relationship with someone involves being faithful to a bond, and this is an act of personal faith,

hope and love. It can be seen that both Royce and Marcel maintained that self-fulfilment lies in establishing personal relationships, and this needs an act of commitment on the part of the individual.

Differences indeed there were between the two philosophers, for,after all, Marcel had abandoned idealism while Royce's work never strayed from that tradition. But we have shown that there is plenty of evidence to indicate that Royce's brand of idealism was of a highly original style and was concerned with many of the issues that were preoccupying Marcel during the war. Royce's work, especially his theory of interpretation, was without doubt a major formative influence on Marcel, for he was able to draw upon the insights of Royce's philosophy of personal relationships in order to formulate his own philosophy of existence. Marcel's study of Royce at a crucial moment in his life gave him a fresh understanding of the depths of human existence, whereby he was able to acknowledge the just claims of empiricism whilst reinstating the central importance of personal values. The clarification of these issues became the basis of his later work.

APPENDIX

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