CHAPTER THREE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

In the last chapter we discussed Marcel's account of his own as well as Descartes' philosophical problem and their respective characteristics. In this chapter we will, in the first instance, consider Marcel's account of his own method and then his account of Descartes' method. In order to do this, we shall, at the outset, give an account of how each of these thinkers handles his problem, i.e., we shall give an account of how each of these thinkers handles his problem; in other words, we shall give an account of their thought. And with reference to this thought, we shall give an account of their respective methods, as the account of their thought will serve us as an illustration for the account of their method.

THE THOUGHT OF GABRIEL MARCEL

As we saw in the last chapter, Marcel's problem is how to deal with the problem of living in a modern industrialised society. To put it in his own terminology,
the problem is the mechanisation, functionalisation and bureaucratisation of human life. That is, the problem is one of self-alienation and alienation from one's fellow-beings in a 'broken world'.

This alienation from oneself and others denies to human beings human communication - participation with one another, which is the basic condition for a relationship of love, hope and fidelity. It is participation which leads us to extensive and intensive mutual understanding and to mutual concern at both material and moral levels. The problem for Marcel is, therefore, to show the difference between alienation and participation. But this is not a matter to be understood, it is a matter to be experienced.

But how can we present this kind of facing a problem? Or how can a philosopher present it? He can do it by describing the concrete phenomena of an individual's life. And he can bring out the various distinctions by describing different concrete phenomena - one which is no participation at all, another, which is not proper participation, and a third, which is genuine participation. That means, in order to give an account of the content and the method of Marcel's thinking, we must give an account of concrete situations and the manner of facing these concrete situations.
in the actual life of a person. However, we shall begin with an example which is not from Marcel. It is an example used by Kierkegaard - that of Abraham.* It represents religious life - a life of participation at its fullest. It is claimed to involve participation with God also. It includes participation of man with man; though the latter may not involve the former.

I. The Story of Abraham:

Indeed, Abraham's problem arises out of a different order of things, existing long before our modern industrialised

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* The reason why we take the example of Abraham is that, in the first instance, it is an example more or less generally known. Another factor to be noted is that we do not feel that any example cited by Marcel will serve our purpose, namely, to bring out clearly almost all the details of his manner of tackling the problem. Indeed, with reference to the full details of his tackling it, our account may not be exhaustive. But it is not that much important, since our purpose is more to bring out the actual manner of his tackling the problem than each and every detail of his actual tackling it. And we feel confident of having brought out the manner of Marcel's actual tackling of the problem through the example of Abraham of the Old Testament. Partly, the example of Abraham owes to Kierkegaard's use of it in "Fear and Trembling". But, like Kierkegaard, we do not want to go into the concept of dread, despair and so on, as we want to go into certain concepts of Marcel, like participation, faith, hope, love, etc., which, in turn, will bring out his specific way or the manner of tackling the problem.
society. And yet, the manner in which he reacts to this problem will show many features which are also involved in Marcel's approach, and will enable us to distinguish a life of love, hope, fidelity towards our fellow-men and towards God.

Now, let us see Abraham's problem. Abraham, in his heart of hearts, knows that he is called upon to do something that will affect the life of his only son, Isaac, for, in responding to this call, he has to sacrifice Isaac to God. This would not have been a problem if Abraham did not love his son. Also, it would not have been a problem if he did not feel in himself the imperious necessity of witnessing to the call. Actually, we may imagine him as a prey to conflicting feelings. On the one hand, he must witness to the call as a man of faith, and, on the other, he must consider his situation as a loving father, a husband and leader of the community, who would be deprived by his sacrifice of a promised leader. We can also imagine him a prey to doubt whether the call he heard was really a divine call, and if it indeed was, would a God of infinite mercy require such a sacrifice? If it is really a divine call, then why did he give him to me out of the barren womb of Sarah, my wife, with a promise to make a great nation after me? Can I
sacrifice him? Will this not be a wanton act of murder, divine call or no divine call? Apart from it, can I, a father for no reason kill my innocent and unsuspecting child? Besides, who is, ordinarily speaking, going to bend to this kind of requirement? Ah! I cannot do it! I love my son too much to do this kind of thing. It is more than flesh and blood can bear. It defies reason itself and goes counter to all natural feelings, which, I believe, God himself has bestowed on us.

These are the sentiments of an individual who, while tackling an issue, does not see, nay, not even attempts to see, its inner significance to his being - his being understood in relation to his actual situation in which he exists - his personal and existential relationship to God. He does not think of himself as a whole with reference to the various aspects of his personality. For, he does not tackle the issue, nay, does not even make an endeavour to handle it from the point of view of others or of their interests. Had he taken this into account, his response to the situation would be integral, that is, it would take note of all aspects of the problem, and faced it squarely, not setting one element against another, nor underplaying anyone of them to suit his convenience. To translate it into Marcel's terminology, these would be reflections of a person who lives in the realm of 'primary
reflection'. According to Marcel a man capable of genuine participation is also a fully integrated person and therefore able to transcend partial or fragmentary considerations. Therefore, it is possible to say that Abraham did not respond according to primary reflection, because his actual response to this problem confirms it.

The determining thought in Abraham's mind, we may presume, would be that it is not right to set human love and human interest against love of God, for from all love derives and emanates. And his actual response, as recorded in the Bible, provides us with enough hints or clues that he does make the following reflections. 'Am I right and justified in thinking in this manner? Do I see the problem with reference to the actual situation in which this call and myself exist? Isn't this divine call made on me in order to create myself? Can I turn a deaf ear to that call? If it is a divine call, then, am I not supposed to act accordingly? Does He not deserve such a sacrifice from me? Have I not already tasted myself the most generous and inspiring love of God towards me through his various blessings in my past life? And, when there is real love between God and me, is there any point in raising the question of divine selfishness or tyranny? Is not every incident in our life meant for our mutual benefit?'
Suppose I sacrifice my son. Will this sacrifice be in my interest only? Will it be also in the interests of my son? How will it affect my son? What about my duty to my son? Am I really forgetting my duty to Isaac if I sacrifice him? How will it affect my wife? What will be her reaction to me afterwards? How will it serve the interests of the community of which I am the leader and of which my son is going to be one? Shall I fall short of my duty to my community?

Then, am I not supposed to love God more than I love my son, my wife and my community? That means, am I not supposed to love them in God? If so, am I not supposed to sacrifice my son Isaac for the realisation of this divine call even though it demands a lot of agony from me, my son, my wife, and my community? If that is so, wouldn't this sacrifice be more rewarding (in the religious sense of the term) to myself, to my son, to my wife, and to my community even though it will take away the light of my home, as well as the hope of the community? Even though, humanly speaking, there is no hope of having another heir to keep my progeny going as well as to become the leader of my community, still is he not capable of providing me with a new Isaac, or many Isaacs, even in this old age? Or can He not bring the same Isaac back to life somehow? - A hope
against hope! It is in such a context that Marcel writes: "Hope appears as a response of the creatures to the Infinite Being to whom it is conscious of giving every thing that it has, and upon whom it cannot impose any condition whatever without scandal". Faith generates hope! Here, therefore, there is no place for despair as in Kierkegaard's interpretation. Abraham does not witness to the inner call in "fear and trembling", but in a heroic act of perfect obedience which implies not faith and hope only but love, which, in turn, leaves no room for either hesitation or hopelessness. The end of the story in the Bible confirms this attitude of Abraham's, for as Isaac does not die, faith lives. For what Abraham has done is to sink his own individual will in God's will, the part in the whole.

These are the reflections of Abraham, who thinks like a man of "commitment". Here he goes deep into the issue and makes a sincere and serious attempt to see its inner significance to the various aspects of his being with reference to God, to his son, to his wife, to his community, and so on. To put it in Marcel's terminology, these are

the reflections of a man who thinks and lives in the realm of "secondary reflection".

This does not mean that, after these reflections, Abraham did not feel excruciating agony in sacrificing Isaac. As a loving father, as a loving husband, as a committed leader, he was witnessing to the deep sentiments of fear, agony, frustration and so on. Still, in his heart of hearts, his personal and sincere commitment to the call does compel, nay does persuade him, to sacrifice his son to God, internally proclaiming, like John the Baptist, 'Thou must increase and I must decrease' - the genuine sentiments of a committed person to others, to the society as well as to God. It is in such situations that Marcel describes the man of God as one who by giving "his own situation he realises his nature most completely - the most completely is". 1

Now, suppose Abraham had not taken a decision to sacrifice Isaac to God. Would he be considered a bad man? Or could he be considered a man falling short of his duties and loyalties? We don't think that anybody could find fault with him, for it was not his duty to sacrifice his son.

And, in fact, nobody can compel him to do it as a duty. If at all he will sacrifice him, it is out of his generosity, the generosity of a creature with reference to his love, hope and fidelity to God, the Creator. That means, even if he did not decide to sacrifice Isaac, still he would not have proved a bad man. Instead, he would continue to be a good man, nay, he had to be considered as a good man, a moral man, for he was not violating any norms of duty. But the difference would be that he would not have had that transcendence of morality. That is, he would not have been a man of faith. That is all.

Furthermore, if Abraham did not accept the call, then it would not follow that he did not really love his son. The factor to be noted then, is that his love for his son would only be of a different kind. It would be a different level - perhaps, what Marcel would call a horizontal, or human, level rather than on the vertical or transcendental level.

If that is so, then in what way can Abraham's act be considered as the act of a religious man? It is mainly the purpose and motive of the person concerned that makes it such an act. In Abraham's case the purpose and motive is the safeguard of the larger interests of the community.
and of God. And this is there throughout his life, for it is for the life of the community that he takes it from one place to another; it is also for the interests of the community and his own that he hopes to have a son in his old age; it is for the same reason that he was ready to beget and bring up a son even in his old age; and it is for the community, for his son, for his wife, as well as for God, that he was ready to sacrifice his only beloved son. Further, as we saw above, it was a voluntary act which would not bring him any worldly gain. Instead, there was only a terrible loss - the loss of a young son in the final stage of his life. 'To lose the only supporter of the family': one need not be told of the excruciating character of this shattering experience on the old parents. The voluntariness of his act shows that there was a superior motive and purpose for his act in suffering this terrible loss. And it is this purpose and motive that bring out the fact that it was undertaken by Abraham for the sake of God as well as for the community, which, in turn, makes it the act of a religious person. Otherwise, who is there to volunteer himself to suffer this terrible loss. In ordinary human terms, only sheer foolishness and madness will prompt a man to kill his only son. Yes, here also it is madness - madness of love, madness of hope and madness of
fidelity towards the welfare of the community as well as God - which prompted Abraham to sacrifice Issac. It is this sort of madness that, throughout his life, prompted him never to fall short of, nay, to be always happy doing anything to realise the call made on him even if he had to sacrifice himself. In sum, it is his readiness to face anything for the sake of God, (the wrath, the suspicion, the contempt of his son, wife as well as that of his community), the manner in which his love, hope and fidelity are enkindled moment by moment hoping against hope, which is prompted by his child-like, simple and absolute faith in the omnipotence of God and his purpose in sacrificing his son (the glory of God and the welfare of the community in the face of the pangs of losing his son, his wife and his community) which make his act the act of a religious person - an act of participation, or of communion with reference to God as well as to other men.

In sum, the example of Abraham brings out the nature of the problem, what is involved in dealing with the problem, and how at various points a different response on the part of Abraham will make the character of the response very different. In handling this issue, he is taking account of himself as a whole, as also his wife and his son, that means, he considers the persons concerned in relation to their concrete, personal and existential situations. Further, he
emerges as a religious man, who is concerned with his own soul as well as the souls of others. And this concern is illustrated through his participation for all concerned.

But, participation with others may take different forms. For the purpose of bringing out the different types of participation we will take some examples from Marcel's own writings. And one of the reasons why we considered Abraham's case is that it is also helpful towards greater clarity about some of the examples from Marcel's writings. We shall consider here two such illustrations.

II. The Story of the Mother and Her Soldier Son:

First, let us take up the case of a mother who has, after much struggle, allowed her son to enlist in the army in time of war. One day she gets a telegram announcing his death. The impact of this news must have been shattering. But that is not the main point in this situation. What is crucial is that, even after getting official assurance of her son's death, she is not prepared to believe it and cherishes the idea of his returning some day, on the presumption that he may be among the missing and not among the dead. Marcel takes this, not as an example of wishful

thinking but rather an instance of undying hope. The mother does not offend against reality altogether for she does accept the validity of the official information. But such is her love for her son that the love begets a hope that no reality can shake. To her mother's heart the thought that is dominant is that, whoever else dies, her son shall not die. Marcel writes: "What characterises hope is the very movement by which it challenges the evidence upon which man claims to challenge it itself".¹ There is the actual fact of death; but there is also the human truth - hope.

At the same time, this mother's hope also shows that it is a firm resolution on her part that the deep urge she experiences in herself to participate with her son shall be concretised in each moment of her every day living. Consciously or semi-consciously, it is a firm determination on her part that the inner personal link that unites her with her son will not be snapped, whatever be the outcome - the materialisation of fidelity in one's own actual life! In sum, this hope is there because of the mother's faithfulness - fidelity to the inner urge for participation within herself in her love for her son.

Now let us analyse what is the motive behind this mother's 'hoping against hope'. Is she hoping for her son's return because of her own interests; or because of her son's interests? If it is owing to both interests, are they confined to this world or are they extended to the other world also? That means, does her hope reveal her interests in the welfare of her own soul as well as that of his own soul? The answers to these questions will show whether her love, hope and fidelity to her son is being materialised either on the human level only or on the divine level also.

For this purpose, let us compare this example with another. For instance, let us ask the following question, 'In what way is this mother's hope superior to that of a mother who does believe the official intimation concerning the death of her soldier son?'—Does it mean that the latter has neither love, nor hope, nor fidelity towards her son? We do not think so. In fact, the love, hope and fidelity of the latter may be equally great. Why should it be less? The mother may, with greater realism, accept the fact of her son's death. Thus, she may not try to escape its effects by way of a resolute hope. She may know in her heart that, in a sense, he is really and finally dead as we know death in this life. But she may also know in the
deeper recesses of her soul that he is not dead. She may transcend her loss not through the partial delusion of hope, but in the spirit of a robust faith. He may be dead to this world, but he is not dead in God; and in so far as she believes in God he is not dead to her. Here we have transcendence through faith.

In the mother of Marcel's example, we do not see this transcendental dimension. The manner of solving her problem shows that her love, hope and fidelity are confined to herself as well as to her son, and that, too, not as a whole, for we cannot say for certain that here she is concerned also with the welfare of their souls, for, as the example stands, it is limited to the human level. It does not have other dimensions, for the purpose and the motive of the hope for her son's return shows as if it is prompted mainly by her own personal interests - the expression of her anxiety to have a support, specially in her old age, and also her earnest desire to have a bright future for him, which, in turn, will help her. For that, he has to be alive. It is a worldly desire, that her son be living and not dead. And even if it has this transcendental dimension, the example will have to be developed further.
III. The Story of the Pastor and his Wife:

Still another example may be drawn from one of Marcel's plays, "The Man of God", where Marcel wants to demonstrate how a life of apparent participation on the human as well as the religious levels is not really such. The protagonist of the play is a Calvinist pastor who is generally known for his exemplary life, and has grown to accept that public character. But a sequence of events gradually drives him to self-knowledge. His wife has had a daughter by Michael Sandier who, on the eve of his death, has a longing to see her. Twenty years before, the pastor had, in what he thought to be a gesture of Christian charity, forgiven his wife for her adulterous way of presenting him with a daughter. So, now, in the same spirit of generosity, he permits Sandier to visit the girl, curiously enough, in the face of his wife's protest. It did not strike him that his visit would embarrass both his wife and her daughter. All that he was concerned with was his decorum as pastor. That is all that matters to him - his professional prestige, in other words himself. However, when Sandier makes a request for a second chance to meet his daughter, the pastor peremptorily turns it down on the pretext that it would hurt both women. This releases a series of incidents calculated to peel off, one by one, the various layers of the pastor's deception.
The first incident is where the wife charges him with being selfish and impugns the honesty of his earlier forgiveness. In whatever he did, he never thought of her, was even hardly aware of her. "The woman in me you never even suspected of being there, and certainly didn't satisfy". When she, as wife, as mother and as woman, protested against Sandier's arrival in their home, he did not even listen to her protest based on some kind of reason which, in turn, would indirectly keep the external religious character of his ministry rather than the peace of the home. He turns down Sandier's second request, this time on the pretext that it would hurt her as well as her daughter, and consequently the peace of the family. Now, why was this point not stressed by him at the time of Sandier's first request: this is her question. To put it briefly, the answer would be that his behaviour had not been governed by consistency except in the sense that in each case he was equally thinking of himself. They had no real place in his life; they had been mere pawns, and existed only in so far as his position had to be safeguarded. Instead of considering her and her daughter as free entities, with their own specific interests and traits, they had been treated as a

means to safeguard his selfish motive. Well might the pastor's wife scream at him at the end "Ah! I've made you see at last, haven't I"?1

Edmée's accusations open the pastor's eyes. "It was you who forced me to open my eyes." 2 He starts reflecting seriously on "What am I?" or "Who am I?" What do my actions reveal of me? What about my forgiving my wife? Was it done for my sake or my wife's? Did I want to uplift her morally and, in turn, myself too, by forgiving her? Or did I want to avoid public scandal? Or did I want to avoid my loneliness so that I could do away with a lot of personal problems in my later life? Yes, it was a professional gesture to grant her pardon so that I could avoid a lot of personal problems as well as keep before others the generally expected priestly decorum of my behaviour. Hence his confession: "When I forgave you I thought it was an act of Christian charity. But, apparently, I was simply running away from scandal and loneliness".3 Again he confesses: "I wonder if I really loved you in those days".4

2. Ibid. p.84.
3. Ibid. p.84.
4. Ibid. p.111.
Now he reflects, in the first instance, on his granting of Sandier's first request, and then on the negation of the second request, to meet Osmonde. What was my motive in first granting him permission to see Osmonde? In what way did it safeguard the interests of my wife? Or, did I think in terms of her interests at all? If so, then should I not think that Sandier's arrival in our home will either tempt her to ruminate on her 'romantic' involvement in the past, or hurt her by way of reviving in her remorse for past sin? Yes, I did not even make an attempt to think from her side. Then, was it in the interests of Osmonde? If so, should I not think that, after all, we have deceived her about her birth? Am I not creating more problems for her by permitting Sandier to talk to her, since the secret is very likely to be divulged? Have I ever tried to develop that kind of relationship by which I could make her understand this terrible truth? If I had, then, even without these things, I should have done it. Yes, I did not even make an endeavour to think in terms of my daughter's interests.

Then, was it in the interests of Sandier? If so, in what way did my permission safeguard his genuine interests except that of the satiation of curiosity? Did it in any way help him build up his personality? Instead of helping
anybody, will not his meeting with Edmee and Osmonde create either potential or actual troubles for everybody other than himself? If so, why didn't I object to his seeing her? Yes, was it because I was blinded by my own interests? Ah! my anxiety to keep up the generally expected professional decorum! Yes, I am not a man with genuine love for either my wife, or Osmonde, or even for Sandier, let alone for God! My reflections show that all these were merely actions of apparent love. They were not genuine. Yes, I was motivated by selfish motives. Hence his confession: "I ought first to have led a man's life. But I am not a man. I wasn't even capable of living like a man, of hating like a man.... But I'm nothing, I am nothing".\(^1\)

If I am not leading a man's life, \textit{ipso facto}, I am not leading a religious life. If I really do not love other men, then how can I say that I love God? Yes, I am not a lover of others, so also of God. I love only myself — a selfish creature! Hence his confession: "I am spiritually bankrupt, I've been living on assets that did not belong to me".\(^2\) At last, he decides to quit his pastoral ministry as quite ineligible for it.

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] Gabriel Marcel, \textit{"A Man of God"}, p.97.
\item[2.] Ibid. p.96.
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In sum, the first part of this play shows that, when he has to do something, the pastor was not really making a serious endeavour to think in terms of others' interests but only of his own interests. That means, he did not go deep into the various aspects of the issues concerned. Hence a superficial way of tackling the issues! Whereas, the second reflection helps him to think in terms of the interests of others. Consequently, it helped him to understand his real self in its various aspects. It reveals to him that his is not a life of participation either with reference to other men or to God, but a life of selfishness; for, in fact, he was not interested in others' material, moral or religious welfare, concerned neither with their body nor with their soul - a life of selfishness rather than a life of participation! Convinced of this, he, at last, quits the ministry.

The discussion of these cases could be more thorough. However, our account is adequate for our purpose of delineating the characteristics of Marcel's method.

B

THE METHOD OF GABRIEL MARCEL

I. The Method of Gabriel Marcel:

As we said above here our attempt is to bring out certain details of Marcel's philosophical method. And this
we try to do by deriving from our accounts of his thought, which, in turn, will bring home also the fact that his method is consistent with the nature of his thought.

(A) The first point we learn from our account of Marcel's thought is that it is developed through the narration of incidents or life-histories, (it may be actual, or modified or altogether imaginary), the concrete situations attempting to state the problem and the actual choices of the persons concerned. That means, he quotes or invents a story—an incident, a situation, a person that is involved in the incident or situation and interacts with it one way or another. As in the story of the hypothetical mother and her soldier son, or the plot of his high comedy, "The Man of God", the thinking is all done through concrete, personal and existential narrative. And through this narration of the life-histories what Marcel tries to drive home is to bring out a structure of certain events in a situation and through them the structure of concepts like 'hoping against hope', love, fidelity and so on; both on the human and on the religious level. This is what we mean by his method. So, the main point to be stressed with reference to his method is that the way or the manner Marcel develops his thought is mainly through the narration of certain incidents. As he says himself, he must first try to map out his problem in relation
to life, rather than outline it in the high void of "pure thought". This, in short, is the method of art and literature, rather than philosophy as traditionally understood. No wonder that critics of existentialism turn up their noses at this new approach and dub it as an art and no philosophy. For example, criticising existentialism in general Debabrata Sinha writes: "Obsessed as it is with the concrete, this type of thinking seems to verge on some sort of autobiography, so to say, in its attempt to identify the concrete with what is one's own. And that brings into play such feelings as may eventually lead to some sort of poetic expression, instead of gaining a scientific form". ¹

For example, in order to see how Marcel brings out the idea that the problem of participation is a continuous one and consequently demands a continuous solution, let us take the story of his play "The Man of God". The life of participation was really in danger when Edmee confessed her adulterous involvement with Sandier. It was presumed as really and genuinely solved when the so-called generous as well as faith-orientated forgiving was granted to his confessing wife by the pastor. Consequently, participation

was assumed as restored actually in their personal and existential lives. Then through the analysis of Édée, pastor's wife, Marcel wants to show that the problem of participation is, in fact, not to be considered as solved really and genuinely with reference to a particular incident or to a particular person or to a particular situation. It is something which is to be considered as a continuous problem, which, in turn, calls for continuous solutions with reference to different situations, persons, issues, times, places and so on, namely, in the first instance, his permission to Sandier to come and talk to Osmonde, his daughter, even in the face of his wife's protest, and then his negation of his second request for the same purpose. And this is echoed in Idmée's words when the pastor confesses his spiritual bankruptcy: "But you can't suddenly have lost your faith, it's impossible". Moreover, in the earlier days of their marriage, the pastor himself had confirmed this idea when he spoke about his tiding over the crisis of faith: "You must realise that it didn't happen in a day or even a month.... It was more like a slow transformation, an inner growth". That means, instead of

2. Ibid. p.55.
developing his thought by presenting, at the outset, certain clear-cut and precise definitions of impersonal and abstract principles, considered theoretically or rationally as self-evident truths and then deductively demonstrating from them certain other implied principles for the purpose of working out a totality of rational truths about the participation, he goes on narrating the situations that attempt to state a particular problem, then the personal efforts, struggles and agonies that a person undergoes in order to respond to that problem, and, finally, the actual choice of the person concerned as a man of participation either on the human level or both on the human and the religious level. In such a manner he will enlighten his readers about the original meaning of his concepts, namely, "hoping against hope", love, fidelity, etc., on the human and religious levels. In sum, his method is narrative rather than discursive.

(B) Another aspect of this method is that the examples chosen by Marcel do not merely serve the function of a metaphor, of "an incidental illustration of a point", but the very constitutive part of it. To put it in another

way, the narration itself is his thought, and not an auxiliary to his thought. As himself puts it: "But I will emphasize, in the first place, that it is more than a metaphor; or if it is one, it is a metaphor woven into the texture of my arguments, part of the pattern of the argument".¹ That means, he develops his very argument in support of his conclusion through the narration of the details, (it can be either clues, or hints, or appropriate imaginative additions and subtractions) of the concrete examples concerned. It follows from this technique of expressing thought that, when isolated from the story, the thought that seemed cogent and convincing enough in it ceases to carry equal weight when seen in a purely logical or theoretical light. Hence, Marcel writes: "I would like the point that for a philosophical approach like ours, which is essentially a concrete rather than an abstract approach, the use of examples is not merely an auxiliary process but, on the contrary, an essential part of our method of progressing. An example, for us, is not merely an illustration of an idea which was fully in being even before it was illustrated. I would rather compare the

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pre-existing idea to a seed; I have to plant it in the
genial soil that is constituted by the example before I
can really see what sort of a seed it is, I keep a watch
on the soil to see what the seed grows up into".  

(C) Another peculiarity of Marcel's method, as we
have seen, is that it is literary rather than philosophical
as we have known philosophy. Since Marcel develops his
thought through the narration of certain incidents in a
situation and the choices of the persons concerned, the
presentation of his thought is brought home either through
plays or through a diary style of expression in its external
form or in its literary style. That is why he himself
writes: "From this standpoint it can clearly be understood
why the Journal (Metaphysical Journal) and its dependent
writings on the one hand, and drama on the other, were my
favourite and even rather exclusive modes of expression".  
At first sight, this might mean the failure of Marcel's
philosophy. And he, candidly, seems to admit as much: "But
I was to find out by and by that such a field of research
in my case, did not lead itself to a systematic exposition,

2. Gabriel Marcel, *Metaphysical Journal*, p.xii,
   (Italicised are ours.)
so that this diary became, so to speak, an end in itself and not a mere preparation". This is too true, not of his diary alone, but of the rest of his writings. He also realises this relative failure when he confesses that what he intended originally to stand as illustration came in the end to stand by itself, in a literary, not philosophical sense.

Since his thought is presented through diaries and plays, it is very likely that it may become a disconnected and loose thinking. And, in fact, it gives the *prima facie* appearance of a disconnected and loose thinking as compared with systematic philosophies. In the *Metaphysical Journal* and *Being and Having* we can hardly find a complete discussion of any single topic. What we find is separate intuitions and reflections arising from the daily experience of his life, in a disconnected manner, without any relation with what went before or what is to come after. Hence, the total impression of his presentation is of something that is ambiguous, unclear and sometimes obscure. This point is well brought out by Frederick Heinemann when he writes: "French students complained jokingly that one needed an Ionian diver to trace its pearls, and textbook writers find no other philosophy so difficult to summarise.... All of them
denote stages of somewhat confused and obscure philosophical itinerary, which follows many side tracks and often returns to its starting point.  

However, at its best, what appears at first loose and disconnected is found to be connected, though not in the manner in which ideas and propositions are connected in the systematic philosophy. The principle of this kind of connection is to be realised that the unrelated events and a description of different layers of the same event add up to a structure from which emerge valuable and sometimes original, concepts like hope, love and fidelity on the human and the religious level. One test of the presence of this unifying principle is that the central theme of each of Marcel's literary works can be detected and isolated. Marcel himself refers to it: "Now the central theme of the Metaphysical Journal, and of course, of subsequent works, is precisely the impossibility of thinking of the being as object." Each of his works, literary as well as technically philosophical, while narrating a variety of

incidents, not necessarily logically inter-connected, do serve to bring out the meaning of certain human values like love, hope and fidelity better than any theoretical definition of each of them would have done. In other words, it is not that Marcel lacks in a system; only, that his system is slightly unsystematic. Behind the sum of events, there is always a point and a purpose. Therefore, in spite of the apparent disconnectedness there is a method of a specific character.

For example, let us take the example of the pastor and the wife in Marcel's drama "The Man of God". It is a fact that Marcel narrates a good number of incidents that take place in their life. Whatever be the nature of these incidents, still there is a point which Marcel wanted to bring to light, namely, that the problem of participation is a continuous problem and consequently demands a continuous solution in different situations, persons, issues, times, places, etc., of one's own life. Unless a uniformity is there one cannot characterise the life of an individual as a life of participation. So, in spite of the apparent disconnectedness of his narrations, still Marcel, more or less clearly, brings out how the generally presumed generous and faith-orientated pardon granted by the pastor is, in fact, a professional gesture, rather than an act of genuine
participation. It means that really what is there is only an apparent disconnectedness. The real connection is to be seen in that each point in the narration will have to bring in the genuine sense of fidelity, hope and love, both on the mundane realm and in the divine realm. And, in fact, it does bring them in. Hence, one can say that there is a connection.

And this apparent disconnectedness is there in Marcel's treatises because the specific problem with which he deals arises for him only at a particular point of time. Between the arising of the different problems as well as the different aspects of the same problem there may not be connection. It is in such a context that Karsten Harris would write: "Marcel's thought is anything but systematic and academic".1 Otherwise there is a connection. It is, therefore, the task of the reader to gather together the various ideas and issues spread out in different places of the book, as well as in the different books, and put them in an orderly and coherent form. In short, Marcel's writings should not be considered as a discussion of some disconnected themes which lack inter-relationship, for, in spite of his apparent

disconnected and loose presentation compared with that of
the deductive systematizer, still Marcel's writings show
a degree of continuity and compactness since they have an
orientation, a focus and a perspective which permeates all
his works even though one may not experience it at once.
That is why he writes: "No method in action in philosophy
can proceed as a kind of free adventure, a 'directionless
voyage'. It must have a prior knowledge of the destination
in the light of which it is able to progress".

(D) Another way of characterising Marcel's method is
to say that he sees a problem from what he calls a
participant's angle, rather than from a spectator's point
of view. From this dichotomy Marcel develops his theory of
reflection. To him there are mainly two kinds of reflection;
the primary and the secondary.¹ According to him, primary
reflection is a reflection in which the philosopher considers
and assesses the object (i.e., the question) concerned, in
itself rather than in relation to its concrete, personal
and existential situations. This is the same as to say
that the philosopher of primary reflection considers the
object in its parts rather than in its totality, because

the real and full nature of something is to be seen, as we have seen already, not only in its internal structure alone, but also in its relation to the situation - both internal and external - in which it actually exists. Owing to this fragmentary approach to the object, the philosopher of primary reflection considers the object as if it was not in any way related to him. Consequently, abstract, impersonal and non-existential elements enter into his approach. And this is what Marcel characterises as the "spectator's" attitude of the philosopher to a question. According to Marcel, left to itself, this reflection is insufficient and inadequate for a full assessment of an object of philosophy. It is to be further perfected for the application of it in philosophy.

Marcel himself, on the other hand, lays great store by secondary reflection,¹ that is, the assessment of a philosophical problem from the "actor's" or "participator's" angle. It is a reflection in which the philosopher considers the question or the object of his philosophy not merely in itself - in its inner structure alone, but also

in its relation to the situations in which it is - both the external and the internal situation. In other words, the philosopher of secondary reflection considers the object not in its parts but as a whole. Owing to this integral approach, the philosopher of secondary reflection considers the object as if it was intimately related to him. Consequently, personal and existential elements enter into his approach. This is what he characterises as the "participator's" attitude of the philosophical approach.

Preceding these primary and secondary reflections, there is what Marcel calls an intuitive experience. According to Marcel, every philosopher has some kind of an "intuitive experience" of the Reality which will provide him with the focus, orientation and perspective required for further philosophising. It is a sort of primitive and approximate encounter with Reality at the point where the Reality reveals itself in a confused way. Marcel describes it as something falling short of self-consciousness, as Heidegger would say, 'such primitive experience at once reveals and conceals itself.' It is only when this intuition becomes self-conscious that we can begin to have our philosophisation.

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There are, according to Marcel, mainly two ways to make this intuitive experience self-conscious. One is the spectator's primary reflection, which is where the abstract, impersonal and non-existential philosopher stops; and the other is the actor's secondary reflection, which is a complete participation with Reality. This is the attitude that Marcel approves of and claims as concrete, personal and existential. He does not see the problem as something apart from himself, but rather as intimately and fundamentally related to him, as part of his total experience. Hence the tackling of it will have a constitutive impact on the personality of the philosopher himself. Therefore, in a sense, we can say that Marcel does not consider knowledge as an end in itself, but something which starts and grows in the perspective of 'what does this knowledge of this particular fact of certain specific situation mean to me, the actual knower, the actual thinker? - a concrete, personal and existential participator with reality.' He cannot place himself outside or "before" what he is seeking to know. He is involved in it, "engaged" in it. One can almost say that he depends upon it; he is, in a certain sense, even inside it. This is akin to the ancient Indian epistemological theory that 'you cannot know a thing unless you are it'. This closeness to the Reality
that is sought to be known, or one is driven to know, brings reflection nearer to the original "semi-conscious intuition" and retains the experiential immediacy or oneness between subject and object as traditionally understood. Marcel writes: "Roughly we can say that where primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience..., the function of secondary reflection is essentially recuperative; it reconquers that unity."

In order to show, perhaps, the continuous character of his philosophical reflection, Marcel qualifies his philosophical reflection as "pensée pensante" - thinking thought, as against "pensée pensée" - thought thought. By adopting this Bergsonian terminology, he wants to show that the reflective activity (otherwise described as secondary reflection) of his philosophy is endowed with the characteristic of continuity, which, in turn, brings home a glimpse of the sense of 'practical' as opposed to 'theoretical' since the practical problem of man will usually be thought continuously before it gets finally solved.

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Further, in order to show the personal character of his reflection, i.e., 'secondary reflection', Marcel makes a distinction of philosophical reflection in another manner, namely, "penser" - thinking, and "penser à" - thinking of. According to him, thinking is to be understood as that reflecting activity which "comes only to bear on objectified essences". Whereas, a reflecting activity, for example, a sympathetic and loving thought of one's own beloved or of one's own deceased friend, can be considered as an example of the reflecting activity of "thinking of" - penser à. It is same as to say that, while "thinking" - penser, is an impersonal activity (primary reflection), "thinking of" is a personal activity (secondary reflection), since it is a reflecting activity with reference to one's own specific situation as well as to one's own specific relation to that situation. Hence, Marcel writes: "In brief, thinking does not come to bear on anything but essences. Note that depersonalisation, while perfectly allowable in this case, is impossible in the order of thinking of. Only a certain person can think of a certain being or a certain thing".

2. Ibid. p.31.
and secondary - Marcel develops two fundamental characteristics or attitudes in man. They are "having" and "being", "opinion" and "faith". While the attitudes of having and opinion are there owing to the primary reflection, the attitudes of being and faith are attributed to the secondary reflection. To put it differently, we can say that the "participatory man" and the "non-participatory man" (i.e., the "authentic" and "inauthentic" man) explained by Marcel by way of primary and secondary reflections are differently expatiated by him through these terms.

**Having:** Since the man of primary reflection does not consider others as if related to him, he does not see others in him and himself in others. Consequently, there is no mentality of genuine giving and receiving, i.e., sharing, but only of grabbing and possessing.\(^1\) Hence, Marcel qualifies the man of this kind as man of "having". "Having", in this particular context, applies to all those things which I can possess - physically, mentally or imaginatively. And, in possessing something, according to Marcel, I always "objectify" it. Hence the abstract, impersonal and non-existential attitude of the man concerned!

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1. Gabriel Marcel, *"Being and Having*", pp.158 ff.
Being: The man of secondary reflection transcends the stage of "having" and reaches the stage of "being". How and why? Because he sees everything not as separated from, and get intimately related to, himself - as if one with himself owing to his "actor's" or "participator's" mentality. Consequently, he sees others in him and himself in others. Hence, there is an open mentality of genuine giving and receiving, i.e., sharing with others. Hence, there is no trace of the mentality either of acquisition, or of grabbing, and of possessing. I consider others as part of me - one with myself. So, the main aim is not "having", but "being" - being together with others in a mutual creative openness.

Opinion: The man of "primary reflection" or "having" is uncertain about everything, since he does not understand others in their totality, because, owing to his "spectator-mentality", he does not look at them in the totality of their inner structure with reference to their own specific situations. Hence, he does not, nay, cannot, go deep into the depth of their very beings; consequently, he has only a superficial knowledge of them. As a result, he has only "opinion", a cumulus of "opinions", about others as well as about himself.
Faith: To have faith, or to believe in somebody, according to Marcel, means that I place myself at the disposal of somebody, since I consider him reliable. This reliability or personal commitment is there owing to the "participator-mentality" of the man of secondary reflection, for the man of secondary reflection, or of "being", does study others in the totality of their inner structure, with reference to their own specific situations. Hence, he gets profounder knowledge of them. Since he has a profound knowledge of them, he knows what they will do in one situation and what they will not do in another situation. And this, in turn, gives rise to confidence in them, and consequently more faith in them. And, according to Marcel, one can have "faith" only in a person whom one considers reliable. So he writes: "To believe in someone, to place confidence in him, is to say 'I am sure that you will not betray my hope, that you will respond to it', that you will fulfill it". 1

To illustrate this theory of reflection, Marcel gives an example of love between a husband and a wife. To begin with, there is actual experience of love, personal and

existential. This love represents or constitutes an actual, concrete unity. The spouses fully participate in each other; they are, in other words, inter-personally involved. This stage of marital experience corresponds to the "semi-conscious intuition" of Marcel's thought.

It is possible that the husband - call him John - is philosophically inclined and gets into a mood when he wishes to understand the nature of love between husband and wife. He begins to analyse love, intellectually, rationally, systematically. This second stage corresponds to what Marcel calls the point of "primary reflection". What John has to do in order to understand intellectually the nature of love is not exactly to cease loving his wife but to stand away from his love of her for a while and observe and analyse its nature in an impersonal, objective manner. His concern now is not with his own personal love of his wife, but with the love of any husband for his wife. By that necessary act his experience partly forfeits, if only for a while, its existential character. As he would say, the 'primordial participation of his existence in the life of the other is accordingly, at least partially, lost in primary reflection, where the subject-object dichotomy occurs'.
In short, he has indulged in an activity which is not personal and existential, that is, in the method of the systematic philosopher. In this, the earlier spontaneity and the original unity of experience are impaired by reflection. Hence Marcel writes: "Evidently this reflection destroys the earlier spontaneity and the original unity of experience". That means, he is no longer 'John-loving-Mary', a single unit of being, but John trying to understand his love of Mary, a sadly truncated and divided John. That means, the warmth of the concrete, personal and existential love is absent from his non-existential, abstract and impersonal approach to love between husband and wife.

In this predicament, he is anxious to 'recuperate' his earlier integral experience and falls back on secondary reflection. To do this, he must collect the fragments of his original disrupted experiences of marital love. "But how will secondary reflection proceed in this case? It can only, it might seem, get to work in the process to which primary reflection has itself had recourse; a seeking of the elements which primary reflection has first severed".


* For this phrase we are indebted to Fr. Copbston who uses this in his book, "Contemporary Philosophy."
That means, he is no longer interested in the nature of conjugal love as such. What concerns him now is to realise what the love of his wife means to himself and, presumably, to his wife. He now considers love, not as an abstract thing for theoretical comprehension, but as a means to reveal him to himself as a husband. Marcel says: "The search is not for a meaning of reality in itself but also for 'my door' to reality". Hence he has to involve himself existentially and personally in the very act of loving, together with his analysis. Hence he writes: "My own idea was, on the contrary, that the undertaking has to be pursued within reality itself, to which the philosopher can never stand in relationship of an onlooker to a picture".¹ Now John, the philosophical minded, has run the full circle of experience from "participator" to "spectator" and back again to "participator" but with, perhaps, a richness of experience which he might have missed but for his primary reflection. Hence Marcel writes: "...for my method of advance does invariably consist as the reader will have noticed already, in working my way up from life to thought and then from thought to life again, so that I may try to

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throw more light upon life." In this process of what Marcel calls recuperation or reconquest the 'I' is transformed into 'We', and the authentic 'I-thou' relationship. Hence Marcel writes: "Roughly, we can say that where primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience which is first put before it, the function of secondary reflection is essentially recuperative; it reconquers that unity". There has been a transmutation which has involved a process of broadening. That is why Marcel writes: "In the final analysis it seems that being reveals or entrusts itself to me only in the measure, always woefully incomplete, in which this transmutation is accomplished in me and for me". That means, by way of this participation John creates himself anew, i.e., a metamorphosis of the concrete person concerned. In other words, here the philosophic problem has been solved, but now in a concrete, personal, existential context. Hence Marcel writes: "....it (secondary reflection) is essentially the process by which I realise myself as a single whole".

2. Ibid. p.102.
4. Gabriel Marcel, Fresh Hope For The World, p.2. (Italicised are ours)
Reverting to the case of Abraham detailed earlier in the chapter, let us see how he behaves in this framework of primary and secondary reflections. As we have supposed, he too has gone through two different stages of reflection. He has set God's command against his personal, family and community interests. He has also, perhaps, doubted the authenticity of the Divine command. But, being a man of faith, Abraham thinks again and permits his second thought to prevail. He chooses his obedience to God at any cost. He can do so, because Abraham does not place himself at a distance from God as a "spectator" but in close, indissoluble, inevitable relationship with God whose creature and servant he knows himself to be. That is Abraham's strength, and his solution of his existential problem. In surrendering his will implicitly and unquestionably to God's will, he has made a recovery; he has saved the original and necessary unity of man with God. Hence he could see the same act of "murder" as an act of 'sacrifice' for the sake of God's glory, which will also be highly rewarding to the religious dimension of himself, his son, his wife, and also his community.

Here there is an attempt on Abraham's part to assess the whole thing on the basis of its significance for the totality of his personality - his own personality in its
intimate and personal relation with God, his son, his wife, his community and so on. That means, in his response to the situation, he is trying to safeguard as far as possible not only his own interests, but also the interests of God, his son, his wife, his community and so on. In other words, there is an endeavour to think from the participator's point of view, rather than from the spectator's point of view - a sharing with their feelings, interests, predilections and so on. That means, their interests and feelings are considered by him as if they were his own concern. Hence, there is a transformation in the very mode of his experience as well as his living, and consequently in the very personality of Abraham compared to the Abraham who was thinking in the light of "primary reflection".

II. The Different Characteristics of Marcel's Method

In the previous part what we did was to bring out the characteristics of Marcel's method in relation to the structure of the presentation of his thought; whereas, here, what we are attempting to do is to bring out the characteristics of his method in view of the content of his thought, i.e., the nature of the problem discussed. Viewed in this line, Marcel's method, to him, is a concrete, personal and existential one. Let us examine the 'how' and the 'why' of his claim.
Marcel's Method is a Concrete One:

On closer consideration, it seems that there are mainly two reasons which made him characterise his method as concrete, namely, (1) Approaching the question through the concrete and specific situations of an individual, and (2) Viewing the question as a whole rather than in its parts.

(1) As we have already seen it in connection with the example of the mother and her soldier son, the pastor and the wife, etc., Marcel's philosophical ideas are deployed through narration in the form of a story or a play in which the attempt is to grapple with the respective questions through the cultivation of an actual life of hope, love and fidelity in a given concrete situation or situations of their actual life, namely, with reference to God, son, wife, and so on. That means, the whole thinking is done through the narration of concrete incidents - either actual or slightly modified or imaginary. More or less the same point is brought out by M.Warnock in another manner when she writes: "Nor is it just an accidental feature of the writers in question that in none of them is there to be found a coherent or systematic moral philosophy. To construct such a system would perhaps have been impossible, in the sense that it would have been contrary to the general intention of their
work." Hence, unlike in the case of an abstract system builder, who develops his thought in the form of precise definitions and rational analysis, Marcel prefers to create a concrete situation in which people behave one way or another according to their attitude as either "actor" or "spectator". So, there is an actual transformation or metamorphosis of the very life of the person who tackles the issue. Since the tackling of the question is done with reference to the actual situations of the practical life of a person, it can be characterised as a concrete method. Hence, here the concrete characteristic is distinguished from one which is a matter of logic and demonstration as it is in the systematic philosophies. Maybe this is the reason why Marcel writes in the following manner. To repeat our quotation: "I think we must first of all try to map it out in relation to life as it is concretely lived, and not to outline its shape in the high void of 'pure thought' for my method of advance does invariably consists, as the reader will have noticed already, in working my way up from life to thought and then down from thought to life again so that I may try to throw more light upon life".

Another reason why Marcel's method is characterised as concrete is his approach to the issue - here man, as a whole rather than in parts. That means, he views an individual being as a whole person in intimate and personal relation with other human beings as well as with God, rather than as either a mere cognitive, a volitional, or sentimental subject, or as a person in his singularity alone. That means, by 'concrete', we must remember, he means, here, something having a reality in actuality, and not merely in thought. That is why Marcel himself writes: "...concrete philosophy which views what is cut and dry and what is de-personalised with distrust. It is a philosophy whose aim it is to restore those links which a certain type of ideology has conceived it as its task to break".  

For example, in his story of the mother and her soldier son he takes an actual mother (and not merely abstract motherhood) who is capable of an attachment to a son so strong and so passionate that it makes the very thought of his death impossible to her. Had he not taken this concrete stand, the mother's attitude towards her dead son would be merely irrational. However, in this concrete situation,

it seems completely warranted. As we have pointed out before, it is not wishful thinking but undying hope. In short, Marcel sees the mother's personality as a whole in its relation to the situation in which he finds herself, namely, the mother in her love, hope, and fidelity to her only beloved son. It is because of this kind of consideration, (i.e., secondary reflection) that Marcel could extol this mother's specific response to this specific situation as a human paradox, revealing one of the finest and most supreme sentiments of a human hope which is prompted by the deep sentiments of love and fidelity of a mother towards her son. This is what he calls, 'being-in-the-world' or 'being-in-a-situation'. This confirms his dictum that "The ontological order can only be recognised personally by a totality of a being engaged in a drama which is his own". In other words, the secondary reflection or participation tends to synthesize the "dualism of the reason in the body, as well as the world and person into a self in intimate and personal relation to others". Such reflection, as he points out himself, 'does not dismember and analyse, but rather re-establishes in all its continuity that living tissue which imprudent analysis (primary reflection) tears assunder'.

It is in this context that Marcel contends that it is erroneous to criticise his preoccupation with the experiences like hope, love, fidelity as volitional. Love, according to him, is not exclusively a virtue of the will alone. Instead, his understanding of it is to be realised as an "experience which over-flows into both intellect and will but proceeds from a centre in which they can be no longer distinguished". It is because of this preoccupation with the totality of man that he does not hesitate to write: "I think we ought to aim at a restoration of that unity of poetic vision and philosophical creativity of which the great pre-Socratic philosophers offer us one of the first known examples". And we can see this proposed unity materialised or concretised in Marcel's own work, e.g., the pastor and the wife of the play, "The Man of God". Right from the beginning, the pastor's solution of his problem takes on varying shapes of shock, revolt, anger, dismay, confusion, prayer, hope, fidelity, love, and so on. Hence, almost all the faculties of man are involved in the development of Marcel's philosophy. Maybe it is this point that made M. Warnock write: "Most

characteristically, then, existentialism will undermine the distinction between thinking and feeling, between the rational and the sentimental. ¹

(B) Marcel's Method is a Personal One:

A closer consideration of Marcel's thought and his method reveals that the solution of the problem is presented by him as if it is handled by an individual with reference to the specific situations of his own actual and personal life, rather than either in a general or in a universal manner. Since the solution of the problem is effected through the personal life of a person, it cannot be generally applied to the solution achieved by others when confronting such problems, for they too, will be tackling such problems in their own personal way with reference to their own specific and concrete situations. Hence, every one will be tackling their problems in their own distinct and personal manner. The same is expressed by M.Warnock when she writes about existentialism in general: "Choices must be made by each man for himself. So they must be described as what each individual plans as he looks out at the world from his own personal angle". ²

¹. Mary Warnock, "Existentialist Ethics", p.10.
². Ibid. p.54.
For example, the way Abraham tackled the problem of participation with reference to a specific situation of his actual and personal life, will not (in certain cases cannot) be adopted by others when they confront the same type of, or similar, problems. If at all they adopt this way of tackling an issue, they may not be justified and rewarded by God in their actions as Abraham is justified and rewarded by God. They may even be condemned as murderers; for, it is the specific personal traits of Abraham, as a man of God, that justify his response in such a manner. Hence, the approach to a problem is highly individualised or personalised. That means, the manner in which one tackles one's personal problem will be different from that of others, since others will be tackling their own personal problems on the basis of their own personal situations as well as their own convictions.

Furthermore, even with reference to the same person the tackling of the different problems of participation will not be of the same nature, because of two reasons. In the first instance, the very personal convictions and priorities of the person concerned will be of a different nature, since the person is changing or being transformed day by day. And, secondly, the very nature of the problems
he confronts will be of different nature since the situations — both the internal and the external — will be varying from person to person, from place to place, from time to time, and so on. This we can see very clearly in the example of Abraham. The tackling of the problem of Abraham's participation with God who commands him to leave his native place is quite different from the tackling of it when he doubts the divine capacity of providing him with a son, and also from that of Abraham who complains to God concerning the same divine promise. Again, we see another way of tackling done by Abraham with reference to the divine request to sacrifice Isaac to God as a burnt offering. Marcel, therefore, calls for each man to realise the truth of his own authentic self through his self-effort.¹ This is, in a sense, brought out by Marcel through Francis, Pastor's doctor-brother, when he was asked by the pastor whether he is right in forgiving his wife her adultery. "You must know, of course, that I've never allowed myself to pass any judgment on the matter. In a case like that, a man must obey his own feelings or his own conscience, or whatever

¹ Gabriel Marcel, "Creative Fidelity", p.156.
you like to call it. ¹ And, again, concerning the permission to be granted to Mr. Sandier, Francis says to the pastor: "You must feel free to act as you wish.... In my opinion, this is a case where you - and you only - can and must decide." ²

(C) Marcel's Method is Existential:

The third characteristic of Marcel's method is its existential character. That is, every problem is faced as if it were a purely personal and private problem in a particular situation, since his thought is developed through the life-histories of persons with reference to their specific situations. In such circumstances, objectivity, which is born of detachment, is not possible for him. Hence, one's efforts to solve the problem must definitely touch the very core of his total personality, as the tackling of the problem of participation with reference to the sacrifice of his son Isaac touched the very existence of Abraham, i.e., the very vocation of his life. One cannot face a problem unless one feels a kind of personal

2. Ibid. p.51.
and existential attachment towards it. And this, in turn, will condition his approach towards the problem. Hence the existential character of his method. This is brought out by M. Warnock in another manner when she writes about existentialism in general: "For an Existentialist, what philosophical beliefs you hold determines the actual way in which you live your life."¹

In this connection Marcel criticises other philosophers' method as abstract, impersonal and non-existential. Now, a question can be asked, namely, "Are the claims and the criticisms that are being made by Marcel in connection with the method of his philosophy all right or not?" For the purpose, we have to consider the method of other philosophies. Hence we start, as we did in the previous chapter, with an exposition of Cartesian method. But, before discussing it we would try to delineate the Cartesian thought in a summary form, as we did in Marcel's case. Hence the need for an account of Descartes' thought.

¹ Mary Warnock, "Existentialist Ethics", p.53.
In the previous chapter, we have already had an account of how Descartes faces his problem of man as part of his main problem of constructing the reasoned structure of a systematic philosophy. Hence, we shall here sum it up very briefly.

I. The Thought of Descartes:

Descartes' discussion of the problem of man originates in his search for a theoretical proof of the existence of his own self, namely, 'Cogito, ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I exist'), which, in turn, serves, in the first instance, as the first positive answer to his search for certainty, and then as the basic premise of the proof of the existence of God, the material world, the constitutive elements of man, the material world and so on, which ultimately results in a system of philosophy in which God is supreme. To put it in a nutshell, Descartes wanted to conduct a coherent, rational and deductive analysis of the reality in order to work out a rational system of absolutely certain knowledge of it—a system in which everything—man, the world, God—finds its place.
The main point of it all is, as we have seen, to build up a reasoned philosophical system that can meet the challenge of science and mathematics against philosophy. And, in so far as his system is a reasoned structure, the development of science and mathematics cannot constitute a challenge to religion or to belief in the existence of God. Instead, science, Descartes contends, exists through the courtesy of God, and not vice versa, for in his rational system God is supreme.

D

THE METHOD OF DESCARTES

I. The Method of Descartes:

Here we attempt to give an account of the method of Descartes as can be deduced from his thought, and then see how far this account of his method agrees with the account of his method given by Descartes himself.

(A) One feature of Descartes' method is his endeavour to find a model of certainty, attributing as he does the chaotic state of affairs in philosophy to the lack of a sound method. As has been noticed, Descartes adopts a model of certainty, and thinks that the propositions that are accepted in his metaphysical system must conform to
this model. The model, for Descartes, as is well known, is provided by mathematics, where the propositions are absolutely certain, and their denial is self-contradictory and/or inconceivable.

Adoption of a model of knowledge or certainty is a fairly common feature of schools of systematic philosophy. For example, mathematics provides a model not only to Descartes, but also to Spinoza and Leibniz. The model adopted by the empiricists, like Locke, Berkeley and Hume, is provided by sense experience. What is given in immediate sense experience is taken by them as a model of certain knowledge.

However, Descartes recognises that the model provided by mathematics is inadequate, because the propositions of mathematics are abstract - they lack content. In metaphysics, the certainty must be gained with reference to real existence.

(B) Another feature of Descartes' method is to find propositions about reality which satisfy this model. The only proposition about real existence which satisfies the model, according to him, is the proposition: 'I think, therefore, I am' which establishes the certain existence of oneself. About the interpretation of this statement
there are many disputes as also about whether it proves the existence of the self or not. For us, what is important is that Descartes thinks that the proposition satisfies the model.

But another question regarding this feature is important. What is the ground for the acceptance of this proposition? Is it intuition or demonstration, or a combination of the two? Here, too, what is important for us is that the grounds supposed to be one or the other or both.

(C) A third feature of Descartes' method arises from the fact that the only propositions which can establish the certainty of real existence is the proposition about oneself. This by itself would hardly be satisfactory, much less able to meet the challenge of the developments in science and mathematics. To avoid this predicament, he first derives the criteria of truth - clarity and distinctness - from the one case before him. About these criteria, too, there are many difficulties: "Are these two or are they one? In any case, are they independent of intuition or demonstration? Though this is so, by and large, the propositions which are accepted as having clarity and distinctness are logically necessary propositions,
such as 'something cannot come out of nothing', 'to know something is more perfect than being ignorant of it', etc.

For example, after having defined the characteristics of the case which fits the model, Descartes searches for other propositions which have the same characteristics, namely, clarity and distinctness. For instance, he states: 'I doubt, but I know distinctly and clearly that to know is more perfect than to doubt'. Because I am not perfect, I have a clear and distinct idea of what is to be perfect and what is a perfect being. Then, on the basis of this clear and distinct idea of a perfect being, he proves the existence of God. For the purpose, Descartes asks the following question: "Whence do I have this idea of a Perfect Being?" Ideas of other things do not raise this question, because I can make them, since they are not more perfect than me. Further, what is more perfect cannot be derived from the less perfect, for something cannot come from nothing. Therefore, this idea is placed in me by a nature more perfect than mine, which possesses all perfections, that is God. In sum, the existence of God is deduced by Descartes from an existential proposition namely, 'I have a clear and distinct idea of a Perfect Being'.

Finally, it is these features put together that enable him to extend the realm of real existents to matter and God.
In fact, with the help of these propositions and deduction therefrom, he establishes the existence of the notion of the world and God. In doing so, he has to adapt the nature of the existents in such a way that they satisfy the model that he has adopted. For example, he thinks that the nature of mind is essentially thinking; or that the nature of matter is essentially extension. These are logically necessary propositions the denial of which is self-contradictory. This, however, only means that thinking is essential to mind, not that nothing else is; or that extension is essential to matter, not that nothing else is. In so far as this is so, the concepts are adapted to his needs by Descartes.

II. The Method Applied and the Method Proposed by Descartes:

The characteristics of Descartes' method stated above bear resemblance to his account of the characteristics a philosophical method should have. In fact, he was perhaps one of the first to give detailed attention to questions of method.* In what follows we will point out the resemblance between our account and the account he has given himself.

* In fact, he regarded the question of method so important that he first looked for a method and set out its most (Contd... see next page)
Though the resemblance between our account of Descartes' method and his own account is not, in fact, as a one to one resemblance, still the essential characteristics are the same. According to him they are the following important aspects. Usually, whenever a discussion is there about the Cartesian method, mention is made about "The Discourse on Method", where Descartes propounds the four rules of the method which he prescribes and claims to follow in his reasoning. But we must remember that Descartes had been interested in the problem of method for quite a long time. His first work on method was the "Rules for the Direction of Mind" (i.e., Regulae) In this book he intended to give 36 rules, of which 12 were concerning method; 12 were concerning their application to perfectly understood questions; and the last 12 were related to their application to imperfectly understood things and questions. But he never fully carried out the intentions he expressed in this book. And yet, this work enables us to understand the full significance of Descartes' famous 'four rules' enunciated in "The Discourse on Method", which we would describe as Descartes' account of his own method. At the same time, we have to realise that there are certain differences between the rules enunciated in the "Rules for the Direction of Mind" and in "The Discourse on Method". However, for our purpose it is not necessary to go into the details of these differences since it will not help us directly to interpret the actual method Descartes made use of. Instead, we will explain only the four rules mentioned by Descartes in "The Discourse on Method", on the basis of which we shall try to bring out the details of the comparison between our account of his method, based on the account of his thought and his own understanding of his method.
(A) The first, known as 'methodic doubt', "was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgement than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt".¹ The adoption of a model of certainty referred to in our account of the first characteristic enables one to follow this principle.

(B) We will take the next two precepts of the method together. "The second, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution". "The third, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence".² The step-by-step development Descartes' thought shows that these two principles are also followed in his system.

2. Ibid. p.15-16.
(C) The fourth rule demands that "In every case make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted." The completeness of the system shows that this precept is also followed by or is exemplified in Descartes' system.

By the enumeration of these rules and their application in philosophy, Descartes does not mean that there is a technique which can be introduced in philosophy in such a way that the natural abilities of the human mind become quite irrelevant. Instead, the rules are meant to make the right use of the operations of the mind. Descartes emphatically contends that, unless the human mind is able to employ its own fundamental operations, namely, intuition and deduction, it would be impossible for it to realise even the content of the very rules mentioned above. And we have already seen how he makes use of intuition and deduction in his philosophy, with reference to the 'cogito' and subsequent propositions.

III. The Different Characteristics of Descartes' Method:

We have given an account of Descartes' thought and method. Now we shall consider Marcel's view that Descartes'
method is abstract, impersonal and non-existent. Our account of Descartes' method shows that, like his problem, his method too is theoretical. The development of his thought takes place with the help of propositions which are logically necessary, such as 'one cannot doubt about his own existence since the very doubt presupposes the existence of a doubter', 'The existence of God cannot be doubted since I have a clear and distinct idea of God as a Perfect Being, because the very idea of a Perfect Being can be instilled in me only by a Perfect Being rather than by me or any other material beings around me since we are imperfect. Otherwise, it will lead to a contradiction, viz., something can come out of nothing'. They have to do with the nature of the concepts. The thought, therefore, is not practical. In view of this, Marcel's description of Descartes' thought as abstract, impersonal and non-existent seems to be appropriate. However, we shall explain these characteristics in some detail.

(A) **Descartes' method is abstract:**

There are two ways of characterising Descartes' method as abstract, namely, (1) abstract, understood as theoretical or logical and (2) abstract understood as emphasis on the part rather than on the whole. Let us begin with the first.
(1) We have already explained the abstract character of Descartes' method in the sense of theoretical or logical.

(2) The other reason why the method of Descartes is characterised as abstract is that it considers the object in its parts, rather than as a whole. His method, by accepting the clear-cut distinction of the subject and object of human knowledge, jeopardises the personal, intimate and lively relation between the subject and the object, which includes, the subject and the world, the subject and the other human beings, the subject and God, and so on, for his method, by insisting on the objective knowledge of the object in itself, emphasises the knowledge of the object in its singularity and inner constitution rather than on the knowledge of the object as it is related to the subject. The consequence of this way of viewing human knowledge is that the philosopher systematically refuses even his own participation (or relation or association) with the object, and becomes an impersonal spectator who resembles more and more one of his mechanical and impersonal instruments.

The abstract character will be made clear further once we take man and the inter-personal relationship on both the human and the divine level as the object of
philosophy. If a strict subject-object dichotomy is applied here, we have to say that the approach will be abstract in nature, because the subject (i.e., the philosopher) also necessarily includes the object. And this approach demands that the subject should tackle the question as if he is not related to it. That means, the object as a whole is not studied, but only as a part. That is why Marcel writes: "My own idea was, on the contrary, that the undertaking had to be pursued within reality itself, to which the philosopher can never stand in the relationship of an onlooker to a picture".1 Hence, Marcel dubs this approach as abstract, for in the place of the whole only a part is emphasized.

This method, according to Marcel, tends to select certain elements and ignore others, since it is habituated to see things and persons isolated rather than interrelated. The negative impact of this abstract thought is more visible when we turn our attention to the social consequences of abstract approach. Marcel contends that the spirit of this method is also expressed in one's inclination to treat his neighbour as an abstraction. "When I consider

another individual as him (i.e., rather than a 'thou'), I treat him as essentially absent; it is his absence that allows me to objectify him, to reason about him as though he were a nature or given essence. Once this way of looking at things (himself as well as others) becomes habitual with a man, then he, Marcel contends, becomes estranged from himself as well as from his fellow-beings (or situations) and becomes de-humanised. This procedure may not always extend so far as the custom in on office, of regarding a man as a number or a series in a dossier. Yet, the principle at work is the same. Thus, this abstract method of approach persuades us to accept a part in place of the whole. In effect, this means a depersonalised observer, a nobody-in-particular. To put it in Marcel's terminology, the primordial participation of my bodily existence in the life of the world (being-in-the-world) in which I have a confused consciousness of universal existence before I come to separate awareness of my own existence, is lost in the Cartesian abstract method by accepting the sharp subject-object dichotomy.

It, 'as a solvent, does not prompt or encourage a relationship or participation between different persons; it rather, in practice, encourages "technical contact" and "commercial communication". That is why Marcel writes: "On many occasions I have denounced the fatal consequences of the spirit of abstraction, notably in politics, and have tried to show that this spirit leads to fanaticism, in other words, to idolatry, and that such idolatry is invariably accompanied by a paroxysm of objectivisation". Thus reflection of this kind breaks the link which unites man, whether philosopher or not, with others and with the world.

The theoretical nature of Descartes' method is also revealed by the kind of objections that are often made to Descartes' thought as a whole or to one or the other of his doctrines. For example, A.J. Ayer attacks Descartes on the ground that the Cartesian conclusions do not follow as Descartes claims they do. For example, from thinking only thinking follows, and not the existence of a person from the fact of mere thinking. And from the idea of person only an idea of person follows and not the actual person. Hence he writes: "If I start with the fact that

I am doubting, I can validly draw the conclusion that I think... That is to say, if there is such a person as myself, then there is such a person as myself, and if I think, I think". ¹ He further criticises the Cartesian contention of the absolute certainty of 'sum' by arguing that the absolute certainty is present only where tautology is present. But he tries to show that the Cartesian 'cogito' is not a tautology. Hence he argues that Iesartes is wrong in his contention of the absolute certainty of himself.

As another example we would refer to Jaakko Hintikka's arguments levelled against Descartes' "cogito". According to him, there is enough evidence, including certain Cartesian statements, that helps us see that the argument contained in 'Cogito, ergo sum' is an inference. At the same time, basing himself on some textual grounds and also on logical points, Hintikka argues that Descartes, "albeit dimly" or "however implicitly", also considered 'cogito, ergo sum' as a performance rather than an inference. According to his argument, Descartes derived the indubitability of 'sum', to a limited extent at least, from

the "existentially inconsistent" or "self-defeating" nature of his endeavour to think its contrary. Because the sense of "Everybody who thinks exists" cannot in the first instance be claimed as a general truth or a general premise on the basis of which the 'Cogito, ergo sum' can be deduced or inferred. Further, there are some strong arguments against the conception of 'cogito' as a logical inference. Hence, he writes: "Descartes realised, however, that there is more to the 'cogito' than the interpretation (i)(which means the interpretation of the 'cogito ergo sum' as a logical inference). He realised, albeit dimly, that it can also serve to express the existential self-verifiability of the sentence, 'I exist' (or the existential inconsistency of 'I don't exist'). On this interpretation, the peculiarity of the sentence, 'ergo sum' is of a performatory character.1

Almost all of these criticisms of Descartes are of a theoretical rather than of a practical nature, the reason being that, in the first instance, they do not consider the practical implications of the Cartesian problem of man, but only its theoretical aspect. For example, as we saw, they are concerned with whether there is self-contradiction,

1. Jaako Hintikka, "Cogito, ergo sum?; Inference or Performance"? op.cit. p.108. (The bracketed are ours)
or whether either any presumption or philosophical leap is there in the arguments employed by Descartes in support of his conclusions. And then the theoretical nature of these criticisms shows, in turn, that Descartes' problems are also theoretical in content, irrespective of their practical implications. And once his method can be characterised as theoretical, as we have already seen, we can also characterise it as abstract or non-practical.

(B) Descartes' method is impersonal:

A problem can be faced in a personal manner if the discussion and the answer depend on a specific person with reference to his own specific situation. For example, 'Should a certain person commit theft because he cannot otherwise hospitalise his pregnant wife?' The problem will differ from person to person. Its solution will be a personal solution.

A clear example of impersonal handling of a problem is that which is found in mathematics and logic. The right answer to the problem of "5 plus 5" does not depend on the individual situation. The right answer is the same for everybody at all times.

In the case of the kind of tackling Descartes undertakes, the situation is different. It is not a
personal handling, like the one about the theft, because here the right answer does not depend on the personal situation; nor is it impersonal, as in mathematics and logic, because in the discussion of these issues there is disagreement between different philosophers. The disagreement between philosophers arises because they are either impressed or unimpressed by one particular logical characteristic or another. For example, Descartes is impressed by the fact that, if there is thought, then there must be a thinker; if there is doubt, then there must be a doubter. Other philosophers, like Ayer, Hume and Russell, think that thought does not imply a thinker. However, our concern at present is not to discuss this problem. Instead, ours is to point out that Descartes' handling of his philosophical problem is not personal in the sense in which Marcel's is. In this sense, Descartes' tackling is impersonal. But it is not impersonal in the same sense in which a mathematical or logical method is impersonal. There is not the same unanimity in dealing with a problem.

(C) Descartes' method is non-existential:

We have already seen that both the problem and the way the problem is faced is of a theoretical or logical
rather than of a practical nature. We also saw that the problem is not faced by Descartes as if it was related to a particular individual with reference to certain specific situation. Hence, by facing the problem in a theoretical and impersonal manner, the being of the person concerned is not directly affected. This means that the theoretical approach to the problem does not affect directly the philosopher's being. So this approach is non-existential, since it does not affect the person who faces the problem. For example, by doubting and consequently proving theoretically the existence of God, one cannot define the person concerned as a theist, for even a practical atheist can prove the existence of God logically in case he possesses the necessary requirements. It may be this non-existential preoccupation that made Descartes write: "For I am assured that, meanwhile, there will arise neither peril nor error from this course and that I cannot for the present yield too much to distrust, since the end I now seek is not action but knowledge."¹ In so far as this solution leads Descartes to consider or reconsider certain existential problems in a particular way, it will have an indirect bearing on the existential

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¹ Rene Descartes, "A Discourse On Method", p.84.
problem. But no direct relationship is there. If it determines anything directly at all, it only determines his thought.

E

PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD: IS MARCEL RIGHT?

As we have seen, there is a difference between the methods of Descartes and Marcel. In Descartes, the method is theoretical, abstract, impersonal and non-existential; whereas in Marcel, it is practical, concrete, personal and existential. But is it possible for us, as we asked in the previous chapter, to describe the difference between these two methods so sharply? A closer examination of the actual manner of facing the problem by reference to the nature of the problem and its solution is necessary before we can accept this way of describing the difference.

I. Marcel's Characterisation of the Methods are not Plausible:

(A) As regards the problem, it was possible for us to argue that Descartes' problem was not only abstract, impersonal and non-existential, but also concrete, personal and existential. We did so on account of the context in
which the problem was raised. The context, as we may remember, was the challenge posed by the developments in science and mathematics to the theological structure of thought which was prevalent at that time, and, consequently, to religious beliefs, for these developments challenged the concept of God as Creator, the immortality of the soul, the life after, and so on. This showed that there was a concrete, personal and existential side to Descartes' problem. In Marcel's case, too, we traced the theoretical, abstract, impersonal and non-existent aspect; for, Marcel, in order to support and justify participation, tries to prove theoretically that man, to be genuine, has to be regarded not only in terms of his inner composition, but also in terms of his relation to other human existences which are basically connected with him in a concrete, personal and existential manner.

But in the case of the method, it is, perhaps, the emphasis on method that leads one to sharply distinguish between the two approaches in terms of abstract and concrete, personal and impersonal, existential and non-existent. However, one may point out the following factors which show that the characterisation of the method need not be so sharp. The point to be noted is that to emphasize the method without taking into account the origin or the nature
of the problem and its solution and then to make this the basis of distinction is to ascribe to the whole the characteristics of only a part, or to treat the part as if it were the whole, for, when these methods, delinked from the origin of the problem as well as from the nature and purpose of the solution, are made the basis of distinguishing these two philosophical approaches, we are losing the point of why the specific methods are being followed in the respective cases when alternative methods are available.

If we are right in this, then, we have to consider the methods of Marcel and Descartes with reference to the origin of their respective problems as well as to the purposes of their respective solutions. That would show, as we have already seen in the case of the problem, that the difference between the methods may not be drawn so sharply, since it can also be shown as concrete and abstract, personal and impersonal, as well as existential and non-existential in the case of both Descartes and Marcel.

(B) The second point, however is important because it shows that, apart from the context, the methods of Marcel and Descartes have features which show that the distinction need not be drawn so sharply as Marcel has done.
Let us take Descartes' method. It is true that the issues and considerations are of a logical character and therefore universal or general. However, in the course of developing a system, an attempt is made to understand everything in terms of a model. Different philosophers differ in the choice of their model. As we have pointed out, while the empiricist philosophers adopt sense experience as the model, the rationalists adopt mathematics. Not only that; having accepted the model, they fit the reality into that model in different ways, e.g., Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. This shows that there is a personal element in this process. It was this that was sought to be emphasized by Lazerovitz when he looked for the psychological basis of the thought of a philosopher. *

If this personal element was not present in each and every system, there would not have been any differences between the different systems. There would have been only one system. And this is also true of different interpreters, as of different innovators, of the same system.

Now we shall see how Marcel's thought is not only

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specifically individual, but has general or universal significance. That the theoretical presuppositions in his philosophy, such as 'being-in-the-world' or 'being-in-a-situation', the existence of oneself, cannot be logically proved, etc., we have already pointed out. Here we shall point out the universal aspects of his very concrete discussions. In the course of the study of the examples, when Marcel distinguishes, say, between the love that the pastor thought he had and his actual love, he brings out two patterns which have a universal significance, though in the other situations of their life they will differ from each other. In so far as this is so, Marcel's concrete thinking has also theoretical aspects. And Marcel himself clearly expresses it when he writes in the following manner: "...let us say that I have to think not only for myself, but for us; in other words for everyone who may have contact with the thought which is mine". 1

In so far as we can point out the personal character of Descartes' thought, and the general or universal character of Marcel's thought, the distinction between these two kinds of thought cannot be as sharply drawn as Marcel does.

II. The Actual differences between Marcel's and Descartes' methods:

We have now examined Marcel's view that his own philosophical method is concrete, personal and existential, while Descartes' method is abstract, impersonal and non-existential. And we found that, in respect of the method, this distinction is much more valid than in the case of the problem as we have seen, or in the case of the solution as we shall see. In fact, it is this difference in method that makes one characterise the two approaches - the systematic and the existentialist - in a sharp manner as is sometimes done. But we also saw that the description of the two approaches through the characteristics of the method is not justified. The systematic approach is not merely theoretical but has its origins in practical problems; while the existentialist approach is not merely practical, but has theoretical presuppositions and implications. Further we saw that, while a personal element enters into Descartes' system, since there is a point of arbitrariness in the choice of it, Marcel's concrete thought has a theoretical aspect since he distinguishes different patterns of love, hope, fidelity, etc., which have a universal significance. This means that, in both cases, there is a theoretical and a practical element. But to say only
this would not be adequate. One must also see that the theoretical and the practical aspects and the relationship between them are not the same in the case of the systematic and the existentialist approach. So, let us now see how the two approaches differ in their theoretical and practical aspects, as well as in the relationship between them.

(A) The difference between the practical aspects of Descartes' and Marcel's methods:

Let us first see the difference in the practical aspects of the two approaches. The practical implication of Descartes' theoretical argument is, as we saw, to be seen in the fact that he evolved his theory, not for its pure theoretical value, but to save his own and other people's religious beliefs. At the same time, his theoretical argument does not say in what particular manner an individual should live on the divine level, or in what particular manner an individual can and does place God in his actual life. These things each individual has to work out for himself in specific situations. That is why, even though Descartes' method has practical implications, the practical implications could be of two kinds. If the theoretical arguments convince one about the reconcilability of God with science and mathematics, then the religious
religious life will be accepted; but if they don't convince one, then the religious life will be rejected. The implication, of whichever kind, is not specific to an individual or an individual's problems; but to a group which finds the arguments acceptable or not. In other words, the practical implications of his theoretical method are felt directly at the social level, which, in turn, has an indirect bearing on the individual level.

As against this, the practical implications of Marcel's method are felt directly on the personal, rather than on the social, level. The means that Marcel's handling of the problem is undertaken with reference, to the specific interests of a particular person in a particular situation. For example, God is proved, if at all, as an answer to the "Ontological Exigence", i.e., "as a kind of dissatisfaction" or a feeling of emptiness in oneself. In other words, the existence of God is proved as a response to the dynamic need for fullness felt by oneself with reference to one's specific, concrete, personal and existential situation. The practical implication of this reveals how a particular person in his actual life comes to a conviction of divine existence with reference to his specific situation. To put it differently, Marcel does not discuss, as we have done in the case of Abraham, how anyone can come to a
conviction of the existence of God. For that purpose, each person has to lead a religious life with reference to the specific situation in which each one exists. That is why Marcel's solution is different for different persons.

The specificity and personalness of the practical implications of Marcel's method can be further seen when we consider the different approaches the same person adopts to resolve the same type of problem in different situations. The manner of resolving one problem gives only a direction to the person concerned to tackle the same type of problem in a different situation. It is up to him to tackle the same type of problem anew with reference to the changed situation. The tackling of the problem undertaken by one person will give only some guidelines about how such problems are to be tackled by others with reference to their specific situations and personal priorities. Hence, the practical implications of Marcel's method are felt directly at the individual level, and, in turn, have some relevance to the way others try to solve the problems.

(B) The difference between the theoretical aspects of Descartes' and Marcel's methods:

Another difference between the methods of Marcel and Descartes is to be seen in their theoretical aspects.
In Descartes, the theoretical part consists of arguments which attempt to show that every thing fits the model that has been adopted, e.g., that the reality of mind consists in thinking and of matter in extension. In this attempt, the logical structure of the concept is adapted to the structure of the model, though, in practice, the concept remains unaltered except in the philosophical context. In the philosophical context, matter is apparently identified with, or is said to be essentially extension. But, certainly, matter is not merely that, but has smell, touch, etc. However, the change in the concept in the philosophical context does not alter the way the concept is ordinarily used.

In Marcel, the theoretical part consists in presenting patterns of human behaviour. In doing so, it extends both the practices and the theory of the concept. For instance, let us take the example of love as it is depicted by Marcel through the pastor and his wife. While distinguishing two patterns of love – the one the pastor had exemplified in his life and the other actual love – through the life-history of the pastor not only the concept of love but also the materialisation of it in the very life of the pastor also get extended. The two patterns of love can be said to extend the practice of love, because each case is different from the other in its structure. It also enriches
theoretically the concept of love in so far as the variety of structures under the concept is increased.

(C) The inter-relationship between the theoretical and practical aspects in Descartes' and Marcel's methods:

The consideration of the different roles of the theoretical and the practical aspects in the thought of Descartes and Marcel has already shown how the theoretical and the practical are differently related in them. We shall only briefly restate them. In Descartes, the conclusion is a theoretical one, and its practical consequences are in terms of direction - general and not specific. In Marcel, the theoretical part is a theoretical justification of what has been found justifiable in practice. The theoretical part does not help us to get a justified conclusion.

III. Conclusion:

In conclusion, we would say that both Marcel's method and Descartes' have theoretical, abstract, impersonal and non-existent as well as a practical, concrete, personal and existential aspects. And yet, they are in a sense also different. In Descartes, the practical implication of his method is felt directly on the social level, and only indirectly on the personal level; whereas, in Marcel,
it is felt directly on the personal level and only indirectly on the social level. Further, in Descartes, the theoretical aspect of the method is to be seen in his endeavour to show that everything fits the model he adopted. In this attempt the concept remains unaltered in practice; whereas, in Marcel, the theoretical part is to be seen even in his attempt to present patterns of human behaviour. In this attempt the concept gets altered both in practice and in theory.